

RIDING ESSENTIALS ***OUR CYCLE2WORK*** ***RIDING ESSENTIALS***

Riding a bike is great fun, but you've always got to keep in mind your safety.

By taking just a few bike-riding essentials out with you, and by carrying them at all times, you can be sure that you're prepared for any eventuality. We have put together a list of all of the items you need to ensure you're safe on the road, whether you are commuting to work or heading out on a day trip.



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1. REFLECTIVE JACKET

A brightly coloured reflective jacket or jersey is a must-have on the roads for cycling both during the day and at night to make sure that other road users see you coming. There are many options available including lightweight and waterproof jerseys and jackets suitable for the different seasons. Bright colours such as yellow, orange and green are recommended for maximum visibility. Reflective gilets and arm bands, leg bands and arm warmers are also a good way to give motorists a better chance of seeing you.



2. HELMET

A bike helmet is another of the key bike essentials. It is extremely important to keep your head protected from any potential falls or collisions. In order to do this, you should always try a helmet on before you buy it to make sure it is a snug fit yet comfortable. It is also a good idea to check that it complies with European standards; look out for the certification sticker inside. Many bike helmets are aerodynamically designed too, so you don't have to worry about it getting in the way of your performance.

Bike helmets come in a wide range of colours and styles for the fashion-conscious rider. If you are into mountain biking or BMX riding, you might also want to get some safety pads to protect your knees and elbows.

3. CYCLING SHORTS

Although they are not strictly essential, cycling shorts are a really good investment if you are planning to get into cycling properly, be it on or off-road. The layer of padding will protect your sensitive areas, preventing chafing and soreness and making for a comfortable and enjoyable ride. Alternatively, you can wear padded shorts over the top if tighter cycling shorts aren't for you.

4. LIGHTS

Reliable bike lights are extremely important as they let you see the road and let other motorists see you. In fact, it is illegal to cycle on a public road in the dark without them. LED bike lights offer bright lighting and are highly efficient, so are the best choice for cyclists. You are also required to have a red rear light on the back of your bike to ensure you are visible to other road users.



5. WATER BOTTLE AND CAGE

A water bottle and water bottle cage are one of the key accessories to get fitted to your bike. It is easy to become dehydrated on a long bike ride so make sure you have water on you at all times with a bottle cage. They can be fitted to the frame of your bike quickly and easily, just check that your bike has the right number of screws to attach the cage.

6. PUMP

A pump is a vital piece of equipment for keeping your tyres properly inflated or inflating them when you get a puncture. Grab a hand pump in case of any issues whilst you are out and about, and a track pump for accurate inflation at home. Hand pumps can be attached to your bike or carried in a backpack and are the best choice if you want to inflate tyres as quickly as possible. A mini hand pump is great if you want to keep weight to a minimum.

7. PUNCTURE REPAIR KIT/SPARE INNER TUBE

There is nothing worse than a puncture ruining a great bike ride! Make sure you don't get caught on the back foot by carrying a puncture repair kit and a spare inner tube with you at all times. Most basic puncture repair kits contain patches, adhesive, chalk, a marker crayon, sandpaper and instructions for patching up a puncture. If the inner tube is too damaged, you can replace it with the spare. Stick one in the back pocket of your cycling jersey.

8. MUDGUARDS

If you love cycling but don't like getting muddy, mudguards are a necessity for you. There are three main types of mudguards; full length mudguards normally fitted to touring bikes, clip-on plastic guards suitable for road bikes and guards that attach to the down tube or seat post of mountain bikes. They will protect you from splashes from puddles during your commute and stop you from getting completely caked in mud when you are hitting the trails.

9. SADDLE BAG

A saddle bag is a handy way of carrying a few important items with you on your ride if you like to travel light. Put your phone, keys and cash in there for any stops along the way or store your puncture repair kit and spare inner tube in there. Once you get one, you won't know what you did without it!



10. SMALL TOOL KIT

A small, portable tool kit is definitely up there in terms of the essentials for bike riding! These are useful for any small adjustments you might need to make. Most compact tool kits tend to include hex keys, chain tools, wrenches and small screwdrivers. The most important bit of cycling kit however is a multi-tool. These Swiss Army knives for cyclists contain everything you'll ever need and fold away to a compact size when you're done. Even if you're not sure what's gone wrong with your bike or how to fix it, hopefully a kind passer-by may be able to lend a helping hand!

Whatever the journey, weather or cycling conditions, this collection of bike essentials will ensure you are ready for whatever your bike riding adventures throw your way.

Taking part in Cycle2Work will save you at least 32% on a brand-new bike and accessories. Find out more at www.cycle2work.info

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