

HEALTH



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Cycling is a great fun activity that can be enjoyed by both kids and adults alike. A fantastic workout, it not only enables you to derive pleasure, but also goes a long way in ensuring your overall fitness. The best part about this sporting activity is that, you would find cycling a delightful experience, without even realizing that it has done good to your body. Cycling proves to be one of the most effective exercises, to shed off those extra calories and get rid of flabby abs. Even a small amount of cycling can prove to be good enough to boost your metabolism level, thereby fastening your weight loss program. It helps to improve the overall balance and coordination. The benefits of cycling go beyond health issues. To know more about the numerous benefits of cycling, read through the following lines.

Benefits Of Cycling

Health Benefits

- Cycling minimizes the risk of coronary heart disease. Essentially an aerobic exercise, it gives your heart, blood vessels and lungs a workout, thereby reducing the risk of heart problems.
- A few miles of cycling per day assure trimmer and toned muscles. This is because your upper thigh muscles, backside and calf muscles all get to workout.
- Pursuing cycling helps a great deal in building your stamina. It enables you to carry out your day-to-day activities more effectively.
- For people, who are on the heavier side, cycling can prove to be beneficial. It manages weight and helps in getting rid of increased waistline and bulging fat.
- The pleasure and satisfaction attained while riding a bicycle alleviates all the stress, anxiety and depression of a person.
- This might come to you as a surprise, but cycling ensures a control in the level of blood pressure.
- Cycling enhances the overall fitness level of a person. It makes you breathe deeper and perspire more, thereby leading to a feeling of enhanced body temperature.
- Cycling has found to be effective for treating people diagnosed with diabetes and cancer.

Other Benefits

- A complete leisure activity, cycling gives you the opportunity to spend time with friends.
- A chance to meet new people and discover new places cannot be ruled out as well.
- Cycling is a complete environmental friendly activity. Unlike other means of transport, it lets out no harmful chemicals in the air.
- Cycling can prove to be the best mode to move around your local area without any difficulty.

Getting started

If you are new to cycling or not a confident bicycle rider, it can be a good idea to start cycling on bike paths. These are usually traffic-free and offer a scenic route. Cycling around your local roads can also be a good idea, as they usually have less traffic, slower motor vehicle speeds, and the roads are familiar.

Riding on local roads can be a great way to familiarize you with riding on the road and gaining confidence in cycling. Once you are more confident, you may want to use bicycle lanes on main roads. Whilst main roads are usually the most direct way to get to destinations, they usually carry more traffic. Remember to maintain your safety and the safety of others at all times.

Getting started – equipment

Before you start cycling you'll need to make sure you have the right equipment. You don't need the full stretchy gear but you do need the following:

- **Bicycle** – having a bicycle that is the right size for you is important. A bicycle that is too big or too small can be dangerous and hard to control.
- **Bicycle helmet** –
- **Bicycle lights** – this is important if you ride at night.
- **Bright or reflective clothing or vests** – (particularly if you ride early in the morning or at night).
- **Comfortable clothing** – make sure it's not too loose around the legs to avoid it getting caught in your bicycle chain or wheels.
- **Covered shoes** – wear shoes that are enclosed and appropriate for riding. Sandals and thongs are not appropriate.

You also need to keep up the maintenance of your bike and check the tires, wheels, chain, brakes and light regularly. This is important to make your bicycle safe and easy to ride.

Some general tips

Before you get started:

- Buy a bike properly fitted for your size and requirements. A good bike retailer will be able to advise you on an appropriate bike.
- Have your bike serviced once a year to maintain its efficiency and safety.
- Spend some time preparing your bike by pumping up the tires and oiling the chain if you haven't ridden for a while.
- Lock your bike and store it in an accessible place.
- Check with a doctor before taking up challenging or competitive cycling.
- Warm up and stretch your muscles and joints before embarking on a hard ride, or at least take it easy in the initial stages.
- Have plenty of fluids on hand and drink regularly.
- Consider appropriate clothes for riding. Avoid loose-fitting garments that may get caught in the mechanisms.
- Plan a route to take when you go for a ride and let others know where you're going.

Cycling is a great way to 'escape' from worries and stress. You can cycle at anytime, anywhere, on your own or with family and friends. All it takes is a roadworthy bike, a helmet, shoes, comfortable clothes and some pedal power.

Source:

