



Riding Notes

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The following riding notes were generated as an aid to a few riders within my community that were new to riding and/or just starting to ride again. These notes are derived from my years of mistakes and hopefully can aid the reader's awareness as to prevent accidents or injuries.



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FIRST OFFHAVE FUN !!

Immediately before Riding

- Ride with your Helmet. Use a mirror attached to your sunglasses. (all other types of mirrors are a waste of money)
- Check Tire Inflation, – (finger pinch the tires, ESPECIALLY FRONT TIRE)
- Assure you have your spare tube, patch kit, irons and most importantly, tire pump which has been utilized with your tubes before. Carry handy wipes, Large bandaids, phone money (or cellphone), and medical cards.
- Assure Wheel disconnects are secure.
- Assure attachment of front brake cables or brake release levers if the wheel had been previously removed.
- Put bike in a low “ride away gear”. - (reason – easier to balance when peddling and not stalled out on start up in a high gear).
- Check to be clear from sand, concrete splices or trenches that could trip up front tire start.
- Check for the lack of traffic/people in starting riding path.

Mounting Bike (most accidents occur here for me)

These are my steps to a successful pedal away.

Style A. Bike Straddle

- Orient the bike in the direction of ride. Do not line up on a ride into gravel.
- Take hold of handle bars with a hand either side of and close to the stem.
- Move left hand to front brake lever.
- Use judicious brake to hold position until you are ready to push off. I typically use the front brake because I cant reach the rear brake handle.
- Throw leg over and straddle bike just forward of seat.
- Straighten front wheel.
- Check for the lack of traffic/people in starting riding path.
- Pick your push off foot and with that foot rotate pedal position to 2 o'clock position. Lean or Cant the bike toward the opposite foot which is on the ground.
- Balance bike between push off foot, foot on ground and hand positions on bar and brake.
- Straighten front wheel again, check for traffic ahead.
- With one simultaneous action, (kind of in this order), place motion into the 2:00 o'clock pedal position by transferring weight and rotating the bike vertical. Release brake and position yourself on the seat as you pedal away with the foot which was just on the ground.

Style B. Kick and Go

- Orient the bike in the direction of ride. Do not line up on a ride into gravel.

- Take hold of handle bars with a hand either side of and close to the outside of the bar, at the ready to use your rear brake.
- Move to side of bike (LH lets say), placing left foot on left lowest pedal position.
- Check for the lack of traffic/people in starting riding path.
- With other foot, create motion of the bike, using the “scooter push” to propel the bike and you forward, while balanced on the LH pedal.
- Kick other foot over seat and settle on to the opposite pedal. Use this position on the opposite to start pedaling from.

Turning Corners

- Avoid loose gravel, oil, wet pavement, tar splices in the turn. In a turn, if the front wheel gets into these, the front wheel will slide out from under you into the outside of the turn and you and the rest of the bike will slam into the ground into the inside of the turn. The trick is to get slowed down as much as possible and if you have to ride across these obstacles, do it such that the bike is vertical with no turning.
- Visualize the turn before making it.
- As the turn is made, extend you leg and some weight on the “outside the turn” down pedal. **Do not make the turn with the inside pedal extended or it will catch the pavement and flip the bike.**
- Check for traffic in your turning area and beware of traffic approaching from behind and passing you which may be turning also.
- Be aware of possible turning traffic in the lane to which you are turning into.
- Avoid swinging wide in the turn, stay in your lane.
- If braking is necessary, Do not use any front braking in a turn, only back braking
- If moisture is present, reduce the radius of the turn and ride as vertical as possible, meaning slow.

