

Learn the basic skills of cycling - practice off the road

If you are a beginner or lack confidence as a cyclist, then Zone 1 is for you!

All Zone 1 exercises are designed for practice in a quiet area. This will help to keep you safe and stress-free whilst you learn the important cycling skills needed before using roads.

Zone 1 will show you how to:

- look after yourself and your bicycle
- develop skills in observation and signalling
- prepare for cycling on quiet roads as part of the traffic

There is also essential information about the Law which you should know before using roads.

1 What type of bicycle should I buy? (a guide to the main types of bicycle)



Hybrid/City/Utility bike

- Designed for daily mixed urban/sub-urban use, often have rear carrier rack and mudguards or at least built-in fittings for these
- 'Normal' size wheels (ask for 700 x 28c) with average size tyres -not skinny as in Road bikes nor wide and knobbly as in Mountain Bikes
- Normally have 15-21 'derailleur' gears, though some have 'hub' (hidden) gears on rear axle
- Best for general leisure, shopping, commuting and utility cycling on most journeys of 5 miles or less. Can easily be used over un-surfaced paths but not very rough ground.
- Features include straight handlebars –'bent back' ones are also available
- They normally have horizontal crossbars, but these sometimes slope down towards saddle –women's version especially



Mountain bike - MtB (all terrain bikes - ATBs)

- Designed originally for off road cycling but now often used (sometimes mis-sold) for general cycling as there's a wide choice of types available
- Smaller wheels (26") than most other styles of bicycle and always multiple 'derailleur' gears –frequently at least 21 gears
- Often do not have fixings for mudguards or carrier racks.
- Straight handlebars, hi-tech brakes and suspension are common features
- Most suitable for off-road cycling over rough ground, though many are used and adapted for urban on-road and leisure cycling, provided thinner/smoothier tyres are fitted



Touring bicycle

- Designed for comfortable commuting and most especially mid to longer distance cycling and load carrying
- Built with a standard frame design and wheel size (typically 700 x 28c tyre size) - though some specialist 'Audax' tourers have 26" wheels
- Drop handlebars and good quality components are common features. Typically 21 speed or more derailleur gears are standard fittings
- Rear (and sometimes front) carriers are standard as are mudguards front and rear
- Suitable for daily/occasional commuting, carrying shopping, goods and materials
- Also suitable for off-road cycle paths but less so on very rough ground



Road/racing bike

- Designed for speed and road use, not suitable for off road
- Often very light, and minimalist in terms of accessories
- Hi-tech and specialist frames and components (commonly seen on the Tour de France/Tour of Britain cycle races)
- Features include standard wheel size but often very thin tyres (700 x 21c). Typically 21 speed or more derailleur gears are standard fittings
- Rarely have mudguards and carriers or fittings for them
- These bicycles are built for fast road riding and racing. They are not suitable for carrying loads

NOTE. There are many other types of bicycle such as folders, recumbents and BMX, as well as variations on all the above types particularly Hybrid bikes.