

# All-Season Bike Commuting\*

*\*Even once per week is an awesome start!*

## Tips to ensure comfort and safety on your ride

### Dressing for all-weather commuting

- Dress appropriately. Use layers, stay dry, avoid cotton!
- Wear gloves. They absorb vibration as well as protect hands in the event of a spill.
- Cycling shorts will reduce saddle discomfort.

### Bike commute safety tips

- Use proper lighting and reflectivity at night – and plenty of it! It is good to use two lights front and two lights rear, in the event of failure or low batteries. Use reflective materials wherever possible. Often, a well-lit or reflectorized cyclist is more visible at night than unlit during the daytime.
- Practice using your front brake, and know your stopping distance! Actually, use both brakes simultaneously. The front brake yields 70-100% of stopping power. Push your weight rearward in proportion to how hard you apply the front brake. Using only the rear brake can make you skid, and using only the front brake can throw you over the handlebars.
- You need a mirror in traffic. Look for overtaking cars with turn signals on. Sure, you may hear the cars (probably not hybrids), but with a mirror you have COMPLETE information, i.e. speed, margin, turn signals, how many cars, etc!
- Research your route. The best auto route is often not ideal for bikes. Often you can find a better parallel route.
- Understand and identify road hazards: potholes, wet leaves, grates, manhole covers, rail tracks, dangerous intersections, wet wood, road debris, overtaking drivers turning right.

### Choosing the right commuter bike & accessories

- Select the right type of bike for the intended use and likely distance to be ridden. Some rough guidelines -- Comfort bikes: casual/5-10 miles. Hybrid bikes: moderate/10-50 miles. Road bikes: active/15-100 miles.
- Make sure the bike is the correct size, and fits properly. Size and fit are far more important than weight or cost. Have a bike shop pro help you find the right size bike and perhaps treat yourself to a

professional fitting -- it's guaranteed to improve comfort and efficiency.

- Accessorize. Computers, locks, kickstands, hydration, flat repair goods, bells, fenders, racks, bags, flat-protection products, comfortable saddles, the list is endless!
- Before you purchase a bike, determine whether fenders will fit easily. Some road bikes do not accept full-coverage fenders.
- Wear a new (less than four years old) helmet. They fit better, are lighter and will not have possible hidden damage or brittle plastics.

## Commuter bike maintenance

- Lube your chain. Add lube when the “rollers” in the chain look shiny or rusty.
- Minimize washing your bike with water and avoid using a pressure hose. The drenching that hoses deliver can kill crucial bearings and cables. Instead, use furniture polish and cotton cloths.
- Inflate your tires. Under-inflated tires are more prone to flats and cause you to work much harder than necessary.
- Learn to repair flat tires on the road.
- To increase your bike's longevity, consider having your bike overhauled once a year.

## Rules of the road

- Obey the rules of the road. If there is one thing to remember, follow the same rules as when you are driving a vehicle.
- Ride with the other traffic. Signal your intentions.
- Ride on the traveled portion of the road, in a straight line, do not run red lights, ride predictably ... earn your right to the road.

## Handy web sites for bike commuters

**Florida Bicycle Association** - [www.floridabicycle.org](http://www.floridabicycle.org)

**Florida Department of Transportation** -  
[http://www.dot.state.fl.us/Safety/ped\\_bike/ped\\_bike.shtm](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/Safety/ped_bike/ped_bike.shtm)

**Florida traffic laws** - The complete state law on bicycles and pedestrians is at <http://tiny.cc/4kMNu>

**Green Mobility Network** - education and advocacy for South Florida bicyclists, walkers and runners: [www.greenmobilitynetwork.org](http://www.greenmobilitynetwork.org)

**Spokes 'n' Folks** - Friendly news and views about Florida bicycling: [www.spokesnfolks.blogspot.com](http://www.spokesnfolks.blogspot.com)