

Did you know ?

- 🚲 The average cost of travel per mile for a car is 79p. The average cost of travel per mile for a bike is 4p!
- 🚲 On a bicycle you can travel up to 1037 kilometres on the energy equivalent of a single litre of petrol.
- 🚲 Cycling for half an hour every day can halve the risk of heart disease.
- 🚲 There are more bicycles in Aberdeen than cars.
- 🚲 Aberdeen has over thirty miles of off-road cycleable track.
- 🚲 75% of people live within two miles of the National Cycle Network.



The Aberdeen Cycle Forum

ACF is a voluntary group seeking to encourage and develop cycling within Aberdeen. The Forum aims to:

- 🚲 Improve cycling facilities.
- 🚲 Achieve a higher profile for cycling.
- 🚲 Highlight the benefits of cycling as an everyday and sustainable form of transport.

If you would like to get involved, visit the Aberdeen Cycle Forum website:

www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

Aberdeen City Council

ACC is currently working towards improving cycling facilities in and around Aberdeen. This includes developing the National Cycle Network (Route 1) and links to it, improving cycle parking, improving road safety, education and awareness campaigns and increasing cycling to school.

If you would like any further information or have any comments on cycling and where you would like to see improvements, visit the website:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Why don't you pick up the Cycling to Work leaflet as part of this series for more handy hints and tips.



GETTING STARTED

A Guide To Trying Out Cycling In and Around Aberdeen



Introduction

Anyone can cycle, every day thousands of journeys are made by bike by people of all ages for a multitude of different reasons.

With its increasing popularity has come the realisation that cycling is environmentally friendly, cheap, efficient and quicker for local journeys. It is also a great way to maintain and increase your health and fitness.

Aberdeen City Council is trying to encourage more of us to get on our bikes. This is in response to local demands for better provision for cyclists and wider recognition of the benefits of more people cycling.



This guide is intended to complement recent infrastructure improvements and provide useful information to anyone wanting to use a bike for commuting, utility or recreation, whether they are doing it for the first time, or returning after not being in the saddle for a while.

Buying a Bike

Thousands of bikes are sold in Scotland every year but many of these rarely get ridden. This is usually because they are the wrong bike for the purpose. Almost any bike will do when you are only going on a journey for a couple of kilometres, but if you plan to do some regular cycling, you might want to invest in something more suited to your needs.

There are good second hand bikes to be found, but they need to be chosen with care. You should go for the best that you can reasonably afford, as it's not worth risking the inconvenience and cost of repair bills on poor quality machines.

It is recommended that you go to a good, well-established cycle dealer for expert advice. The bike may cost slightly more, but it will be light, well-equipped and reliable.

For more information go to the Company of Cyclists website:

www.getcycling.info

Right, I've got the bike, now what should I wear ?

You can cycle in almost anything, although jeans and other garments with bulky seams are not that comfortable on longer rides and long skirts can easily get caught in the rear brakes. Wearing layers lets you control your temperature - it's better to be a bit colder for the first couple of miles than to swelter for the rest of the way.

A good helmet will fit you properly, meet standards, won't come off when the straps are done up and should be replaced if at all damaged.

I've just remembered I have never had any cycle training !

What do I do ? . . . Try Cycling Aberdeen !

Try Cycling are free adult training sessions run by the Cyclists' Touring Club and the Aberdeen Cycle Forum.

The rides are led by trained cycle leaders aimed at beginners or those who haven't been in the saddle for a while. They normally take under 3 hours and are ideal for getting some practice or gaining road confidence.



The sessions start and finish at the Duthie Park by the pond (off Riverside Drive) at 10am every Sunday from the first Sunday in April. There is no need to book in advance. To learn more visit:

www.ctcgrampian.org.uk

www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk

Cycle Safety Check

Always ensure your cycle is roadworthy. Regular checks should include:

Saddle
Check that the saddle is the correct height. As a rough guide, your toes should be able to touch the ground when you are sitting on the saddle. The height of the handlebars should be similar to that of the saddle. Do not raise the handlebar stem or seat pillar above the limit marked on them.

Accessories
At night you are legally required to use a front light, rear light and a red rear reflector. Spoke reflectors and pedal reflectors will help you get noticed by other road users.

Wheels
Check that both wheels are securely attached to the frame and can rotate freely without rubbing on any part of the frame, mudguards or brakes. Check that there are no dents on the sides of the rims, even a small dent can affect control when braking. Check the tyres for wear or cuts. Tyres should be inflated to the pressure recommended by the manufacturer.

Clothing
Equip yourself with a helmet to protect against head injuries and ensure that loose fitting garments do not catch on any part of your bike.

Lights
Check that the lights and reflectors are clean and in good working order.

Brakes
Check that the front and back brakes work properly. Frayed inner cables should be replaced. Trim any excess cable and protect the ends with tape. The brake levers should be within easy reach.



