



Bike Buddy Programme

Sharing the secrets of bicycle commuting

How does a Bike Buddy programme work?

A Bike Buddy programme matches a new cyclist with an experienced cyclist, or mentor, familiar with the commute between your home and workplace.

Maybe you are:

- an experienced recreational cyclist who wants to know the best route to the office
- new to riding in traffic and want to learn the ins and outs of bicycle commuting
- someone who has tried commuting but aren't sure how to ride in the rain, in the dark or in traffic

A bike buddy mentor can help you learn the 'secrets' of bicycle commuting.

Advantages of bike commuting

Bike commuting lets you:

- save money
- ignore traffic reports
- fit a workout into your busy day
- feel energized when you arrive at work
- get more control over your schedule
- avoid parking hassles and costs
- help improve air quality
- reduce your carbon footprint

It's worth the effort!

Step 1: Getting started

Setting up a Bike Buddy programme is simple.

Find cyclists and match them up

There are probably experienced cyclists at your organisation who are willing to help. Explain the Bike Buddy programme and ask for their support. Appoint a coordinator or ask for a volunteer.

If there are no experienced cyclists at your organisation, contact your local bicycle advocacy group or cycling club. Cycling Advocates Network (www.can.org.nz) lists local groups. They can put you in touch with local cycling experts.

Get support

Ask your local council or bike shop for support. Some councils publish cycling maps and fund cycling skills training. Your bike shop may offer a discount on bikes and equipment as an incentive to new commuters.

Call a meeting or run a lunchtime workshop for people interested in bike buddies. Use email, your intranet, newsletter, and notice boards to advertise the meeting. Explain the Bike Buddy programme and invite people to sign up to be individually matched with a mentor.

Match new cyclists with experienced cyclists to learn the best routes to work and share biking knowledge.

Agree on how many times the mentor and new cyclist will meet and ride together. One meeting to check the bike and plan a route; and a couple of rides together is often enough.

Keep bike buddies alive!

Have posters or flyers in the staff rooms and regular reminders in any staff newsletters or bulletins that are sent out. Include information about bike buddies in any 'induction' materials that are put together for new staff. Mention bike buddies at staff meetings. Have a morning tea, breakfast or lunch to allow potential cyclists meet the experienced cyclist mentors.

Sample invitation to join bike buddy programme

This could be used as an email, poster, advertisement in staff newsletter, etc.

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What can a Bike Buddy offer?

If you're new to bike commuting, you'll get all the support you need to get started. Your mentor can help you check if your bike is commute-ready before taking it out on the road. In addition, a mentor could help you:

- choose a safe and comfortable route
- ride safely in traffic
- learn how to fix a flat tyre (or find out where to get it fixed!)
- choose comfortable clothing
- choose gear for commuting
- find a good place to park your bike
- take your bike on the train
- enjoy your ride.

Why be a mentor?

As an experienced cyclist, you already enjoy the benefits of regular exercise, along with the convenience, affordability and fun of cycling. Being a mentor gives you the chance to share these benefits with others.

Yes, I'm interested in cycling to work!

- Match me with a Bike Buddy mentor. I want to start commuting by bike.
- I want to be a Bike Buddy mentor. I'm an experienced cyclist who is available to assist new bike commuters.

Name _____

Home address _____

Work location _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Return to: [coordinator]

Step 2: Before riding

Before riding together, mentors and their buddies should check:

Safe bike and gear

Use the bike inspection checklist below, or have a bike shop mechanic check the bike. Repair if necessary.

Safe route

Look at a map and plan a safe route. Some councils publish cycling maps, or your local cycling advocacy group may be able to help. Note any hazards or concerns and how you plan to deal with them.

Road sense

Can the rider confidently handle their bike in traffic? Do they know the road rules? See below or check the Road Code (www.ltsa.govt.nz/roadcode). If necessary, find a quiet road to practice steering, changing gears, signaling, braking and stopping. Then try it on a busier road.

Road Sense

Follow these guidelines for safety.

Be predictable

You must give a hand signal for at least three seconds before stopping or turning. Look behind to make sure there is room for you to turn, pull out or pass safely.

- To signal a left turn, put your left arm straight out.
- For a right turn, put your right arm straight out.
- To signal slowing or stopping, put your right arm out and up with you palm to the front.



Watch for traffic coming from behind

Watch out at intersections

When approaching intersections requiring vehicles to give way or stop, check that the way is clear before entering the intersection.

Move off the road if you stop

If you are stopping, move off the road so you don't interfere with traffic.

Agree on responsibilities

Both new cyclists and mentors are responsible for their own safety.

