

Group Riding Skills

Positioning

Do not overlap your front wheel with the back wheel of the rider in front of you.

- This is the number 1 reason for falls in a group ride.
- If the lead rider swerves to avoid a hole or obstacle, the REAR rider will fall!
- Every rider is responsible to monitor her/his own position.
- Look at the lead rider's helmet or beyond, and become acquainted with the correct distance of body-to-body.
- Often referred to as "half-wheeling".

The rider that is ahead has the right of way.

- Ride right! Ride safe! Don't overlap wheels!

Moving into the line for traffic:

- When you hear "Car Back", you should be IMMEDIATELY looking for a place in the right-hand line. Call out "Car Back" to pass it up the line.
- It's important for the first person in line to maintain the pace or even speed up. This prevents the group from bunching.
- If you have a rider to your left you should make a space for him.
- Remember that cars will overtake the group quickly so we must get into line quickly but safely.

Be Smooth and Predictable

- No sudden accelerations or slowdowns!
- If a gap opens in front of you, try to close it gradually
- Sharp braking should be used ONLY in emergencies
- Do not move out to pass the rider in front of you without checking to be sure that you don't have another rider in your 'blind spot' (coming up behind you on the left)
- Riders should verbally communicate upcoming stop signs: "SLOWING", "STOPPING"

If you're getting too close to the rider ahead:

- 1) Soft pedal
- 2) Sit up higher to catch more of the wind
- 3) Move over slightly to catch more of the wind (but don't overlap your front wheel with the next rider's back wheel, and again, watch out to be sure there is not a rider coming from behind who you would be cutting off)
- 4) Try not to coast – when the riders behind you see you coasting, they will slow down too and cause an accordion effect

- 5) If all of the above do not slow you down enough, feather your brakes;
- It's better to roll over minor obstacles like small holes or sticks than to make a sudden move over or slam on your brakes.
 - Go to the back of the group to drink, eat or adjust clothing. When in the midst of the group, keep your hands on the handlebars at all times.

Communicate

- Use both Hand signals and Verbal signals
- Right turn, Left turn, Slowing, Stopping
- Pointing at obstacles and calling them out (you need to point before going by the obstacle or you are not giving the rider behind you enough warning)
 "Hole" "Rough Road" "Car Back" "Car Up"
- Move over for obstacles ahead (example, "Walker up")

Hills

- The front person should pedal on downhills, or else everyone behind will be catching up to them too fast.
- The group may need to slow down after uphill to allow slower riders to catch up.
- Be careful when standing to climb when riding in a group – this can jerk your wheel back into the rider behind you

Know Your Limitations

- If you're not strong enough or too tired to take a turn at the front, stay near the back and let the stronger cyclists pull in front of you instead of making them go to the back of the line.

Don't Leave Stragglers

- If you get separated at intersections, as a matter of courtesy, the lead group should soft pedal until the rest have rejoined.

Relax

1. Bike riding is fun! Relax and enjoy the ride.
2. It will allow you to be smooth and responsive.
3. It not only saves energy, but it makes bike handling much more effective.