



THE TORONTO  
**CYCLISTS**  
HANDBOOK

**Partnership**  
for Integration  
& Sustainable  
Transportation



  
**CultureLink**



# Cycling is affordable, healthy and convenient.

Join over 400,000 Toronto men, women and children who choose to ride a bicycle most days because it is inexpensive, healthy, fun and very convenient.

Cycling is for everyone!

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# **independence**

A bicycle lets you travel where you want to go, when you want to go and is often quicker than public transit or a car.

# **safety**

Bicycles are popular on Toronto's roads. Lanes reserved just for bikes and traffic laws that protect cyclists make cycling safer for adults and children.

# **economical**

When you own a bicycle your travel costs are almost free – hundreds of dollars less than the cost of transit and thousands of dollars cheaper than a car.

# **healthy**

Exercising regularly on your bike will improve your mental and physical health and make you feel more energetic.

# **fun**

Exploring Toronto's neighbourhoods, beaches and parks with family and friends is one of the many ways to have fun on your bike.



### **before riding your bike**

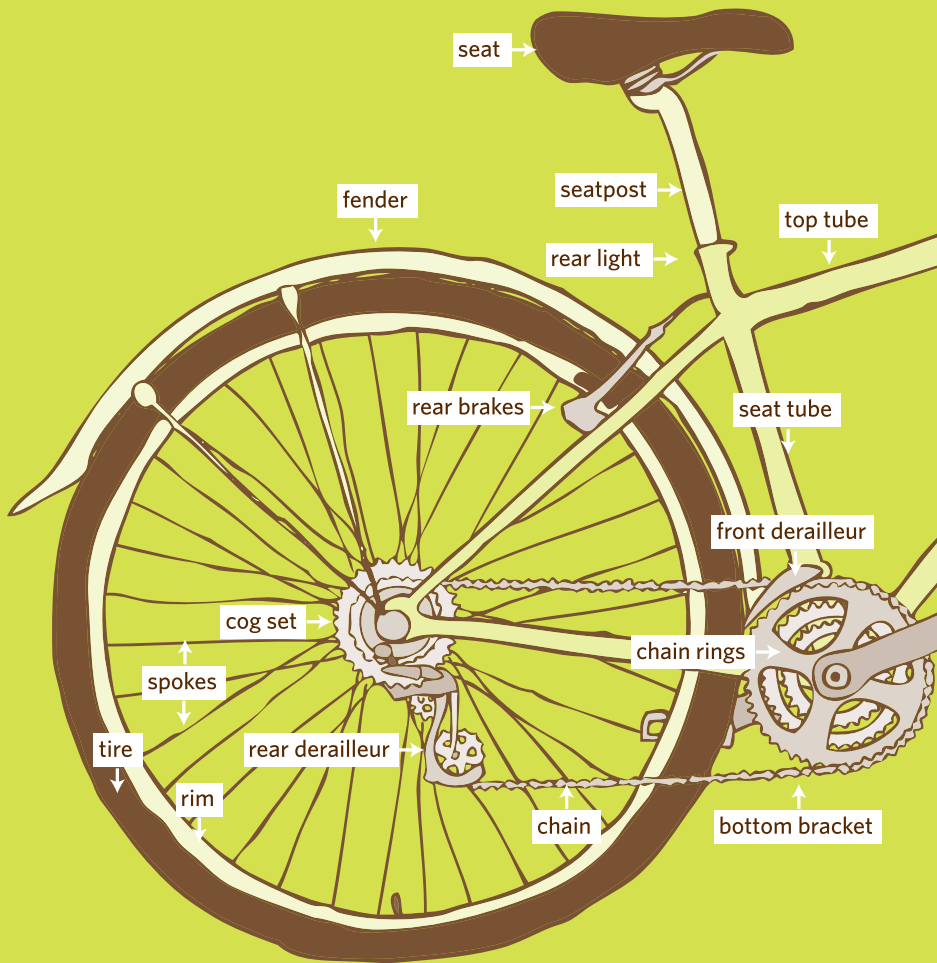
You'll feel safe, comfortable, confident and happy if you have a bicycle that fits properly, is regularly maintained, and equipped with the right accessories.

