



Beginner/Intermediate Group

BRAKING, CORNERING, AND SHIFTING

SHIFTING

The idea is to maintain a constant pace and use your gears to make it easier to pedal uphill or in the wind and to use them to your advantage going downhill and with the wind.

Shifter on the left

This shifter controls the front gear settings, called chain rings, by the pedals (crank). Changing this makes a big difference in your pedaling.

Shifter on the right

This shifter controls the rear gear settings, called the cassette. Use this to fine tune pedaling. This is the shifter used the most.

Shifting

Pedal while you shift, lighten the pressure on the pedals while you shift. Keep them turning but don't muscle down on them to preserve the life of your drive train (chain and derailleurs).

Don't use extreme gear settings- cross chaining. No Large-Large and no Small-Small.

Shifting on hills: Uphill

Shift down, which means the smaller ring(s) in front and larger rings in back.

Shifting on hills: Downhill

Shift up, which means the larger ring(s) in front and smaller rings in back.

CORNERING

To turn a bicycle you must lean inward toward the direction of the turn. The faster you are going, the sharper the turn, the more you must lean. Keep the center of gravity all in the same place: ideally the upper body and the bicycle will be leaned together, keeping them in line as when riding straight. (Most beginners lean the bike more while keeping the upper body more upright.)

For downhill corners

Keep the inside pedal up.

Straighten the outside leg and put your weight on that pedal.

Look ahead at the line you want the bike to follow.

Brake before the turn and then stay off the brakes during the turn.

If traffic allows, approach the turn by starting wide, the cut to it' apex, and exit wide.

For flat corners

If riding in a group, keep pedaling to maintain speed and keep up with other riders.

BRAKING

Right Brake

The right brake controls the rear brake. It has less braking power than the front brake, so takes twice as long to stop with the rear brake.

When to use the rear brake

- On slippery surfaces, wet pavement, or any time there is a risk of skidding.
- On bumpy surfaces where your wheels may actually go off the surface. If you stop the front wheel and come down on a stopped wheel, there is a strong possibility that a crash is likely.
- When the front tire flats. If your front tire is flat or you have a front tire blowout, use the rear brake alone to bring yourself to a safe stop.
- A broken cable or other failure of your front brake.
- On long, mountain descents where it is best to alternate between the front and rear brake, called feathering the brakes, so the rim doesn't heat up and blowout the tire—particularly in hot weather.

Left Brake

The left brake controls the front brake. It has maximum braking power, but can send a rider over the handlebars if not used correctly.

Although many cyclists shy away from using the front brake due to

fear of flying over the handlebars, 95% of professional cyclists use the front brake only.

Using both brakes together can cause you to fishtail. This does not apply to long wheel base recumbents and tandems without a stoker.