Cycling Code of Conduct

Cyclists and pedestrians are natural allies in wanting and needing safe and attractive routes in the City. However, conflicts do occur and pedestrians can be left feeling very vulnerable when cyclists speed close by without warning. The message from pedestrians who feel intimidated by cyclists can have an effect on local decisions about cycle access. It is important for cyclists to behave appropriately and make sure facilities remain open to them.

As a cyclist, you cannot expect to use shared paths and pedestrianised zones for high-speed travel. Different skills and techniques are needed from road cycling as explained below:

- 🚲 Always give priority to pedestrians.
- 🚲 Even if the path is segregated, do not expect pedestrians to stay on their side, especially young children.
- 🚲 Never speed close by pedestrians, especially from behind.
- 🚲 Always be ready to slow right down, make sure you can stop if anyone unexpectedly moves sideways - kids and dogs are unpredictable.
- 🚲 Use your bell or a friendly voice - "bike passing to your left" letting pedestrians know you are there, but remember that some may not be able to hear you.
- 🚲 Slow down near blind spots like bends, entrances and trees.
- 🚲 When passing on-coming cyclists, it is normal to pass on the left.
- 🚲 Be polite - say "thank you" if a pedestrian moves for you, especially on a narrow path.
- 🚲 Use lights at night - it helps oncoming cyclists and pedestrians to see you.

Cycling to the shops

Cycling to your local shop rather than driving will help reduce the number of short trips made by vehicles in your neighbourhood. You will also make a valuable contribution to your local economy and community.

Aberdeen City Council is now putting in cycle racks at all community shopping centres - so by taking your bike you don't need to find a car parking space.



But I've got a lot of baggage . . .

You can carry a surprising amount on a bike if you have the right luggage. A bike rack and panniers (saddlebags made for bicycles) will help, but make it easier on yourself and try to distribute the weight evenly. A backpack can also be used for lighter loads.

Cycle security

Having got your bike, you will want to keep it! A 'U' lock is best, but will typically cost around £25. Always lock your bike to a fixed object - preferably a bike rack, but if not, be considerate to pedestrians and especially think about blind people and wheelchair users when you park.

Cycling for fun

Enjoyable cycling often includes enjoying scenery and nature such as gardens, parks and riverbanks. It's also a good idea to avoid as much traffic as possible and cycle on cycle paths rather than busy roads. The Deeside Line, Formartine & Buchan Way and Hazlehead area all contain off-road routes that are good for families and beginners.

If you are just starting to cycle regularly, you will need to make sure you don't push yourself too hard. Cycle at a pace that you feel comfortable with. Start with short distances and gradually cycle further and further each day.

I've cycled to the shop, been out on some fun rides, now I'd like to try cycling to work

It is worth planning your route to work carefully, and maybe even going on a test run. Remember that you will probably cycle routes that you wouldn't normally use with your car. Pick up a copy of the Aberdeen Cycle Map which shows off-road routes and cycle lanes as well as recommended quiet routes around the City. The maps are available in libraries and the Point. If you cannot find one get in touch:

www.aberdeency.gov.uk

www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk



Tackling those hills !

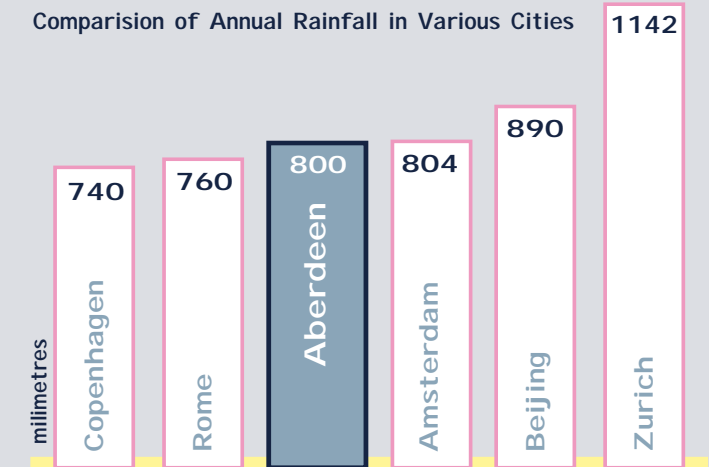
Aberdeen does have a few hills that are harder if you are new to cycling or haven't cycled for some time; it takes time to build up your strength and endurance.

Remember that getting up hill on a bike is as much about technique as it is about strength and endurance. The most common mistake beginners make is to work too hard at the beginning of a hill in too high a gear, and get tired out before the top. It is better to go up slowly in a low gear with your legs 'spinning' than to stand on the pedals and heave yourself up in a high gear. That way you are more likely to have a bit left in reserve, rather than run out of steam before the top.

. . . And coping with the Aberdeen weather

To be honest, it doesn't really rain that much in Aberdeen! It just sometimes feels like it does!

In fact Aberdeen has a pretty low rainfall compared to other cities, it's actually drier than Amsterdam where everyone seems to cycle.



(Source: www.iexplore.com)