

The Toronto Cycling Handbook

**Everything you need to know
about cycling in the city, all in
one book**

Second edition, 2016



Cycling is for everyone!

Join over 1.4 million Torontonians who ride bicycles because it's convenient, healthy, inexpensive and fun.

This handbook will teach you about your bicycle, our traffic laws and safe cycling habits. When riding your bike in Toronto, always remember to use your best judgement, take your time, and to have fun!

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Reasons to ride

healthy

Using your bike regularly will get you in shape, improve your mental health, and make you feel more energetic.

convenience

A bicycle is often faster than public transit or sitting in traffic, especially downtown. You can go wherever you want, whenever you want, as soon as you hop on.

environmentally-friendly

Contribute to cleaner air and less crowded streets by taking your bike instead of a car or bus.

affordable

Owning and operating a bicycle is a fraction of the cost of a car or transit. Once you own a bike, it is free to operate!

fun

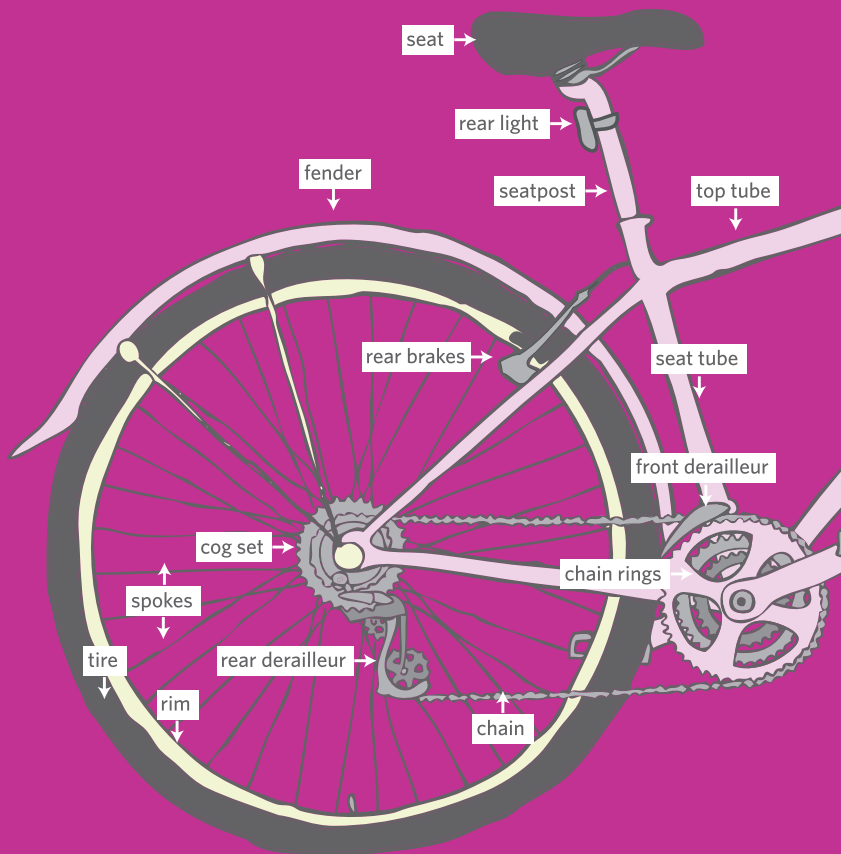
Exploring Toronto's neighbourhoods and parks with family and friends is one of the many ways to have fun on your bike.

a safe way to explore Toronto

A growing network of bicycle lanes and trails as well as traffic laws to protect cyclists make cycling increasingly safe and enjoyable.

