

Guide Bike Experience



Avec le soutien de :



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Decided to use a bicycle to get around? Congratulations!
Bike Experience will help you get started cycling in Brussels.
With our support, you can (re)discover the city on two wheels!

The experience has already started: with this guide! You will also be supported by one of our instructors. First, you will follow a short city traffic training course, which will already make you feel more at ease. The training has three phases:

1. Revision of the highway code relating to cyclists.
2. Test of your cycling ability.
3. Sharing experiences.

Then you have the opportunity to be accompanied by a Coach.
Trust in our experience: with only two weeks of coaching you will be able to travel by bicycle independently. Together with your Coach, you will agree on the times that they will accompany you. Together you will work out the most suitable routes: pleasant, safe and fast!

For the Coaches reading this: at the end of this guide (p. 28), you will find a section dedicated to coaching which will help you to make your coaching a success, step by step.

If you want to share your experience, publish your thoughts and your best photos on social media to explain to those around you how your Bike Experience is going: you are the best ambassadors of the programme!



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Equipment and preparations

1. Which bike for which trip?

Before you start cycling, you need a good bike adapted to your size and your movements. To help you choose, we will go over the three of the most common types of bikes.

Tip

- If possible, test the bike before buying it.
Find a list of bicycle dealers by district on the GRACQ and Pro Velo websites.





City bikes

These are the “classic” bicycles. There are frames for men and women, with various numbers of gears.

A 7/8 gear bike seems to us to be a good base, especially if you’re cycling in the city. If you opt for a bike with an internal-gear hub, you will never have to worry about the chain derailing and you will be able to change gears when stationary.

If possible, opt for a conventional derailleur that combines chainrings (front) and sprockets (rear) to achieve up to 27 speeds.

Favour a model with good brakes and good (anti-puncture) tyres. For a good quality bike, budget to spend approximately €500-600 for a new bike.

At Pro Velo Brussels, city bikes from the Belgian brand Oxford are on sale all year round.



E-bikes - electric assist bikes

E-bikes, whose sales have been growing steadily in recent years, are bikes with electric assistance which is activated on demand when pedalling – it is therefore not a moped.

Its power is limited to 0.25 kW and its speed to 25 km/h (according to European directives).

For a quality e-bike, budget for a minimum of €1,200. Pay attention to the battery: the model influences the price, its overall lifetime and battery life. Some e-bikes offer adjustable starting assistance (different levels) and/or generative starting assistance (the battery recharges during braking or downhill driving).

It is usually possible to disassemble the battery to recharge it. Don't hesitate to try out different bike models before making your choice, for example by visiting a specialist dealer.

At Pro Velo Brussels, e-bikes from the Belgian brand Oxford are on sale all year round.



Folding bikes

If you want to combine cycling and public transport, the folding bicycle will make your life easier. Perfect for commuters whose homes and/or offices are between one and five kilometres from the station, or for cyclists who do not have a place to store their bikes at night.

Be aware, however, that a folding bike is less comfortable for long treks and over cobblestones. They are also more expensive than a city bike (budget for approx. €1,000).

A few criteria to keep in mind:

- How compact the bike is, its weight.
- The number of gears and the type of gear shift (derailleur or hub).
- The size of the wheels (the bigger they are, the more stable the bike is, but the less manoeuvrable and compact it is).
- Whether you can roll it along once it has been folded.
- Accessories (lighting, bags, transport bag...).



Second-hand bikes

The second-hand market is proving to be a good alternative when buying a bike. This option allows you to find a quality bike, at a better price, while reducing waste and your environmental impact.

A few points to watch out for so that you don't get a "bike" that will cost you more in maintenance than it cost you to buy:

- The quality of the frame and its size (adapted to you).
- The transmission: the chain, the gear cables, the derailleur.
- The brakes: check the brake pads (the grooves must be visible), as well as the brake cables.
- The pedals: is there any play when you pull them outwards? Are they well attached?
- The wheels: make them turn, are they bent? Are all the spokes there?
- The tyres: examine them closely!
- Peripherals: saddle, handle, mudguards, lighting?
- Is the compulsory equipment all there? (see p.9)

Tips

- Before buying, always ask to test the bike on the road.
- Go around the block and make it “suffer a little”: change gears, go uphill, test the brakes.
- Ask about the price of spare parts to make a quick price calculation of possible repairs to be carried out.



2. Size of the bike and position

The second most important point when choosing your bike is the size of the frame and the position you are going to take. The frame must be adapted to you! There is nothing more uncomfortable than cycling on a bike that is too small or too big... Get someone to help you!

Tips

- Some bike models allow you to move the stem to widen (or reduce) the space between your arms and the handlebars. You must be able to reach the brake levers after adjusting the handlebars.
- Your position can be changed by adjusting the saddle and handlebars.
- Place the balls of your feet on the pedal and not your heel... This will make pedalling take much less effort.