Riding

- As a minimum, keep your thumbs wrapped around the handlebar. Road vibrations and bumps can potentially brake your hold on the handlebars and cause you to loose control.
- Keep your head up and ears open. Don’t wear headphones while riding.
- Ride with a sweat skull cap under your helmet.
- Adjust your mirror to give you situational awareness behind you. If you have cars not giving way, raise your hand straight in the air and give them the elbow to move over.
- Do not ride by parked cars less than a door length away. A door may be opened by a motorist and you would be faced with an accident with a door.
- Be a predicable rider. Ride a good line. Don’t keep other bicyclists and motorists guessing about what your next move will be. As necessary, indicate your intentions by hand signals. Left hand out, left turn. Left hand up in an L for Right turn. Down, palm back for stop.
- Give the right-of-way to emergency vehicles. Pull to the right and stop if you hear a siren.
- Beware of loose gravel. Do not intentionally ride over loose gravel, rocks, sand, soft spots, holes and ruts. If you have narrow tires like a 700-23, stay off this terrain and change your bike to a trail bike with fatter tires.

- Avoid wide cracks in the pavement. Narrow tires can easily get caught in wide cracks. Be especially careful on roadways paved with concrete. Center cracks on concrete roads are dangerous. (case in point, Ragbrai 2007 death)
- Railroad tracks. Cross them at right angles. (Angled tracks and low shoulders are major causes of accidents.)
- Eat and drink frequently (every 10 miles). Rather than loading up once in the middle of the day, stop frequently for fluids and food. Carry cool water with you. Consider that your body has a gas tank that needs refreshment every 10 miles. (Avoid greasy foods. Keep your diet low in fat)
- Formation riding, avoid it. Ride at more than a bike length behind another rider and make sure he/she knows you are there. Be aware that they may be stopping with out announcement. Do not cross tires.
- Overtaking other riders and passing, announce in a calm voice, “on your left” and pass the other person at an acceptable distance. Say “thank you” while passing.
- Wear suntan lotion. Pay attention to your ankles, upper legs, back of legs, back of neck, arms, “V neck”. I use 50 to 70 and dress in long white stretch jerseys on extended rides. Sun will also get thru jerseys and black spandex. Consider lotion in those areas as well.
- Consider a bell or noise maker on the bike that can easily be reached with little hand movement. It helps alert pedestrians to your presence.
- Use your gears to ride a consistent cadence that is comfortable for your riding style. (See my lesson paper on gear usage)

Coming to a Stop

- Avoid ever putting your foot down in front of a pedal. A toe could catch.
- Use rear braking mostly, little or no front braking.
- Move your weight slightly rearward on the seat.
- If you clip in, unclip your “ground” foot, prior to bringing the bike to a stop. Not doing so will cause you to spill at the stop. Unclip while your moving.
- As you slow to a stop, raise yourself off your seat and stand on your pedals to lower the center of gravity. It’s easier to balance your bike standing up, even in a dead stop.
- Extend one leg on a pedal and using the opposite foot, extend it to eventually catch your stop.
- As you come to a stop, put that foot down, outside the pedal arch to catch the lean of the bike and your weight. As you might be making a rolling stop, this foot can initially be used to slightly contact the ground and be then again raised to leapfrog to a stop, resist the attempt to do leapfrog stops. Make them smoothly, straight forward and a slow transition of braking to a stop and transference of weight to ground.

Parking

- Baby the derailleur side of your bike. It is a highest precision component on the bike. Don’t lay your bike down on the derailleur side because it bends the rear derailleur or places it in dirt. If you have to lay your bike down, lay it down on the other side.
- The preference is to stand the bike up against something so it doesn’t fall, or put it on its stand.
- If you lock the bike, do so that the frame is entrained. If the front wheel is the only thing

locked, the bike can be disassembled and stolen in no time and all that will be left is the front wheel.

Falls

- Use the bike to brake the fall if you can, by holding on to the handle bars and driving the bar into the pavement. Sacrifice the bike.
- Try to keep elbows and wrists close to the body.
- Resist the urge to slam your foot into the pavement. (twisted ankle, knee....)
- Go down on your side and rear if possible (more padding)
- Tuck and Roll if you can.

Bike Maintenance

- Check for dragging brakes. Adjust any dragging out.
- Check for wobbly wheels. Spokes may need truing.
- Check for proper tire pressures before riding.
- Keep chain oiled with Teflon oils and cleaned of excess oil which collects dust and dirt.
- Determine pedal length on every ride and adjust upon need.
- If shifting becomes a problem, True it out. It is normal to be making adjustments from time to time.

ON YOUR LEFT ! THANK YOU

