

Beavers Cyclist Badge

Go For A Short Ride In A Safe Place

Bicycle Activities[©]

By Samantha Eagle

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Overview

I have split this task into 3 sections; they include teaching: non riders to ride a bicycle, new and experience riders to follow a simple course and experienced riders to follow an obstacle course.

Leader Speak – The Week Before

You've worked really hard so far gaining knowledge for your cyclist badge. For the last task you need to go for a short ride.

If you can't ride a bike yet it's okay because we'll help you get up and running in no time. If you can already ride your bike, we'll show you how you can improve your skills by riding around an obstacle course.

Riding well and safely takes practice to prepare for hidden challenges such as situations from barking dogs to crazy drivers.

Wearing a helmet is important, but it's not enough. You need to learn how to balance and control your bike with confidence.

Next week I want you to bring your bike with you (if it's impossible to bring in their bike then you can get the children to share for the evening).

Preparation Before The Meeting

1. You will need at least two leaders one for the 'Non Riders Team' and one for the 'Riders Team'. Depending on how big your group is will depend on if you need to ask for helpers
2. Watch the videos on how to teach non riders to ride
3. Read the 'Simple Course – For New Riders' section and the 'Obstacle Course For Experienced Riders'

Materials Needed

- Ideally a bike and helmet for each child if not they can share
- See activities for other materials needed

Preparation At The Meeting

1. Set up the simple course
2. Set up the obstacle course

Non Riders - Directions/Leader Speak

1. **Direction** - Ideally you have watched the following videos to give you tips on how to teach the non-riders to ride
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlugLE4TaLA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6SNCvIN4EI>
2. **Speak** – The easiest way to start to ride a bike is to '**Scoot**' first. This means moving along not pedalling but holding the handlebars and using your feet on the ground to move along. This will help you get used to balancing before you put your feet on the pedals.
3. **Direction** - Once they are ready to put their feet on the pedals run along side them. If they are a little scared you can start off holding their seat to give them a little confidence then let go after a little practice but stay to the side of them. Encouraging them as you go
4. **Warning** – Make sure you allow for plenty of space
5. **Direction** – If any of the children are struggling get them to get off their bike take some time out then have another go.

New and Experienced Riders - Directions/Leader Speak

1. **Speak** - As I mentioned last week you are going to improve your cycling skills using an obstacle course. Before we do this you are going to ride a couple of times around this simple course that we have put together. You will notice there are two junctions. The first one you will need to stop and look right. The second one you will need to stop and look left
2. **Speak** - Before we get going I want to demonstrate a good way to mount and dismount your bike.

One of the most basic skills of cycling is the ability to ride straight, without wobbling from side to side. It is not possible for you to do this until you reach a certain minimum speed, typically in the range of 5-8 miles per hour (8-13 kph). Learning the correct starting technique will enable you to reach this critical manoeuvring speed sooner, so you will spend less time with your bicycle under only partial control.

I am going to demonstrate how to mount and start riding your bike. Then you will have a go.

3. **Direction** - Use the information on the following pages to help you with your demonstrations...The information you use will depend on how experienced your riders are. If you have very experienced riders, then some of this information will be great for them. However, if they can ride but are just starting out then cut down what you explain to them.

CORRECT BASIC STARTING TECHNIQUE

1. For your starting position you need to stand astride the frame, both feet on the ground

Do not try to sit on the saddle while the bike is stopped, this is not usually possible if your saddle is properly adjusted.



2. Rotate the pedals so that the pedal for your less skilful foot is 45 degrees forward of straight up
3. Put your foot on the high pedal, and then press down hard. This will simultaneously:
 - a. let you use the pedal as a step to lift yourself high enough to get onto the saddle...and:
 - b. apply driving force to the chain, causing the bike to pick up speed.

Directions...

Now let the children have a go.

Leader Speak

If your bike has gears you may need to do a bit of experimenting to find the most suitable starting gear on your bike.

- Too low a gear will cause the pedal to descend too fast to give support as you step up
- Too high a gear will not get the bike accelerating fast enough to reach balancing speed

CORRECT STOPPING TECHNIQUE

If you have gears it's best to get into the habit of shifting into a fairly low gear as you glide to a stop, so that you will be in a suitable gear for starting up again.