To remember

- A good saddle height is important: in order to have as much strength as possible when pedalling, your leg should be neither too stretched nor too bent.
- Adjust your saddle by standing next to it. It should be at the same height as your hip.
- Sitting on the saddle, you should be able to touch the ground on tiptoe.
- You can adjust the saddle by moving it forwards or backwards.



- Good contact with your feet on the pedals is useful to make the most of your effort.
- The handlebars should be at the same height as your saddle. For a more aerodynamic position, lower them. On the other hand, for a position that is more comfortable for your back and makes you feel safer in traffic, raise them.
- Above all, you need to feel comfortable. You may need to make some adjustments before you find the right position...

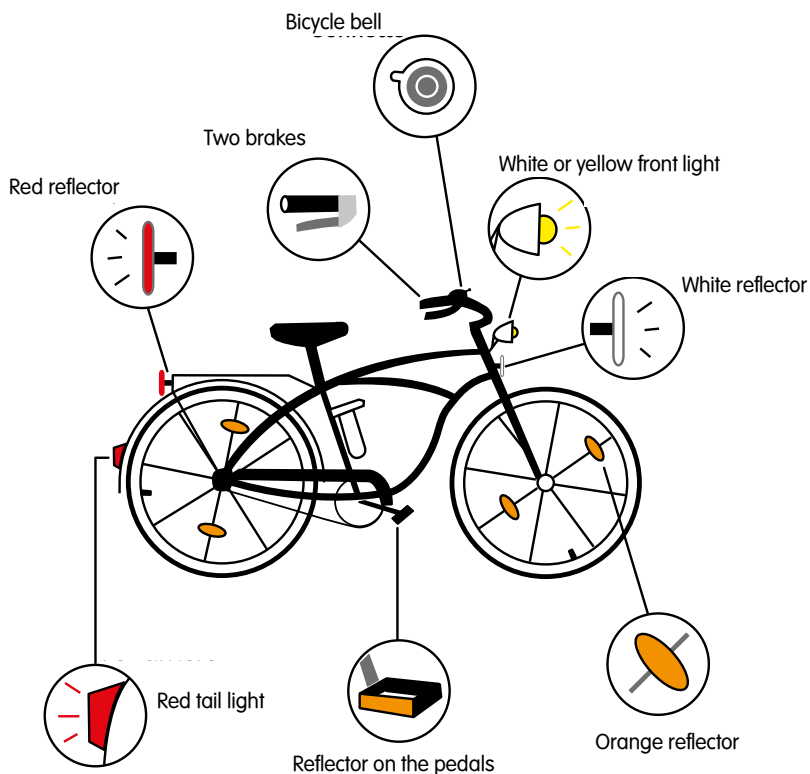
3. Equipment

You have a bike properly adapted to and comfortable for you. Now you need to get the right equipment for it... and for you, too!

Compulsory bicycle equipment

There is nothing stopping you from personalising your new purchase as long as you respect the legal obligations.

The accessories listed below are **mandatory on all types of bikes** (classic, folding and electric).





Personal equipment

The essential equipment:

- The padlock: by far the most important item after purchasing your bike.
- Fluorescent vest and helmet: they are not obligatory but recommended.
- Saddle bags and/or a basket: handy to put your briefcase or your groceries in.
- A pump.
- Slap wraps: to keep your trouser legs secure to your ankles and make you visible.

What clothes should you wear?

Contrary to popular belief, you don't need to put on your latest sports equipment for your daily journeys. The most important thing is that you can move freely and feel good.

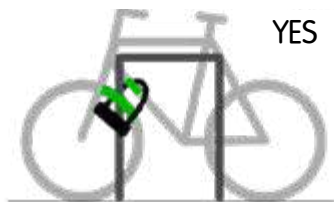
Tip

- Choose comfortable clothes that are not too warm.
- However, avoid untied laces, long hair that could get in your face and interfere with visibility, accessories that could get stuck in the bike and make you fall (scarves, hoods, drawstrings...), loose trousers, long skirts.



4. How do you prevent theft?

- Always secure your bike to a fixed object by the frame and front wheel, even if only leaving it for a very short time.
- Use a good padlock (preferably U-shaped).
- Have your bike engraved. Or register and identify it on the platform **mybike.brussels**.
- Create a bike identity card. If you buy a second-hand bike, ask the seller for one.
- You can also get your valuable bike insured if you wish.
- If your bike is stolen, go to the website www.velosretrouves.be.



Tip

- If you have a folding bike, take it everywhere with you.



5. How do you care for your new bike?

You have found a rare pearl and you are going to take care of it. The best advice is to carry out small checks on a regular basis, as this will avoid needing major repairs.

Tip

A lot of cyclists cycle with under-inflated tyres. For optimal efficiency when travelling, inflate them every month.

