

Cycling in the wet

Wet weather (or at least the threat of rain) puts a lot of people off cycling. However, despite the reputation of the great British weather it's actually quite rare for regular cyclists to get a soaking. And with the right clothing and some extra precautions, getting around by bike can be as quick and as comfortable whatever the weather – if you don't choose the bus instead!

Stay visible

Once again, being visible is a key safety concern. Bright fluorescent clothing is recommended, particularly for on-road cycling, and you should consider using your lights.

Keeping dry

Light, well ventilated, waterproof jackets and trousers that can be slipped over your standard clothes are essential items for all-weather cyclists. Breathable waterproof products are more expensive, but will help keep you cool and dry, and for the really dedicated, it is possible to get waterproof shoe protectors.

Check list

- ✓ Cycling at night: use lights and reflective clothing.
- ✓ Cycling in wet weather: wear bright clothing and consider using your lights; use waterproof clothing; check your bike especially brakes, tyres and gears, more regularly.
- ✓ Cycling in very hot conditions: wear cool cotton clothes and use suntan cream; drink plenty of fluids.

Keeping your bike maintained

Rain will wash away the oil that provides essential lubrication so you may need to check items such as chain and gears on a daily basis during a spell of bad weather. Make sure your brakes are in top condition, tyres well pumped and remember that it takes longer to stop in the wet.

Cycle carefully

While roads in general will become more slippery in the rain, surfaces such as painted road markings and metal plates can provide very little friction in the rain and can be extremely hazardous. Avoid applying your brakes too sharply – instead, cycle more slowly and carefully, especially down hills and around corners.

Cycling in very hot weather

It's not usually necessary to take any special precautions for short everyday trips. However, on longer journeys, remember to use suntan lotion or to cover your arms and the back of your neck. It's also advisable to drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration and take extra clothes for when you stop and may cool down.



Further information

Other leaflets in this series:

- Cycling: the right bike for you
- Cycling: basic bike maintenance
- Cycling: security matters
- Cycling: sharing your route
- Cycling: with children
- Cycling: finding your way
- Cycling: clothes & accessories

For more copies of this leaflet or others in the series, or for advice on where to cycle, including maps and guides, contact Sustrans on 0117 929 0888 or visit www.sustrans.org.uk

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Cycling in different conditions



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A dry summer's day is perfect for cycling. But as you discover how convenient cycling can be for everyday trips, you may find yourself cycling in different conditions.

Gaining confidence on a bike is generally a lot easier than learning to drive a car. And once you're in the saddle, it's often quicker and easier to get around by bike. This leaflet is one of a series giving tips to help you get going - and enjoy the freedom and convenience of cycling.

Cycling at night

Cycling at night is just as practical and brings all the same benefits as cycling by day. However there are some simple but important steps to ensure that you are both safe and within the law.

Lights and reflectors

The law states that you must have at least two lights attached to your bike – a white light at the front and a red light at the rear. In addition you must have an efficient red reflector at the rear. Flashing LED lights are not permitted on their own, but can be a useful supplement.

There is a wide disparity in the price of bike lights, however for regular night cycling you should consider investing in a bright halogen light for the front.

Battery or dynamo?

Dynamos have the attraction of providing 'free' energy to your lights, they are unlikely to be stolen, and avoid the pollution of disposable batteries. However, this energy comes from you – you will find it harder to pedal and they may not work when you are stationary.

Battery powered lights are generally cheaper than dynamo sets, and can be easily removed to prevent theft (lights should always be removed when locking up your bike) and rechargeable batteries are a good option for the regular night cyclist.

Dress for visibility

It is advisable to wear bright reflective clothing when cycling at night. A reflective jacket or waistcoat that slips over your coat will help to define your shape in the dark. Reflective patches, badges, tape and stickers can be applied anywhere on the bike or rider, and are recommended to maximise your visibility.



Be alert

At night it is easier to spot approaching cars because of their headlights but remember that you may be dazzled by lights on full beam.



photo: J Bewley/Sustrans

Lights and high visibility outerwear help others see you.

