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The top 5 benefits of cycling

Going for a ride is good for your heart and muscles, and it may improve how you walk, balance, and climb stairs.

They say you never forget how to ride a bike, so maybe it's time to climb aboard a two- or three-wheeler and enjoy the health benefits of cycling. "It's socially oriented, it's fun, and it gets you outside and exercising," says Dr. Clare Safran-Norton, a physical therapist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital. Check out the main physical benefits.

1. It's easy on the joints. When you sit on a bike, you put your weight on a pair of bones in the pelvis called the ischial tuberosities, unlike walking, when you put your weight on your legs. "That makes it good for anyone with joint pain or age-related stiffness," says Dr. Safran-Norton.

2. Pushing pedals provides an aerobic workout. That's great for your heart, brain, and blood vessels. Aerobic exercise also triggers the release of endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals—which may make you feel young at heart.

3. Cycling builds muscle. In the power phase of pedaling (the downstroke), you use the gluteus muscles in the buttocks, the quadriceps in the thighs, and the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles in the calves. In the recovery phase (backstroke, up-stroke, and overstroke), you use the hamstrings in the back of the thighs and the flexor muscles in the front of the hips.

Cycling works other muscles, too. You use abdominal muscles to balance and stay upright, and you use your arm and shoulder muscles to hold the handlebars and steer.

4. It helps with everyday activities. "The benefits carry over to balance, walking, standing, endurance, and stair climbing," says Dr. Safran-Norton.

5. Pedaling builds bone. "Resistance activities, such as pushing pedals, pull on the muscles, and then the muscles pull on the bone, which increases bone density," says Dr. Safran-Norton.

Safety considerations

Get the okay from your doctor before you climb aboard a bike, especially if you have heart disease, arthritis, or thinning bones. "If you have osteoporosis, consider riding a tricycle, which is more stable than a two-wheeler, posing less of a fall risk," says Dr. Safran-Norton. "Don't ride a bike at all if you've had a recent fracture. Another fall could make it worse."

When riding, remember that the seat height should allow a slight bend at your knee. "You don't want a straight knee at the bottom of the pedal stroke, because the bike could be too tall and you could fall off," says Dr. Safran-Norton.

Other tips: Wear a helmet to protect your head; don't use clips to keep your feet on the pedals, which can make injuries worse if you fall; don't ride alone; stick to bike paths instead of riding in the street; stay hydrated before, during, and after your ride; and use sunscreen and sunglasses.

Tips to choose equipment

You probably know that a helmet is a must for safety. The right type of clothes and bike will also make cycling safer and more comfortable.