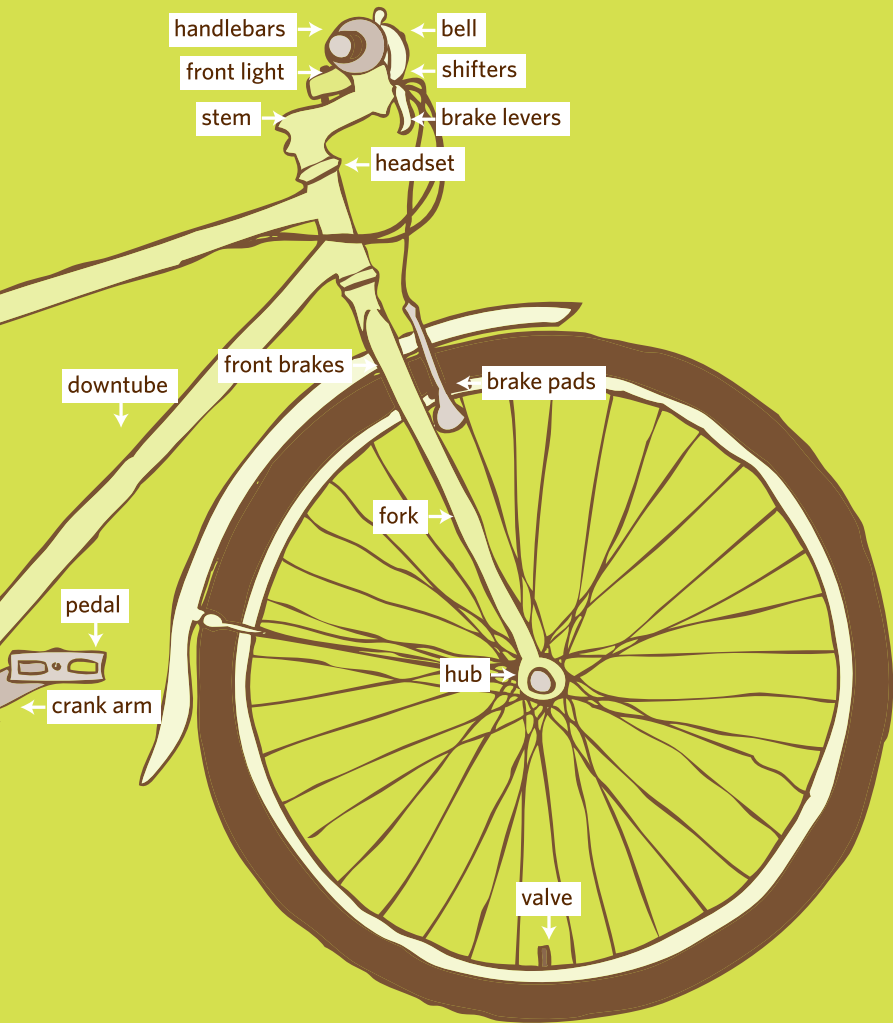
**maintain your bike** Check regularly that your brakes allow you to quickly and easily stop and your crank arm does not move back and forth. A well-inflated tire will reduce the chance of a flat tire.

**your bike should fit** Make sure you can stand over the crossbar of your bike. When sitting you should comfortably reach the handlebars and your leg should be slightly bent while touching the pedal at its lowest point.



*The City of Toronto cycling web page at [toronto.ca/cycling](http://toronto.ca/cycling) is a good general resource that offers the latest city cycling news as well as information on city programs*





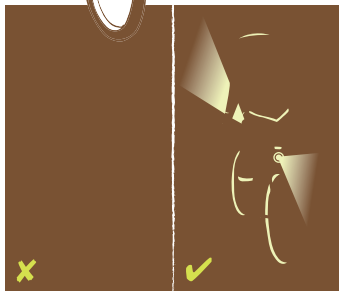
### **learn to fix your bike**

The Community Bicycle Network offers general workshops on how to fix your bike as well as courses for women taught by women. [CommunityBicycleNetwork.org](http://CommunityBicycleNetwork.org) or call 416 504 2918

**be seen, stay safe** Ontario law requires that bicycles be equipped with a front white light and rear red light as well as a bell or horn. Lights, reflectors and bright clothing help drivers see cyclists at night.



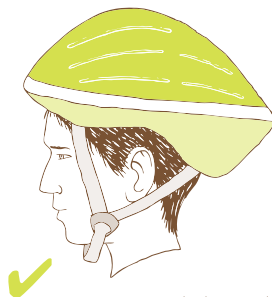
*a cyclist is easier to see in the daytime*



*at night you become invisible*

*with lights & reflectors you can be seen again*

**wear a helmet** A properly worn helmet will protect your head in a fall. In Ontario, cyclists 17 years of age and younger are legally required to wear one.