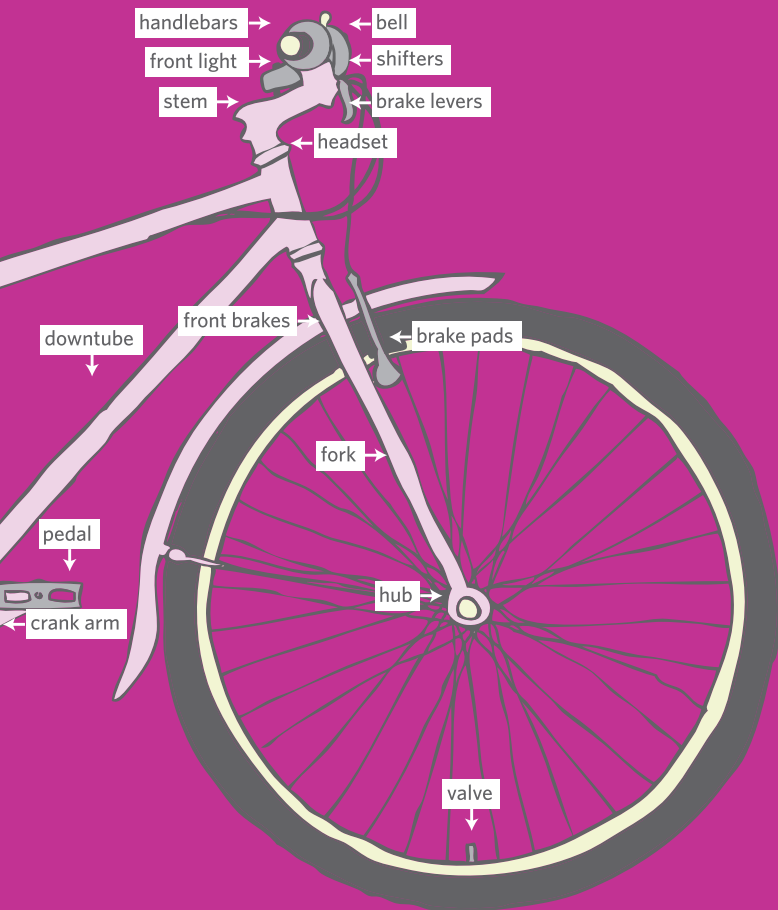


The bicycle





You can learn to fix your own bike or buy a used bike and bike parts at drop-in community bicycle work spaces, located across the city. Check out www.cycleto.ca/DIY for the bicycle repair space closest to you! (website is in English)



Ready to ride

does your bicycle fit?

Make sure you can stand over the top tube of your bike. When sitting you should comfortably reach the handlebars and your leg should be slightly bent while touching the pedal at its lowest point.

keep your ride smooth with the ABC checklist:

air

- ☐ tires have enough air
- ☐ wheels spin freely

brakes & bars

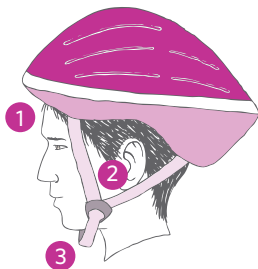
- ☐ brakes are working
- ☐ handlebars are stable

chain and crank




- ☐ chain is tight and lubricated
- ☐ pedals spin freely
- ☐ crank arm is not wobbly

wear a helmet, and make sure it fits

A properly-worn helmet will protect your head in a fall. In Ontario, the law states cyclists under 18 must wear one.



follow the 2-V-1 rule

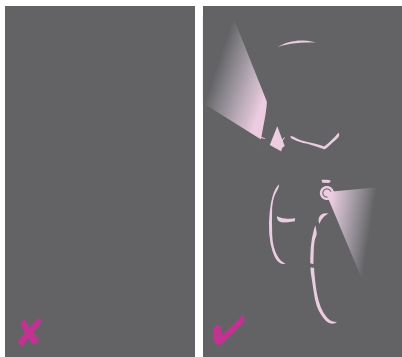
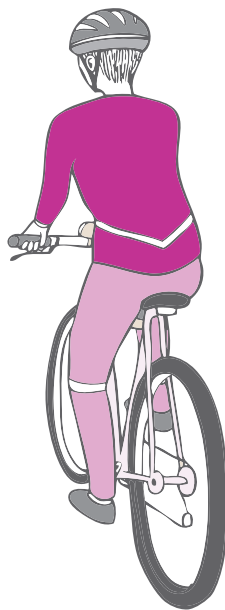
- 1**  2 fingers between your eyebrow and your helmet.
- 2**  The straps should form a "V" around your ears.
- 3**  1 finger should fit between the strap and your chin.

take care of small children

By law, small children must be seated in an approved child's bicycle seat or bike trailer. In Ontario, it is illegal for two people to ride on a bicycle meant for one person.

be seen, be heard, be safe

Ontario law requires that a bicycle be equipped with a front white light and rear red light or red reflector at night, and a bell or horn at all times. A bell lets people know you are approaching. Ring it when passing parked, pulled-over, or turning cars to alert the driver of your presence. The more people see and hear you, the safer you are.