Your Bike Mentor will be an experienced bicycle commuter who knows answers to many of the practical challenges of bike commuting – things like clothing, parking, washing facilities, dealing with traffic, and finding suitable routes.

You can count on a Mentor's knowledge, patience, and general cycling ability. He or she will answer your questions and help you get ready for bike commuting. When you're ready to give it a go, your Mentor will accompany you on at least one trip to work.

Here's what Mentors expect of you.

- You are a competent and confident rider who is fit enough to ride the route, but who may not be experienced riding in urban traffic.
- You have a suitable bicycle in good repair.
- You provide all necessary clothing and equipment.
- You keep appointments with your Mentor or cancel them well in advance.
- You commit enough time to try your commute several times – one try is usually not enough to work out all the issues.
- You listen to your Mentor's suggestions.

Mentors will give their best advice, but each rider is responsible for their safety. Should a rider ever feel that they're heading for more risk than they want, it's up to them to say so. The Mentor will respect this decision and work to find solutions.

Step 3: Begin riding

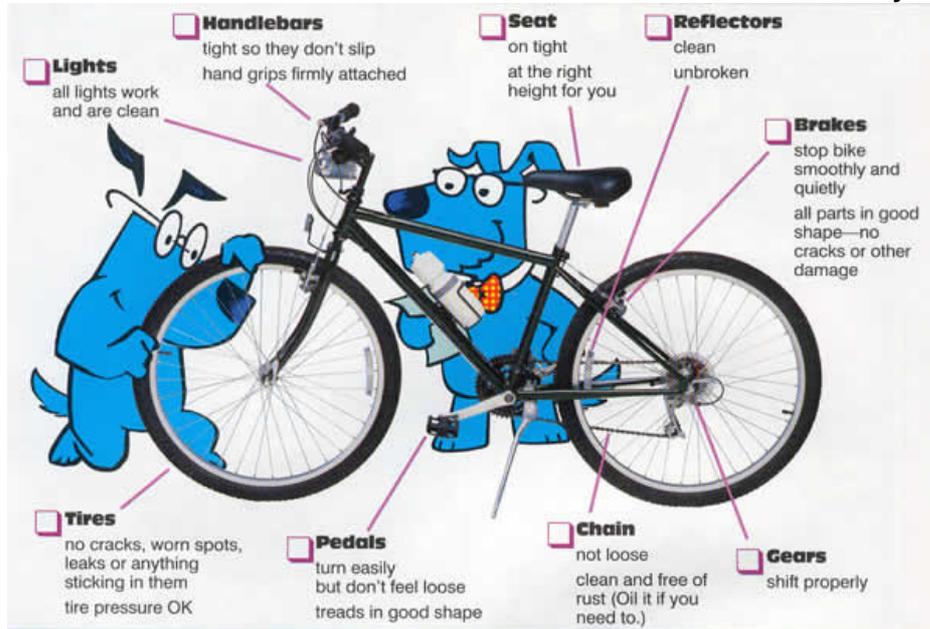
The cyclists might want to test ride the route together at a quiet time of day before riding during rush hour. Review any hazards and work out how to handle them.

Mentors can come to your home or meet over coffee to review your equipment and map out a route. They can do a test ride with you to make sure you're comfortable with the selected route.



Bike inspection checklist

Note: This checklist can be used for the mentor and their buddy!



Item	In good working order	Check within 6 months	Needs attention
Frame			
fork and frame are in good condition			
handlebars and grips are secure			
seat is in good condition and seat post is secure			
Wheels			
no spokes are missing, wheel is true			
tyres have good tread			
tyres have correct air pressure			
valve stem is straight			
Brakes			
cables are tight, unfrayed and unbroken			
brake pads are in good condition and adjusted			
Pedals and cranks			
pedals spin freely			
crank turns freely			

Chain and gears			
chain is clean and free of rust			
gears shift smoothly			
Safety			
reflectors, lights, and bell are fitted and working			
bike is the proper size to fit rider			
rider is wearing bright clothing and reflective gear			
helmet fits properly			
lock, mudguards, water bottle, pump and carrier are secure			

More information

Everything you wanted to know about riding to work

This brochure from Bicycle Victoria (768 KB pdf) covers the 10 most frequently asked questions about riding to work, including what to wear, route planning, riding in traffic, and how to deal with rain and punctures.

www.bv.com.au/join-us/30056/

Bicycle Commuter Mentor Program

This program is offered by a group of cycling enthusiasts in North Carolina, USA who want to help others try out cycling to work.

<http://bikementor.org/>