Naturally, in an emergency, panic stop, you'll just stop, and not worry about the gear, but for normal, controlled stops, you can teach yourself to do this downshifting automatically.

When To Put Your Foot Down

When stopping, you need to rest your weight on one pedal. Your other foot shouldn't touch the ground until the bicycle is pretty much stopped.

SAFE BRAKING PROCEDURE

It's important that you understand when to use the front and back brakes.

Beginners

If you're a beginner it's okay to use both brakes at the same time, however this is not the safest method.

Can anyone tell me the fastest way to stop your bike?

Apply the front brake so hard that the rear wheel is just about to lift off the ground. On dry pavements the front brake will give you the maximum stopping power.

Many cyclists shy away from using the front brake, due to fear of flying over the handlebars. This does happen, but mainly to people who have not learned to modulate the front brake.

Unfortunately, it takes twice as long to stop with the rear brake alone as with the front brake alone, so reliance on the rear brake is unsafe for cyclists who ever go fast.

Modulating the front brake to prevent going over the handlebars

1. Use your arms to brace yourself securely during hard braking
2. Move back on your saddle as far as you can comfortably go, to keep the center of gravity as far back as possible (this applies whether you are using the front, rear or both brakes)

Using both brakes

Using both brakes together can cause "fishtailing." If the rear wheel skids while braking force is also being applied to the front, the rear of the bike will tend to swing past the front, since the front is applying a greater decelerating force than the rear. Once the rear tyre starts to skid, it can move sideways as easily as forward.

When to use the rear brake

- **Slippery surfaces.** On dry pavements, it is generally impossible to skid the front wheel by braking. On slippery surfaces, however, it is possible. A front wheel skid almost always leads to a fall, so if there is a high risk of skidding, you're better off controlling your speed with the rear brake.
- **Bumpy surfaces.** On rough surfaces, your wheels may actually bounce up into the air. If there is a chance of this, don't use the front brake. If you ride into a bump while applying the front brake, the bicycle will have a harder time mounting the bump. If you apply the front brake while the wheel is airborne, it will stop, and coming down on a stopped front wheel is a Very Bad Thing.
- **Front flat.** If you have tyre blowout or a sudden flat on the front wheel, you should use the rear brake alone to bring yourself to a safe stop. Braking a wheel that has a deflated tyre can cause the tyre to come off the rim and is likely to cause a crash.
- **Long mountain descents,** when your front brake hand may get tired, or you may be at risk of overheating a rim and blowing a tyre. For this situation, it is best to alternate between the front and rear brake, but not to use them both at once.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR GEARS

Multi-speed gears allow you to climb hills comfortably that might force you to stand up and "pump" or even get off and push if you were riding a one-speed. They also allow you to go faster downhill or with the wind at your back.

High or Low?

"Higher" gears put more resistance on the pedals. If you select a gear that is too high for the conditions, it will force you into a slower cadence.

Pedaling slower than your ideal cadence is wasteful of energy. You also run a higher risk of muscle strains and joint damage, particularly to the knees and hips.

"Lower" gears make the pedals easy to turn, so it becomes easier to spin to a fast cadence.

Pedaling faster than your ideal cadence can allow you to generate an extra burst of speed, but you will tire yourself out too soon if you try to maintain an excessively fast cadence.

Simple Course – For New Riders

You need to find some ground that you can use for your course. If you don't have the luxury of having some land attached to your meeting place, you can either:

- Find an unused car park
- Ask a local school if you could use their car park
- Ask a local business if you could use their car park

