



Cycle Training for Groups with Disabilities

An Introduction for Parents/Guardians/Assistants

An individual who can sit and walk independently, can also learn to cycle, with the proper direction and support and with reference to their individual learning curve.

In preparation for training, it is essential that parents/guardians/assistants are aware of how training will progress and the role they will play.

Structure

1. Participant numbers for a cycle training group depend on

- space available
 - With a basketball-court-sized area or greater, a group of up to 12 learners can be feasible
 - **It is essential to have access to a similar-sized indoor facility for cold or bad weather, particularly for learners who may have sensory issues**
- presence of parents/guardians/assistants to assist
 - **Each learner should have someone to assist them, the learning process is equally about teaching the person who is learning and teaching the adult with them to help them progress.**

2. Equipment

- Learners should use their own bikes, as this facilitates practice between sessions, which promotes maximum benefit and progress from the course of training
- Trainers should offer guidance on bike fit which best suits individual learners – a good bike shop is then the best place to guide on a specific model
 - Saddle height to best suit progress to striding and then gliding with flat feet reaching the ground and slight bend in the knees
 - Reach to handle bars to ensure that a learner can comfortably hold and move to steer without having to lean forward, which can lead to uncomfortable seating position and dipping of the head position
 - Reach to levers to ensure a learner can pull the brakes with ease – this may necessitate switching brake levers for learners who have weakness on one side or another, or releasing tension on the cables to facilitate easy use of brakes

- Trainers can assist with the removal of pedals and stabilisers from a standard bike to facilitate the balancing phase which is the first step towards independent cycling – parents/guardians/assistants need to be aware that with a number of bikes this will take time on the first day of training

3. Phases

- Parents/guardians/assistants play a very active role during the training process, from active involvement in sessions, to facilitating practice between sessions, and it is essential that they are aware of this from the outset
- It is also essential that they are aware of the phases of learning to cycle and, in particular, of the transitions between phases, which is when a trainer will need to spend more time with individuals
 - Getting on and off the bike
 - Starting to move
 - Striding
 - Gliding
 - Pedalling (slight rise in height of saddle)
 - Stopping
 - Starting independently
 - Cornering
- Between the transitions, the parent/guardian/assistant will be giving primary support to the learner, implementing the guide points of the trainer, who will offer periodic support
 - Using the same teaching points as the trainer
 - Using the same verbal supports
 - Using the same physical supports
- Even when a learner appears to be ready to transition to the next phase, the trainer may guide that their confidence will benefit (often greatly) from spending more time at the current phase
 - As a learner, having the time to enjoy the achievement of where they are at
 - As a parent/guardian/assistant praising what has been achieved and giving time for this to be enjoyed by the learner
 - One step/phase at a time