*correct position — lookin' good*



*too far forward, strap too loose*



*too far backwards*

**small children** By law, small children must be seated in an approved child's bicycle seat or bike trailer. It's illegal for two people to ride on a bicycle in Ontario.



## watch for pedestrians

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users. Stop while pedestrians are on crosswalks and always be respectful. When passengers are getting on and off TTC streetcars or school buses, cyclists must stop a reasonable distance from the doors and allow them to safely cross the road.

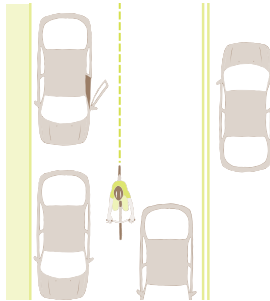
**stay safe in traffic** Always keep control of your bike and be aware of traffic and pedestrians. Stay alert and ride predictably in the safest part of the road to avoid collisions. Treat other road users with respect.

**pay attention** Pay attention in traffic because drivers don't always look for bicycles. Check for hazards such as potholes or car doors opening into your lane.

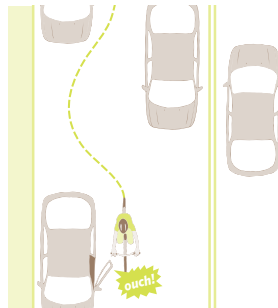
**obey traffic laws** You must stop at red lights and stop signs and always ride in the same direction as traffic. Under Ontario law, the slowest moving vehicles occupy the road closest to the curb.

## ride in a straight line

Drivers will understand your intentions if you ride confidently and predictably in a straight line and away from parked cars. Do not swerve in and out of traffic. Look back before changing lanes.

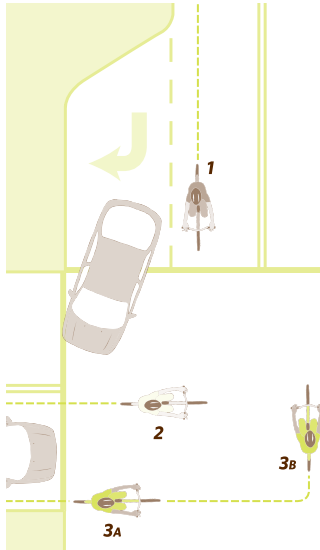


✓ *keep a good distance from parked cars*



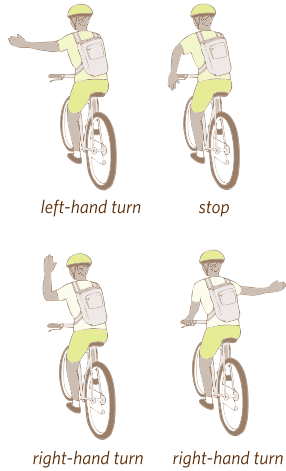
✗ *resist the temptation to ride into gaps*

**intersections** When travelling straight through an intersection try to make eye contact with drivers. Your bike can legally occupy the entire lane if that is the safest way to proceed.



- 1 do not enter right-turn lane if going straight
- 2 left-hand turn from left of lane
- 3 two-part left-hand turn from right of lane

**signal your turn** Signal your intention to turn before you reach an intersection by using hand signals or clearly pointing. Reduce your speed on turns - especially on wet roads.



**avoid large vehicles**  
Be very cautious when riding near trucks, buses and other large vehicles. Don't pass them in an intersection unless absolutely certain they are proceeding straight.



**Take a safe cycling course**

can-bike cycling courses for young cyclists and adults will boost your skills, safety and cycling pleasure: [toronto.ca/cycling/canbike](http://toronto.ca/cycling/canbike)

## cyclists and the law

Riding a bicycle in Toronto does not require a licence or special permit. However, cyclists must follow traffic rules and obey signs and signals or face fines.

## Highway Traffic Act

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act (HTA) specifies how all road users – including cyclists – must behave. Cyclists must obey all regular traffic laws as well as some regulations specific to bikes.

## traffic laws & police

Police can stop cyclists they believe have disobeyed a traffic law. If stopped, cyclists must give their correct name and address.

## no demerit points for cyclists

Cyclists do not receive demerit points on their driver's licence for tickets issued while riding their bicycle.

## List of select HTA offences and fines

carry passenger under 16 not wearing proper helmet	\$110
disobey stop sign or fail to stop	\$110
fail to signal for stop or turn	\$110
cyclist riding in or along crosswalk	\$110
red light – fail to stop	\$325
careless driving	\$490



### find legal resources

The Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists (ARC) website has the most comprehensive information about bikes and the law, the rights and responsibilities of cyclists and advice on how to deal with tickets and insurance claims: [www.respect.to](http://www.respect.to)



### **stay off the sidewalk**

It is dangerous and illegal to ride your bicycle on the sidewalk and in cross-walks. Always let pedestrians proceed first when they cross your path. It may be best to dismount and walk your bike in these areas.