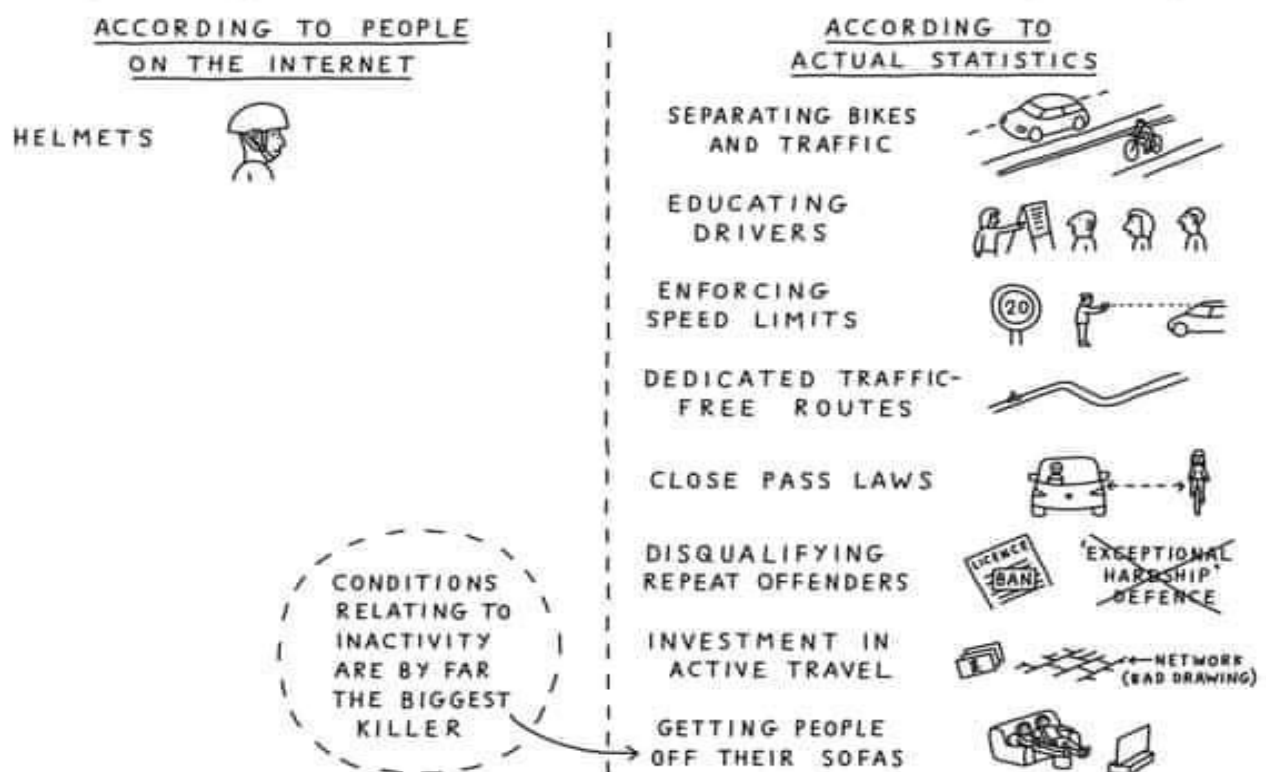
Cycling clothes. These have high-tech fibers that wick away moisture. They are usually neon-colored, with reflective material so you'll be visible to drivers. Bike shorts have a thick pad or chamois to prevent chafing and provide cushioning.

Bikes. Look for one that puts less stress on your body, such as a beach cruiser or comfort bike. They have high-rise handlebars that enable you to sit upright, wide tires for a smooth ride, shock-absorbing seat posts, and low top tubes so you don't have to swing your leg too high to mount the bike (allow at least an inch or two of clearance between you and the tube). If mounting a bike is difficult, there are even "step through" bicycles that feature top tubes just six inches off the ground (see photo).

Other bike types include tricycles, which are helpful if you are less stable on your feet, and recumbent bikes that allow you to lean back and ride. "If you have spinal stenosis, a recumbent bike puts your spine in a flexed position and gives you pain relief. But if you have a herniated disk, the bike can make the disk bulge more," says Dr. Clare Safran-Norton, a physical therapist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Saddle. Get one with extra padding that's wide enough to support the pair of bones you sit on. Go even further with a saddle that relieves pressure on the perineum, the area between those bones, behind the genitals. It's home to nerves and arteries that supply the lower body, and too much pressure here may cause numbness and tingling in the legs. Pressure-relieving saddles may have a "noseless" or horseshoe design.

WHAT WOULD MAKE CYCLING SAFER?



THE SHARED-USE PATH

AS FOUND IN MANY CITIES

EXPLANATION

OF
THE
LANES:

CARS

MORE
CARS

INACTIVE CARS
STORED AT THE
TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE

SHARED-USE PATH:
PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS,
ROAD SIGNS, TREES,
OVERHANGING BRANCHES,
DOG WALKERS, CHILDREN,
BUS STOPS, PEOPLE
WAITING AT BUS STOPS,
MORE PARKED CARS,
STREET FURNITURE,
DISCARDED FURNITURE
(ETC)

QUALITY OF
THE ROAD
SURFACE:

SMOOTH

SMOOTH

WE DON'T REALLY KNOW
BECAUSE THERE ARE
ALWAYS CARS PARKED THERE

VERY
BUMPY



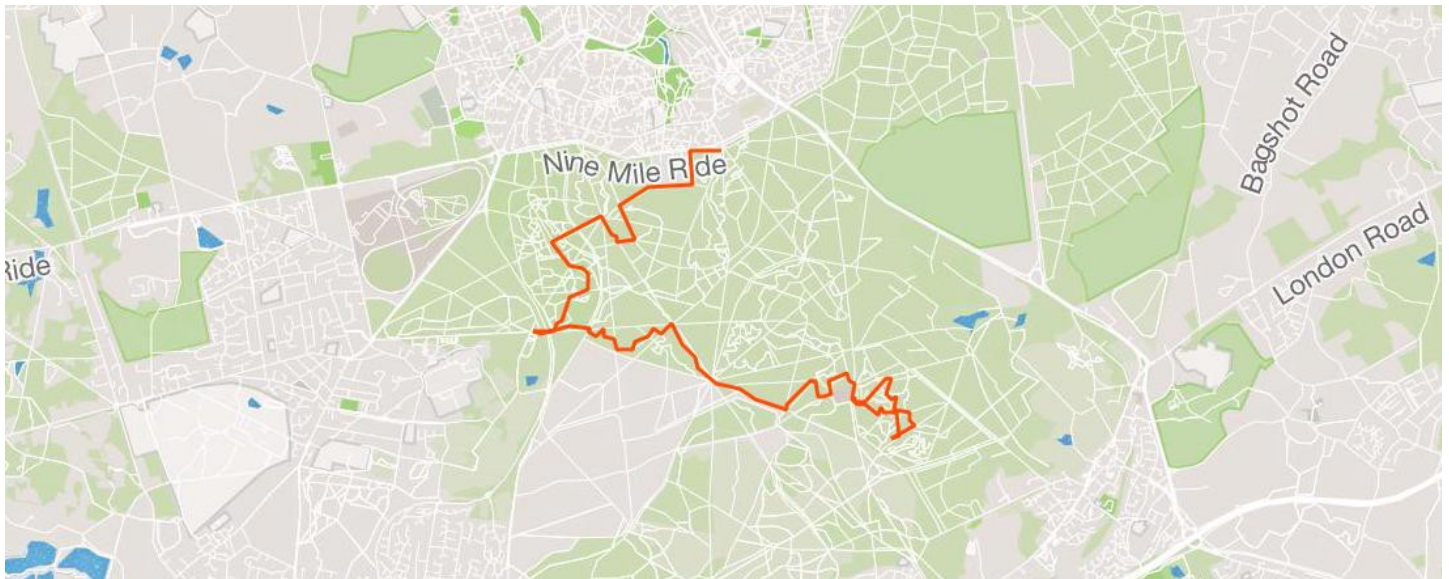
Bike parking in Amsterdam

A friend of mine is currently travelling through Amsterdam and she sent me this photograph. The image shows the top level of a four story parking facility near the city center. It is available to cars and bikes. She indicated that the four levels were just crammed with bikes.

Apparently it is law in Amsterdam for car drivers to open the car door from the inside using the hand furthest from the door (right hand drive left hand – left hand drive right hand). The reasoning being is that this forces the body to rotate and it is easier to see any cyclist in a cycle lane – helps prevent 'dooring.'

John Perkins is travelling and cycling overseas at the moment (July). Here are some of his posts to Strava. How “English” is that forest? You could almost expect Robin Hood to leap out and demand some coin for the poor.

<https://www.strava.com/activities/2536951726>



Interesting Web Sites

[Electric bikes lead the charge to short circuit big cities' congestion cycle](#)

[Bike rider safety – VicRoads](#)

[Jack Bobridge Track likely to be renamed following cyclist's jail sentence for drug dealing](#)

[Eastern Regional Trails Strategy](#)

This link will take you to a PDF that details the ongoing strategy for shared trails throughout the region – building/connecting/finishing etc. It is ponderous reading, but well worth the effort.