Regular checks

- Brakes adjustment.
- General state of the tyres and pressure (check the indicator on the tyre).
- Cleaning and oiling the chain.
- Checking the lights.
- Cleaning the wheels (especially if you have a reflective tyre instead of the mandatory reflectors in the wheels).
- Gears: if the gears aren't shifting well, go to a mechanic quickly.
- Once a year, schedule a complete check-up.

Maintenance kit

Basic kit

- Bicycle pump.
- Set of Allen keys and wrenches.
- Emergency repair kit for inner tubes and changing wheels.
- A little oil or grease.



6. Cycle routes

Cycling map of the Brussels-Capital Region (see page 15)

Before setting off, prepare your itinerary with the help of your Coach. The cycling map can help you to find suitable routes (reliefs, cycle-friendly routes, the Promenade Verte...).

ICRs (regional cycle routes) and **ICCs** (local cycle routes) are signposted and cleared paths recommended for cyclists. They generally use local roads, off the main roads, allowing you to cycle in less dense and less stressful traffic. In Brussels there are 19 ICRs and new ones continue to be developed for even greater ease and comfort.

Alternative routes

In addition to your cycling map of Brussels, don't hesitate to use alternative routes:

- Just think of the lift near the Palais de Justice.
- Avoid the Mont des Arts by taking the channel in front of the Royal Park, near the entrance to the Bozar.
- If it is on your route, consider the Parc du Cinquanteenaire.
- Use the Promenade Verte, it goes around Brussels.
- Just a reminder that cycling is forbidden in the Grand Place, as well as many parks.



7. Public transport

Metro and tram

It's free to take your bike with you on the metro and tram, but this is not allowed during rush hours (Monday to Friday 7am-9am and 4pm-6:30pm) unless you are travelling with a folding bike.

Please note: some stations remain difficult to access for bicycles and a maximum of two bicycles are allowed per carriage. The space provided for bicycles is often in the first or last carriage of the vehicle.

Train

You can take the train with your bike. If you own a folding bicycle, there will be no extra charge if you fold it up and store it next to you.

To transport a classic bicycle, you have to buy a €4 "Bicycle Supplement" for any journey. Please note that you cannot take your bikes on board at all stations, so check before departure.





Urban cycling

To make cycling in the city a pleasant experience, make sure you follow a few basic rules necessary for your comfort and safety.



1. Attitude and positioning

Your attitude and the position you take in traffic largely determine your comfort and safety.

- **Check your equipment:** choose clothes that are comfortable and suitable for the weather conditions. Maintain your bike, check tyre pressure and brake efficiency.
- **Respect the highway code:** all road users have rights and duties. If you want to be respected, start by setting a good example.
- Never go through a red light (unless a specific sign allows you to carefully pass through).
- Leave pavements for pedestrians and never go the wrong way down the street, unless there is a contraflow system for cyclists.
- **Be visible:** make sure you can be seen.
- Do not cycle in vehicles' blind spots, position yourself properly on the road, use the ASLs – advanced stop lines – to wait in front of cars at red lights, and have lights.
- **Be predictable:** indicate the direction you're taking clearly and in good time (with your arm outstretched), and take as straight a course as possible.

- **Cycle in the correct position on the road:** keep one metre from the right-hand edge of the road or from parked cars. Watch out for car doors opening!
- **Don't get stuck:** when overtaking or manoeuvring, take care not to get stuck in traffic. Position yourself in the middle of your lane as you approach intersections where you may need to stop. Always stay visible and predictable!
- **Priority does not equal safety:** cyclists generally attract less attention, and motorists may be surprised by their presence.
- **Communicate with other road users:** make eye contact with other drivers. Make sure you have been seen before you enter a junction!
- **Be courteous:** show respect for a better sharing of public space! Keep smiling and thank motorists and other road users when they give way to you. Don't forget that pedestrians have priority on pedestrian crossings.
- **Keep a look out:** look far and wide to spot and anticipate obstacles (e.g. stopped motorists about to get out of their cars)!



2. The highway code: a few reminders

Cycling infrastructure

Cycle paths

Cycle paths are the part of the roadway reserved for bicycle traffic. Two broken white lines or the blue sign makes it mandatory. Please note that the cycle path is not exclusively reserved for cyclists. Class A mopeds must use it, as well as pedestrians if indicated as such.

If the cycle path is impassable, the highway code allows cyclists to use the road. Because of this, cyclists can leave the cycle path to change direction, overtake or avoid an obstacle. Finally, when the cycle path is interrupted and joins the road, the cyclist has priority. But be careful, priority does not equal safety.

Suggested cycle lanes

This is a strip of a different colour from the road indicating to other road users that cyclists may be present on the road.

It is usually found when the width of the road is not wide enough for a real cycle path. This lane suggests a space for the cyclist to use on the road, but its use is not obligatory.

