

CARRYING IMPORTANT ITEMS

If you use a bicycle for transportation, you will want to carry things with you, perhaps a briefcase, school books, or the dry cleaning you pick up on the way home. It is dangerous to carry things in your hands or hooked over the handlebars. Steering becomes difficult and something could get caught in your front spokes. A rear rack is an inexpensive accessory that makes it easy to attach all kinds of things. Add baskets, panniers, even a plastic milk crate to carry all your items.

Secure your items. Keep a rack strap or a couple of bungee cords strapped to a sturdy rack. Make sure any load is carefully attached to the rack so it will not fall off or into the spokes or rub on the tire during transport. There are rack packs that strap onto the top of a rack to carry smaller items.

For larger or multiple items, touring packs, sometimes referred to as bicycle saddlebags or panniers, are a great way to carry most other loads. Some touring packs also convert into backpacks or briefcases. For unusually large, heavy, or awkward loads, a bicycle trailer is the way to go. There are trailers specially designed to transport children, and others made for hauling cargo. Most trailers can haul up to 100 pounds.

TIP

Wear a bicycle helmet, glasses, and bicycling gloves. Dress appropriately for the type of riding you are planning.

Equipment and Accessories

Bicycle equipment does not have to be expensive or fancy; however, it does need to fit properly and be reliable and functional. Choose equipment you feel comfortable using. Remember, putting yourself at risk and crashing is much more expensive than a few simple accessories.

Identification, medical information and change for a phone call

These items should be carried with you at all times. Identification is necessary if you are stopped for a traffic violation, and if you crash, it will enable you to receive prompt medical care as well as notification of your family. Tape some change under your bike seat. It is also a good idea to keep a few dollars hidden in your patch kit, inside the end of the handlebar, or elsewhere on your bicycle. You may forget your wallet, get hungry and need a snack, or you may need cash for an unexpected errand. Think ahead and be prepared.

Helmet

Seventy-five percent of all bicycle driver fatalities are a result of head injuries. The best protection against this type of injury is use of an approved bicycle helmet. Wearing a helmet can reduce the severity of brain injury in a crash by 88% and could save your life. Helmets are inexpensive and come in a multitude of styles and colors.

The best helmets have a smooth plastic outer shell over a foam liner. The outer shell helps prevent sharp objects from penetrating the helmet and the foam liner protects your head by absorbing much of the force of an impact. The extra soft foam pads that come with your helmet are for exact fit and comfort. The very best helmet is one which the rider likes and wears on every ride.



Helmets which have several openings in the front and air channels inside allow for the best air flow. Helmets also provide protection from the sun.

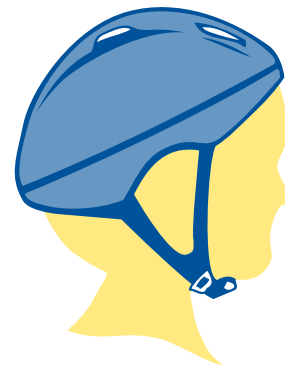
Take time to select a helmet which is the right size for your head. A helmet needs to fit snugly so it will not move around on your head when riding, or come off your head if you fall. Adjust the straps so they fit around your ears and hold the helmet on securely. The helmet should be worn over the forehead and not tipped back. Check that the front edge of the helmet is positioned only one inch above the eyebrow. It is a good idea to have an experienced bike shop employee assist you in properly fitting your helmet.

HELMETS HAVE A LIMITED LIFE

A crash, as well as age and normal wear and tear, will cause the foam of the bicycle helmet to become less effective. The soft foam fitting pads will compress and need to be replaced from time to time to ensure a snug fit. It is time to replace your helmet when it becomes too loose to tighten or it is several years old.



The correct fit



Wrong



Wrong

TIP

Remember, a crash can happen at any time. Wear your helmet every time you ride.

Bicycle

The first step to getting comfortable is owning a mechanically sound bicycle – including brakes, steering, tires, and drive train. Colorado law states the bicycle must be equipped with a working brake or brakes that will enable you to stop within 25 feet from a speed of 10 miles per hour on dry, level, clean pavement.

There are many types and styles of bikes to choose from. Select a bike based on your primary use, but feel free to use it for other rides as well. Bike shops encourage you to try different types to help you find the right fit and function.

HOW SAFE IS YOUR BICYCLE?

No matter how safely you ride, an unsafe bicycle puts you at risk. If you acquire a secondhand bicycle, it is a good idea to take it to a bike shop for a safety check. Loose nuts and bolts make it difficult to control the bike.

Preventative maintenance will also increase your satisfaction with bicycle transportation. If you like to do mechanical work, take a maintenance class and maintain your bicycle yourself. Maintaining your own bicycle can be very satisfying and empowering.

