

TIP OF THE WEEK # 7

🚲 **Basic Biking Skills (2 of 2)**

Cornering

One crazy rule of cycling is that you should never look where you don't want to go. **And it's true that the more you stare at an obstacle, the more likely it is, you'll run right over it.** This can be a dangerous problem in corners. If you fixate on the line you've picked to carve the corner, you may ride right out of the turn and off the road.

It is recommended looking to the inside of the turn. And don't just turn your eyes. Actually rotate your head slightly so you're looking just to the inside of the line you want to follow around the bend - or in a tight turn, almost at the road's edge or centerline. This will make it much easier to hold the correct line around scary corners. Be safe though. Practice cornering techniques at slow speed until you're comfortable.

Shifting

Most people don't shift enough, which leads to premature drivetrain wear, sore knees (or worse) and one tired rider. Here's how to shift a bicycle: Think of yourself as the bike's engine. Like an auto engine, you're most efficient pedaling at a certain rate, usually from 70 to 90 pedal revolutions per minute. **To maintain this efficiency, shift every time you feel your pedaling rate (called cadence) slow or speed up.** Following this rule, on a rolling course, you'll be shifting almost constantly to maintain that steady cadence. But at ride's end, you'll be fresh while a ride partner who shifts less will be spent.

How do you know what gear to select? First, don't get confused by the many choices, and don't worry about harming the bike by shifting it "wrong" — you can't hurt it as long as you slightly ease the pedal pressure when shifting (you must pedal to shift). And understand that the correct gear is any gear that allows you to pedal comfortably at the moment. **There's no right or wrong gear and there's no proper sequence to follow. You just shift when your body tells you it's time for a change.**

Shifting the right lever one click makes it slightly easier or harder to pedal. Think of this lever as a way to fine-tune the effort required to pedal. As you pick up speed on a slight downhill for example, you'd click the lever once or twice to shift into a better gear for the speed. Shifting the left lever makes large differences in pedal effort. Think of this lever as a way to make it considerably easier or harder to pedal. Dropping into a valley for instance, you'll want an easy gear to get back out. But, you'll probably be in a hard gear because you were just riding downhill. To make the pedaling easy immediately, shift the left lever to move the chain onto a smaller chainring providing much easier pedaling.

It is recommended to keep a straight chain-line. You cannot use the big-to-big (see figure 1) nor small-to-small (see figure 2) combinations for two reasons. First, with these combinations the chain is askew, which damages the chain plates; second, the ideal chain length is not long enough to go all the way around the big chainring and the big sprcket. If the chain becomes too loose, as it would if you used the smallest chainring and smallest sprocket, there is a risk of bouncing off. The same ratio is given safely by the middle chainring with a mid-range sprocket. The desirable gear combinations are to use the largest chainring with the smaller sprockets, and smallest chainring with the bigger sprockets. Simply, the gearing is toward the bike for easy gearing and away from the bike for harder gearing. The middle chainring is the most ubiquitous, and you can safely use it with both the biggest and the smallest sprocket

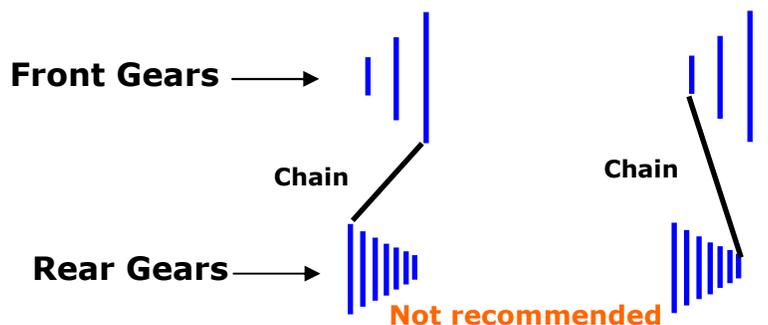


Figure 1

Figure 2