A cyclist is easier to see in the daytime.

At night you become invisible.

Lights, reflectors, and bright clothing help drivers see you at night.



Take a safe cycling course: Can-Bike cycling courses for young cyclists and adults will boost your skills, safety and enjoyment of cycling. Visit www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/cycling-in-toronto/cycling-events-and-programs/can-bike-courses-and-information/

Rules of the road

Highway Traffic Act

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act (HTA) outlines how all road users — including cyclists — must behave. You must follow all regular traffic laws in the HTA, as well as some laws that are specific to bikes.

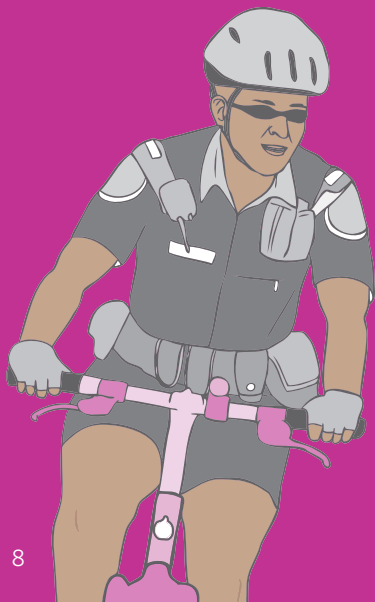
cyclists and the law

Riding a bicycle in Toronto does not require a license or special permit — anyone can do it! Cyclists are legally required to follow traffic rules, obey signs and use hand signals. A cyclist who has disobeyed a traffic law can be stopped by a police officer and may be fined.

riding on the road

As a general rule, the slowest-moving vehicles, like bikes, occupy the road lane closest to the curb. Keeping one metre between you and the curb, or parked cars, ensures that you are visible to other road users and have room to maneuver if a car passes you too closely.

On roads with narrow lanes, you are entitled to take the entire lane. Drivers must give one metre when passing a cyclist in Ontario or face a fine and demerit points. Ride with confidence!



Examples of ticketable offences under the HTA*

ride two on a bike	\$110
disobey stop sign or fail to stop	\$110
improper (or no) arm signal to indicate turns or stops	\$110
improper bicycle lighting	\$110
fail to stop at a red light	\$325
careless operation of bicycle or vehicle	\$490

HTA offences, fines, and demerit points for drivers*

insufficient passing distance (drivers must leave one metre)	\$110 + 2 points
opening car door into traffic (cyclists or vehicles)	\$365 + 3 points
distracted driving	\$615 + 3 Points + 3-day suspension

**Fine amounts listed are inclusive of provincial set fines and all additional fees.*

sidewalks are for walking

It can be dangerous to ride your bicycle on the sidewalk and in crosswalks. In Toronto, children aged 13 and under are allowed to ride on the sidewalk, but older cyclists can be ticketed for doing so.

Sometimes, especially outside of downtown, a cyclist may feel the road is too dangerous and will use the sidewalk.

To stay safe, always let pedestrians proceed first when they cross your path, and walk your bike in crosswalks and busy areas of the sidewalk.

fines, not demerit points

Cyclists do not receive demerit points on their driver's licence for tickets issued while riding their bicycle. But they can be given tickets for which they have to pay fines.



Find legal resources: Cycle Toronto has further information about bikes, the law, and your rights and responsibilities as a cyclist, at www.cycleto.ca/cyclistresources/legal-spin (website is in English).

Cycle safely

pay attention

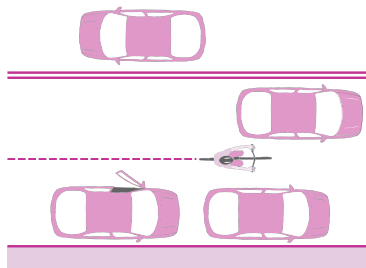
Pay attention in traffic, as drivers and pedestrians might not see you. Stay alert for hazards like potholes, cars changing lanes, or car doors opening into your lane. Do not use headphones while riding your bike. Respect other road users.

