

Learn how to ride a bike – step by step

1. Find a suitable bike and take off the pedals

- To get started you will need a bike. Make sure that to get started you choose a bike that is easy to get on and off (steer clear of supercoole «male» bikes with a high bar in the middle).
- Get tools so you can adjust the saddle and take off the pedals.
- Put the saddle in the lowest possible position. So you can place your feet flat on the ground while sitting on the saddle.
- Check the airpressure on the tyres.
- Choose a middle to light gear.

2. Clothes

- Shoes: as a beginner don't go with flip flops or sandals. If your shoes come with long laces, make sure those are stowed away safely in your shoes so they can't get caught up in the bike.
- Pants: if your bike doesn't come with a casing around the bicycle chain, make sure your right pant leg is protected. Either just roll it up or secure it with a special clip/band.

3. Find a good place to practice

To get started find a place without traffic. Make sure the surface you are practising on is flat and firm.

4. Take your time

Don't expect yourself to perform a miracle. As an absolute beginner learning to ride a bike will take a bit of time. Allow yourself to take small steps in your own pace and don't forget to take breaks!

5. Get to know your bike

- Give the kickstand a try, folding it out and in.
- Push your bike using both hands, using just one hand on the handlebar or maybe even just one hand on the saddle.
- Check out the breaks: Try squeezing just the front break or just the back break and see how your bike reacts. Use both breaks and try to push your bike forward.

6. Get started on your «balance bike»

Scooters or balance bikes are ideal to get started. They do wonders for your balance and are an ideal way to get ready for riding a bike.

Take a seat on your pedalless bike and push away! Try varying the speed and «play» a bit: what happens if you use your feet alternately to push off? What if you use just your right or just your left foot? What if you use both feet at once? The better you get, the longer distances you can go without setting a foot on the floor.

7. Practise hitting the breaks

On a balance bike you can break at any time by just putting your feet on the ground. To learn to ride a bike it's time to get to know the breaks.

Test (at a moderate speed) to just use the front break or just the back break and get a feel for how your bike reacts. Try to find a measured way to break.

To get the best result try and get used to using both breaks simultaneously as often as possible. If you don't want to go flying over your handlebar: avoid sharp breaking with just the front break!

8. Optional: Ride a scooter

As stated before riding a scooter is a good step to train your balance before you tackle riding a bike. Try attaching just one pedal to your bike and riding it like you would a scooter.

9. How to get started on your bike

Re-attach the pedals. Get on your bike and bring the right pedal into the starting position using your foot, while holding the breaks. Push the right pedal backwards until it is in the 2 o'clock position (if you were looking at the bike from the side).

Sit down on your saddle, use the left leg to push off (then place it on the left pedal) and get the right leg up onto your pedal in starting position – and start pedalling.

While it may feel scary at first, it helps if you don't go superslow but at a medium speed. That greatly reduces the risk of losing your balance and falling over.

If this step feels a bit too challenging yet and you want to break it down try attaching only one pedal (in this example the right one) and leave the other one off.

You can try which side suits you better to push off/have the starting pedal and of course vary those.

10. Riding your bike

Practice as often as you can. You don't have to practise for long intervals. Just do it frequently and stay at it.

As you get more and more practised riding your bike you should gradually raise the saddle position and give yourself time to adjust to each new position.

You have reached the ideal saddle position when you can still easily reach the pedal with the heel of your foot while the leg is fully stretched.

Once you've gotten the hang of riding your bike you can start getting some further bike control practice by training to

- ... stop at a given position

- ... stay in lane (draw a chalkline on the ground and try to stay on it)

- ... ride controlled curves

- ... go through tight spots

- ... look over your shoulder while riding

- ... take on hand off the handlebar

Same as before: take your time and don't forget to take breaks!

11. Ride in traffic

If you've mastered all the above steps, you should have perfect control of your bike now. Riding your bike shouldn't require your concentration anymore which means you have capacities to focus on your surroundings.

Before you get into traffic make sure your bike is fit for that!

Check that

- ... both your breaks have a good grip

- ... you have reflecting surfaces on the front (white) and back (red) and on both sides of your pedals (orange)

- ... that the lights in the front and back are working

In addition you'll need to have a firm understanding of the traffic rules before you venture out on the roads.