Preparation On The Night

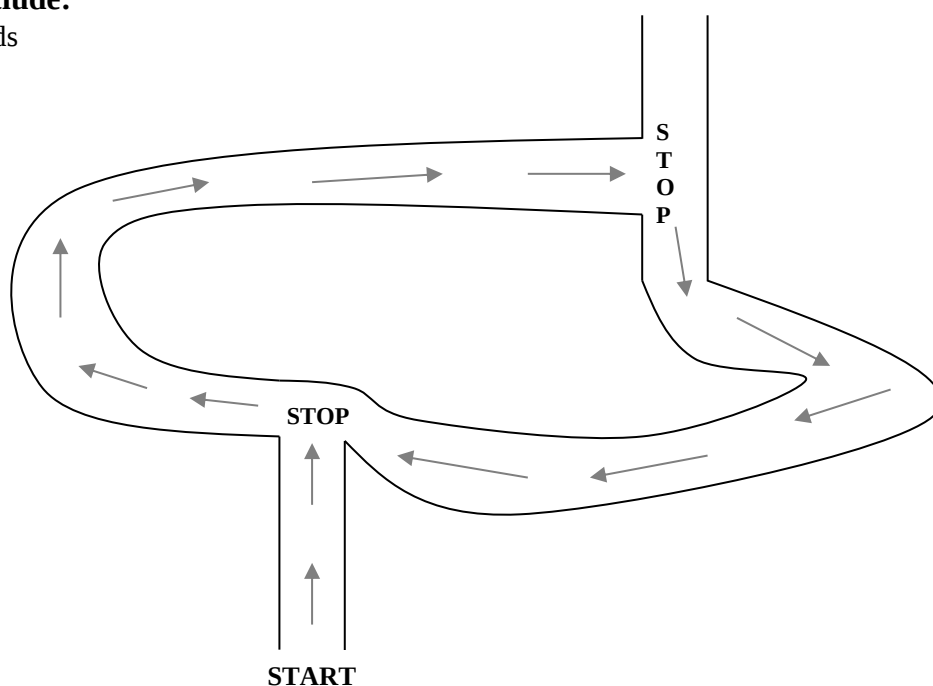
1. Layout a simple course using cones or rope. Use chalk to mark the direction of the course. If you have a large group layout two courses to ensure maximum participation.



The course should include:

- At least two bends
- A left turn
- A right turn

Here's an example Cycle Course

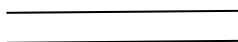


Direction

1. Simply direct the children to ride around the course making sure they stop at each junction
2. Allow time between each child and make sure you don't have too many on the course at once

Obstacle Course For Experienced Riders

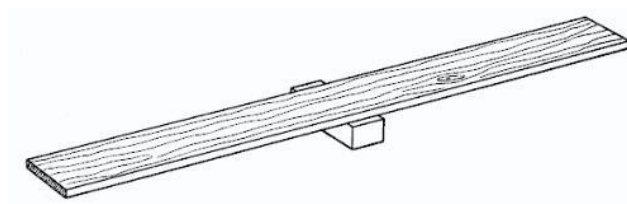
1. **Narrow Lanes** - Layout two short lanes on their own and make them very narrow. If you have a very large group make three lanes



2. **Zig Zag** - Layout cones close to each other for the children to zig zag in and out of them



3. **Seesaw** – If you can get hold of a plank of wood set up a seesaw (ideally the wood would be wider than the diagram below)



Direction

1. **Cycle the course single file once**

Speak - The first task I want you to complete is to ride around the course twice and then stop.

2. **Cycle the course using hand signals**

Speak - Now you are going to ride the course again stopping at the two junctions and use hand signals. [Demonstrate the hand signals]



Left Turn



Right Turn



Stop Alternative



Right Turn

3. Ride through narrow lanes

Speak - Over here I have set out some very narrow lanes I want you to ride through them without touching the rope/cones and without putting your feet on the ground (split the group into two and get each group to use a lane each)

4. Cycle in and out of the cones

Speak – In the same groups you are going to zig zag in and out of these cones try to do this without putting your feet on the ground

5. Cycle up and over a see-saw

Speak – Now I want you to cycle over this see-saw.

6. Cycle past a leader and shake their hand

Speak – Now I want you to all cycle towards me and shake my hand without putting your feet on the floor. Then cycle to the next leader/helper and shake their hand

To Finish off

Get everyone to demonstrate the arm signals.

Optional Tasks for Really Experienced Riders...

Or maybe the leaders can have a go!

1. Take a bean bag from the top of one cone, transfer it to the other hand and then throw it into one of three different hoops lying on the ground.
2. Cycle under two limbo bars