watch for pedestrians

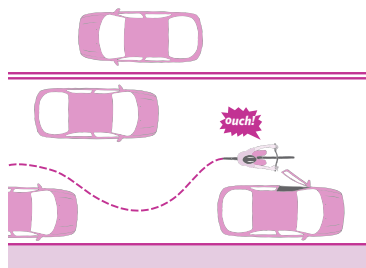
Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users. Stop at pedestrian crosswalks and always be respectful.

ride in a predictable, straight line

If you ride confidently and predictably in a straight line, other road users will be able to recognize your behaviour and give you room to ride. Do not swerve in and out of traffic or construction zones — it is your right to take up as much space as you need. Ride away from parked cars, so that you don't ride into someone's door if they open it without looking. Always check over your left shoulder before changing lanes.



keep a good distance from parked cars.



resist the temptation to ride into gaps.

signal your turn

Signal your turn before you reach an intersection by using the hand signals or clearly pointing. Reduce your speed on turns — especially on wet roads.

ride next to a friend

You may ride next to another cyclist and take up an entire traffic lane. If a faster vehicle wishes to pass on the left, you must move into single file.

intersections

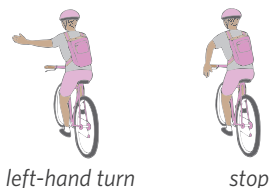
1 You can turn left with traffic using the far left lane or turning lane if you are comfortable.

2a You can turn left by riding along the crosswalk, and make a two-part left turn.
2b

Only enter the right-turn lane if you are turning right. Do not enter it if you are going straight through the intersection.

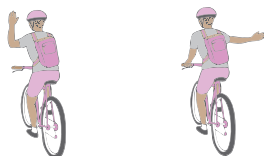
Do not pass right-turning drivers on the right if you are going straight, unless you are in a bike lane and the driver has given you the right of way.

5 If you are turning right, wait your turn behind a right-turning car.



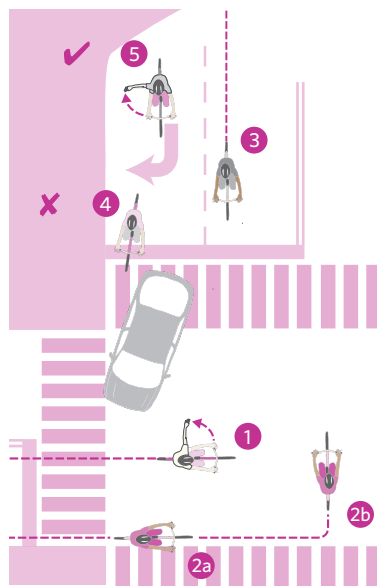
left-hand turn

stop



right-hand turn

right-hand turn



Sharing the road

large vehicles

Be cautious when riding near trucks, buses and other large vehicles. Don't pass them in an intersection unless absolutely certain they are proceeding straight. Never pass them on the right if they are turning right, only on the left. Large vehicles can make wide turns.

electric scooters

E-scooters are not allowed to use protected bike lanes or multi-use trails in Toronto. They are allowed to use painted bicycle lanes.

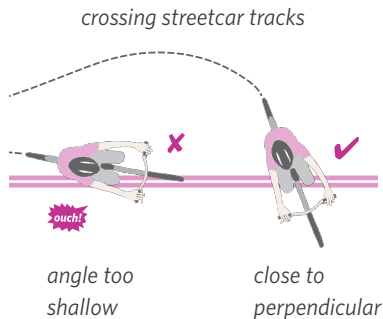
collisions

If you are involved in a collision, you are entitled to benefits - including money to replace your bicycle or pay health bills — even if you caused the collision. Be sure someone calls the police, exchange contact information with the driver, and write down their licence plate number and insurance information. Call 911, or 416-808-2222 for non-emergencies.

streetcars and school buses

When passengers are getting on and off school buses or TTC streetcars, cyclists must stop a reasonable distance from the doors and allow them to safely cross the road before continuing to ride.

Streetcars travel predictably on tracks. Do not try to pass them if there isn't enough space, as they can't move out of the way for you. Tires can get caught in streetcar tracks, and they are very slippery when wet. Always try to cross them with your wheel at a right angle so you don't get caught!