Make regular stops at your bike shop for mechanical evaluations. Let an expert troubleshoot for you. The mechanic can advise you on what service your bicycle needs to be safe, to prevent damage to components, or to enhance performance.

TIP

Whether you service your own bicycle or not, check regularly for:

- **Tire pressure, wear and damage**
- **Chain-drive cleanliness**
- **Brake and gear shifting performance**
- **Head and tail lamp battery charge**

TIRE PRESSURE

When riding in good weather, tire pressure should be maintained as written on the tire sidewall. The correct tire pressure increases the life of your tires and decreases the effort needed to pedal. For rain, snow, or ice, you may want to decrease the pressure for better traction. Check the tire tread and sidewalls for cuts and scrapes.

FLAT PREVENTION

To prevent flats, use tires which will work for their intended use. Ask your local bike shop which tires are appropriate for you. There are also products such as tire sealants that self-heal after a puncture and practically eliminate the need to repair a tube. Always carry a pump that fits your valve stem (Schrader or Presta), a patch kit, a spare inner tube, and know how to use them.

CLEANING AND DRYING

Chain-drive cleanliness reduces the destructive wear which grime causes. A clean chain drive will also protect your clothing from stains and makes your bicycle easier to pedal. Select a quality lubricant designed to reduce grime attraction. Non-aerosol lubricants can be directed only to the part of the chain which requires lubrication. Wipe the chain down after lubrication so the outside of the chain will not accumulate grime.

When you ride in the rain or snow, it is important to allow your bicycle to dry completely. If this is not possible at your destination, bring the bike into a warm place to dry at night or when you return home. This allows drying inside the bearing assemblies.

Finally, remember that all bike maintenance is cheap compared to auto repairs. Don't put yourself at risk to save a few dollars.

DOES YOUR BICYCLE FIT YOU?

It is essential that the bicycle fit its rider. Improper fit can cause discomfort and the inability to properly control the bike. You should be able to straddle the top tube while standing flat footed on the ground with clearance between your crotch and the top tube. Consult your bicycle dealer to obtain a correct fit and test ride the bicycle to determine comfort and proper control.

SEAT COMFORT & HEIGHT

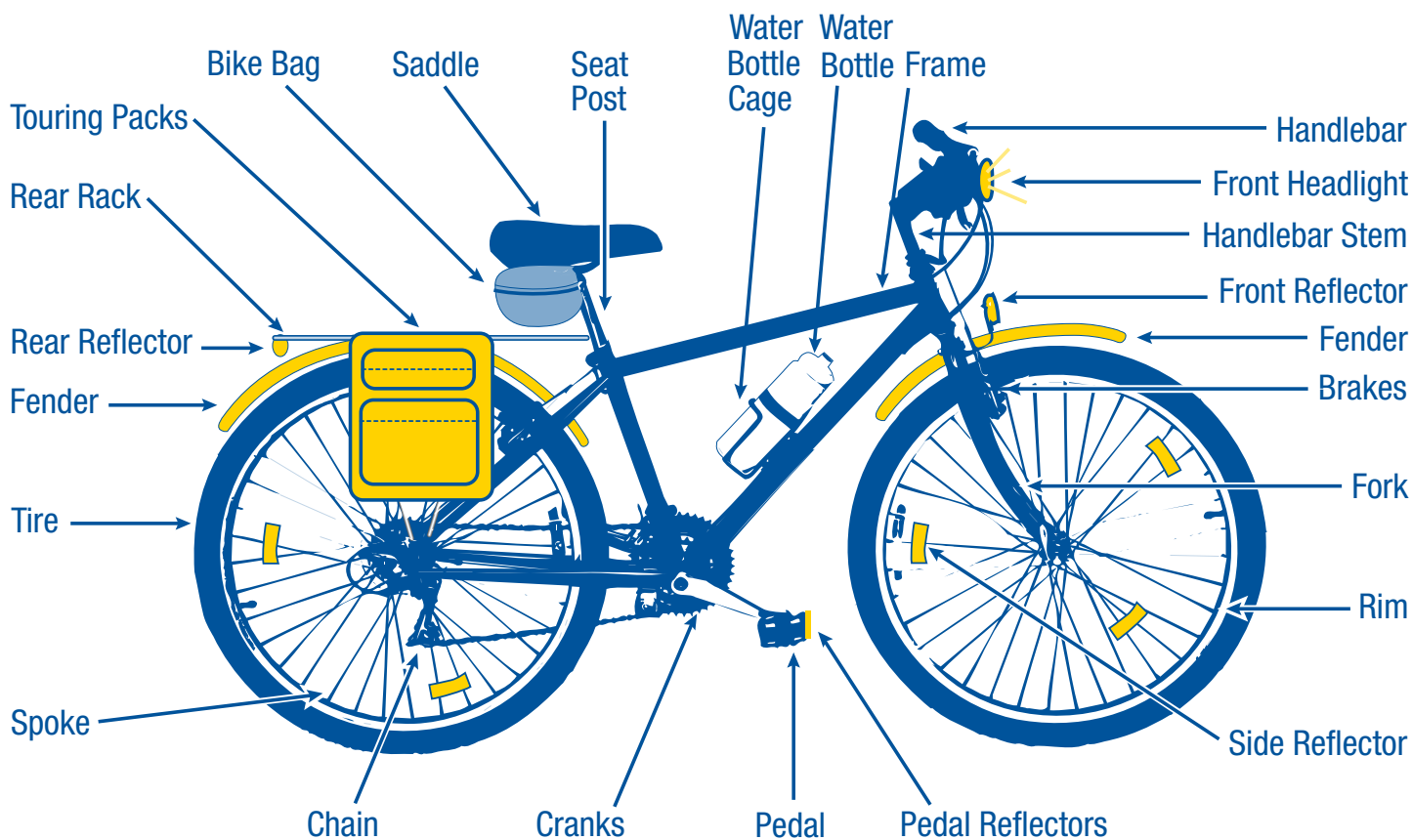
There are many factors involved in saddle comfort – saddle design and position, rider position and clothing, and riding style. If you haven't bicycled in a while, expect to be sore for a few days no matter how comfortable your seat is. After the first day, you may even need to take a