**tickets** Police can issue tickets to cyclists for moving violations, such as not stopping at a red light or for not having proper bike equipment like a light or bell. Most tickets cost \$110.

**collisions** If you are involved in a collision, you are entitled to benefits - including money to replace your bicycle or pay health bills - even if you caused the accident. Be sure someone calls the police, exchange contact information with the driver, and write down their licence plate number and insurance information.

## getting around your city

More than 60% of Toronto households own bicycles. During the summer, residents make more than three million bicycle trips every week, to shop, meet friends or travel to school or work.

**commute to work** Nearly one-in-ten Toronto workers travel to work or school by bicycle. Commuting by bicycle is considered a smart, affordable and convenient means of transportation.

## choose the best route

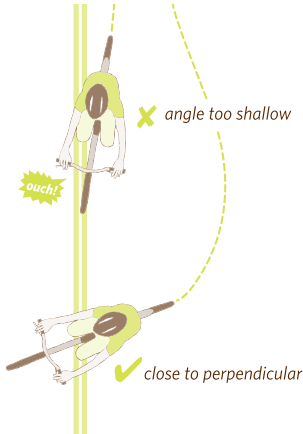
The Toronto Cycling Map will help you choose a route using bicycle lanes, paths through parks, waterfront trails or side streets without trucks and speeding cars. Try a new route on a Sunday to experience it without busy weekday traffic.

**bike routes and bike lanes** Toronto has hundreds of kilometres of on-road bicycle lanes as well as routes that travel through parks, ravines and on the waterfront.

## ride with an experienced cyclist

If you are a beginner, partner with a more experienced cyclist to learn how to ride safely in traffic and discover the best routes.

**beware of streetcar tracks** Streetcar tracks are dangerous because narrow tires can get caught in them and they are very slippery when wet. Try to cross tracks at a right angle.



### cycling map

View the Toronto Cycling Map on-line at [toronto.ca/cycling/map](http://toronto.ca/cycling/map) and access route maps from neighbouring municipalities such as Oshawa, Hamilton and Newmarket at [smartcommute.ca/choose/bike/route](http://smartcommute.ca/choose/bike/route)



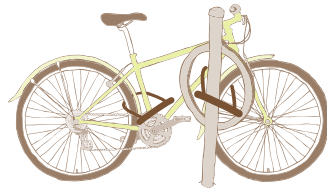
### dress for the weather

Wear whatever you feel comfortable in. Layers of light clothing that can be added or removed as needed help in colder weather. Waterproof jackets and pants will also keep you dry when it rains.

### transit with your bicycle

You can take your bicycle on the subway anytime except morning and afternoon rush hour during the week. In addition, over 70 city bus routes offer bike racks on TTC vehicles.

**lock your bike** Always lock your bike frame and both wheels to prevent theft. A U-lock fixed to a city post-and-ring works best, otherwise try a secure post or pole. Use a second lock for extra security.



*lock your front wheel & frame to the post, not ring*

Start your journey to

# health, happiness and freedom

Riding a bicycle keeps us healthy and happy, and gives us unlimited freedom of movement. Explore your city with thousands of others and enjoy cycling for life.

**Partnership**  
for Integration  
& Sustainable  
Transportation



This handbook was produced by the Partnership for Integration and Sustainable Transportation, a joint initiative of CultureLink Settlement Services and the Toronto Cyclists Union, with the generous support of the Toronto Community Foundation. This handbook is available in 16 other languages.

For more copies email:  
[cycling@culturelink.net](mailto:cycling@culturelink.net)



**TORONTO COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
The Art of Wise Giving™



The Toronto Cyclists Union is the only non-profit city-wide cycling

advocacy organization representing a community of cyclists from every geographic area in Toronto. We work towards improving the safety and accessibility of cycling and provide resources for cyclists to be effective local advocates.

We aim to promote cycling in an inclusive and welcoming manner.

[bikeunion.to](http://bikeunion.to)



CultureLink is a not-for-profit community-based

organization that facilitates the settlement of newcomers in Toronto. Our programs promote self-sufficiency, positive interaction and understanding between the Host and Newcomer communities, and the overall well-being of all participants.

[culturelink.net](http://culturelink.net)

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July 2010