Biking in the city and beyond

getting around your city

More than 60% of households across Toronto own bicycles. During the summer, residents make more than three million bicycle trips every week, to shop, meet friends or travel to school or work. Try cycling for your next errand!

ride with an experienced cyclist

If you are a beginner, partner with a more experienced cyclist to learn how to ride safely in traffic and discover the best routes in your neighbourhood.

commute to work

Nearly one-in-ten Torontonians travel to work or school by bicycle. Commuting by bicycle is considered a smart, affordable and convenient means of transportation.

choose the best route

The Toronto Cycling Map will help you choose a route using bicycle lanes, paths through parks, waterfront trails or side streets without trucks and speeding cars. Try a new route on a Sunday to experience it without busy weekday traffic.

bike lanes and trails

The City of Toronto is making it less stressful and more enjoyable to ride a bicycle with new dedicated cycling infrastructure. Use the Toronto Cycling Map (link below) to find the best routes for you.

Learn more about bike lanes and trails at www.cycleto.ca/cyclistresources (website is in English).



View the Toronto Cycling Map online at www.toronto.ca/cycling/map and access route maps from neighbouring cities at www.smartcommute.ca. Get a hard copy of the map at City Hall (100 Queen St W), your local library or civic centre, or at the Cycle Toronto office .

weather-proof your ride

Wear whatever you feel comfortable in. Layers of light clothing that can be added or removed as needed are best in colder weather. Waterproof jackets and pants will keep you dry when it rains. Wear sunscreen in the summer, and bring a water bottle to stay hydrated on longer trips. Fenders will keep you dry when you splash through rain or snow.

transit with your bicycle

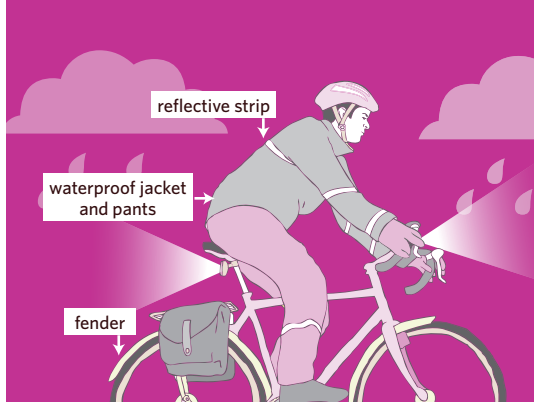
Take your bicycle on the subway anytime, except from 6:30 am to 10:00 am and 3:30 pm to 7:00 pm on weekdays. All city buses have bike racks on the front of the bus that you can use anytime. Nearly all stations have ring-and-post fixtures or bike racks, so you can bike to the closest station and then take the subway or bus.

Toronto Transit Commission bike repair stops

The TTC has installed self-service bike repair stops at certain stations. Find a list of these stations at www.ttc.ca.

lock your bike

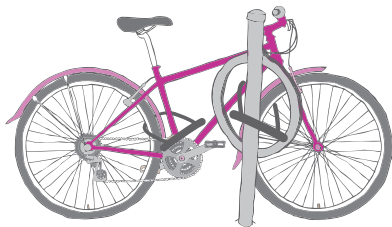
Always lock your bike frame and both wheels to prevent theft. A U-lock fixed to a city ring-and-post works best, otherwise try a secure post or pole. Use a second lock for extra security.



stay comfortable and dry with the right clothes and fenders

fight bike theft!

Register your bike with the Toronto Police at www.torontopolice.on.ca/bike/. If you are buying a used bike, you can check whether it was reported as stolen by looking up the bike's serial number here: www.isthisbikestolen.com. The serial number is usually on the underside of your bike.



lock your front wheel & frame to the post, not the ring

Riding a bicycle will keep you healthy and happy.

Explore your city along with thousands of other Torontonians, and enjoy cycling for life!

This handbook is available in 13 different languages and in two editions (2010 and 2016). To order copies or download, visit: www.cycleto.ca/handbook



Cycle Toronto is a diverse member-supported organization that advocates for safe streets.

We contribute to a cycling-friendly city for all by pushing city council to build more cycling infrastructure, supporting Torontonians riding more often. We promote cycling in an inclusive and welcoming manner. Become a member at www.cycleto.ca/join.



CultureLink is dedicated to facilitating the active participation

and integration of newcomers and the broader community, recognizing the interdependence of these groups in our society. Learn more at www.culturelink.ca.

Start your journey to health, happiness, and freedom!

Supporters:



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