day off before riding again. After that, if you are still not comfortable, you may want to get a different saddle. Consult your local bike shop about saddle styles, adjusting your riding position, and other possible solutions.

The seat height should be adjusted so your knee is slightly bent when your foot is at the bottom of the pedal stroke with the ball of your foot over the center of the pedal.

HANDLEBARS

Adjust the handlebars for comfort. Adjust the stem for height, positioning it no higher than the maximum extension mark. Rotate the handlebars to your most comfortable position.



BRAKE LEVERS

Brake levers should be positioned so there is no strain to your wrist and can be reached by the middle of the fingers.

REAR VIEW MIRROR

It is important to know what is happening behind you. As with car driving, a mirror should not be used as a substitute for looking back when changing lanes or turning. A rear view mirror allows you to look to the rear frequently. Never assume passing motorists see you.

REAR RACK

Be sure to have a good quality rear rack installed and have a bungee cord or rack strap handy to carry items such as a briefcase, shopping bag or other unexpected items.

BIKE BAGS OR TOURING PACKS

These are good general purpose choices for holding and protecting most of the things you may need to carry. Also available are suit bags, front or rear mounted packs, and briefcases which attach to the bike rack.

WATER BOTTLE & CAGE

Attach a water bottle and cage to your bicycle. In Colorado's dry climate, it is important to avoid dehydration by getting into the habit of sipping water throughout your trip, even if you are not thirsty.

FENDERS

You may occasionally be caught in sprinklers, afternoon showers or puddles, so be prepared. Fenders can save your wardrobe and relieve you from always carrying a rain suit. They also keep your bicycle cleaner. If you use your commuter bike for mountain biking, there are effective clip-on fenders which can be removed without the use of tools.

BELLS AND HORNS

Colorado law requires you to give an audible signal when passing pedestrians on paths, sidewalks or other facilities. A good way to do this is with a bell or horn that has a friendly pleasant sound which will not startle or anger pedestrians. Sound it or say, "Hello up there, passing on your left," before you pass by.

NIGHT RIDING EQUIPMENT

Colorado law states when bicycling from sundown to sunrise or when weather or other conditions cause poor visibility, your bicycle must be equipped with a rear red reflector and reflectors on both sides that can be seen for 600 feet in a car's headlamps. You must also have a white headlight that can be seen for at least 500 feet from the front of the bicycle.

FLASHING RED REFLECTOR LIGHT

These LED lights are more visible than a plain reflector and can be attached to you or your bicycle.

WHITE HEADLIGHT

A powerful white headlight will make you visible and light your way. Battery operated headlights are available and some have rechargeable battery packs. Each have their own advantages and disadvantages. Your local bike shop can help you decide which is best for you.

REFLECTIVE MATERIALS

You cannot wear too much reflective material at night. Wear it on your helmet, shoes, arms, legs and torso. Pedal reflectors move as you pedal and will make you more visible. Reflectors and reflective materials are important even with good lighting systems because bicyclists are hard to see and motor vehicle drivers may not be looking for you at night. Be safe. Be seen.