[Croydon to Lilydale Shared Trail](#)

It is now possible to ride from Warburton to Carrum on shared trails with a number of short on-road sections.

This section meets up with Trawalla Creek Trail at Croydon then on to Dandenong Creek and Carrum in the distance. I think the idea would be to start at Lilydale.

Darebin Council supports cycling

Darebin Council is an active supporter of cycling. Many of its activities can be viewed here.



EVENT SCHEDULE - SPRING 2019				
SEPTEMBER				
Events	Partners and service providers	Venues	Time and date	Info and bookings
NARC BIKE DAY with FREE BIKE TUNE-UPS	NARC + BikeLinx + Darebin BUG	Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre forecourt	10am-1pm 22/09/2019 Sunday	darebin.vic.gov.au/darebinlovesbikes
BIKE STORYTIME and FREE BIKE TUNE-UPS and UNICYCLISTS	Darebin Libraries + DriveClean + Westside Circus	Preston Library children's area + forecourt	10.30am to 12pm 25/09/2019 Wednesday	darebin.vic.gov.au/darebinlovesbikes
OCTOBER				
Events	Partners and service providers	Venues	Time and date	Info and bookings
DAREBIN BUG INTRO RIDE (for SENIORS MONTH with MORNING TEA AT BUNDOORA PARK CAFÉ)	Darebin BUG + Darebin Aged & Disability + Bundoora Park	Jika Jika Community Centre, Northcote/ Bundoora Park Cafe	9.30am 1/10/2019 Tuesday	0429 477 416, darebinbug.org.au
DAREBIN BUG RIDE TO WECYCLE/PRESTON MARKET (for SENIORS MONTH with LAUNCH OF DAREBIN SPRINGTIME COMMUNITY EVENTS 2019)	Darebin BUG + WeCycle + Darebin Aged & Disability + Preston Market	Jika Jika Community Centre, Northcote/ WeCycle Batman Park/Preston Market	9.30am 3/10/2019 Thursday	0408 523 686, darebinbug.org.au
WECYCLE OPEN MORNING (for SENIORS MONTH with MORNING TEA)	WeCycle + Darebin BUG + Darebin Aged & Disability	Batman Park, Northcote	9.30am-11.30am 3/10/2019 Thursday	0405 042 022, darebintransport.eventbrite.com
BASIC BIKE MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP	Bikes At Work + Libraries	Preston Library	2pm to 4pm 6/10/2019 Sunday	darebintransport.eventbrite.com



The future is looking bright

Above is the future of roadside assistance. A diesel van towing a petrol driven generator recharging an electric car. I can imagine this scenario will be commonplace on a road near you in the not too distant future.



Banyule BUG AGM

This was a wonderful meeting with an interesting guest speaker who extolled the virtues of cycling and public transport. He can be seen below displaying the folding attributes of a Brompton bicycle.

This is truly an alarming report from the pages of the June/July issue of RACQ magazine

The research was conducted by Monash University, QUT's Accident Research Center & Road Safety – Queensland and the University of Melbourne's School of Psychological Sciences.

The study found that:

... informal comments made by participants in the study compared cyclists to cockroaches.

More than half of motorists don't view cyclists as human

17% of drivers used their cars to deliberately block a cyclist.

11% of drivers have deliberately driven close to a cyclists.

9% of drivers have used their car to cut off a cyclists.

[Read a full account of this article here.](#)



Yet another new bridge has opened crossing the Darebin. This one is just behind Northland. It is a solid structure. When I saw it, I was surprised at how substantial a structure is for a walking/cycling bridge.



Great Southern Rail Trail

Gordon Bettenay has organised a BUG ride along the Great Southern Rail Trail strating at Leongattha of the 30th of October. Gordon has been emailing information and will no doubt provide us all with up-dates as the date to ride draws closer. In the meantime – here is a link for you to peruse. [GSRT](#)

That's it for now, but as always, email your valued contribution to Allan Garbutt allang@bigpond.net.au

Safe Cycling