This type of design tends to disappear and be replaced by chevrons.





Chevrons

When they appear in double, these markings indicate the presence of a cycle route where it is impossible to put a cycle path.

If there is a single chevron (as in the photo), it serves the same purpose as the suggested cycle lanes: to remind motorists that space is shared and to give cyclists a sense of legitimacy.



Contraflow systems

As a cyclist, you are able to use one-way streets in both directions where you see the additional sign “except cyclists” (excepté cyclistes). When driving in the opposite direction to the one-way traffic, cycle in the centre of the road as long as there are no cars, or if a car is approaching. When passing, everyone should slow down and move to the right.

Be particularly vigilant at junctions. Motorists do not always expect to see a bike going down a one-way street. Adapt your speed and be very attentive to pedestrians who may also be surprised. Don’t hesitate to warn them that you’re approaching.

When exiting the contraflow system, make eye contact with the drivers before joining traffic (even if you have the right of way). Politeness and friendliness are very important when contraflow cycling.

ASL (Advanced Stop Lines)

Some junctions with traffic lights have advanced stop lines, or bike boxes. Using this box allows you to be more visible and to start ahead of other traffic when the light turns green.

It also allows you to pull over to the position that best suits your destination (left, centre or right). Please also refer to “Passing a lane of cars” in the section “Important manoeuvres” on page 22.



B22 and B23

Some signs allow cyclists to cross a junction without the traffic lights into account. This is the case with the B22 and B23 signs. They allow cyclists to pass through red or amber traffic lights.

However, cyclists do not have priority and must give way to other road users.

B22 signs allow you to pass through traffic lights to turn right and B23 signs allow you to pass through traffic lights to continue straight. Both are generally used as long as the cyclist does not have to cut off the flow of traffic.





Bicycle boulevard

Installed on roads where there is a lot of bicycle traffic (but where car traffic is also possible), bicycle boulevards are an adapted development in favour of cyclists. However, motorised vehicles are allowed to use them under certain conditions. These must not overtake the bikes and must keep to a maximum speed of 30 km/h.



Bus / taxi / cycle lane

When a bicycle symbol is shown on the bus lane and signposted, these lanes are accessible to (but not compulsory for) cyclists. In these you cannot cycle two abreast and you have to keep to the right. When travelling on these lanes, the lights for buses also apply to cyclists.



Pedestrian zones

These areas are accessible to cyclists if and only if there is a bicycle symbol signposted. If there is no additional information, cyclists may use these areas at all times, as long as they cycle at walking pace. If there are a lot of pedestrians, the cyclist will have to get off their bicycle.

3. Important manoeuvres

Right of way

Right of way is applicable at **every junction**, except in the presence of a qualified person, traffic lights, or road signs.

As a reminder, even if the vehicle is **stationary**, it still has **priority**. When you have priority yourself, don't forget the basic principle that priority does not equal safety!

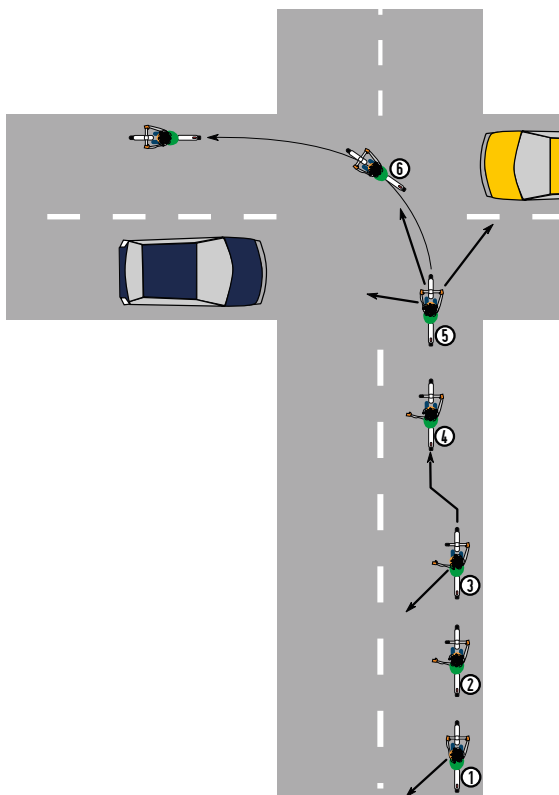
Turning left

Remember that when you change direction, you lose your priority.

1. As you approach the junction, look behind you to assess the situation.
2. Indicate your intention to move to the left by raising your arm.
3. With your arm raised, look behind you to check that the lane is clear or that the driver behind you has braked to let you manoeuvre.
4. Move to the middle of the lane.
5. With your hands on the handlebars at the entrance to the junction, look straight ahead and to the right, as all vehicles coming from these directions will have priority. Don't forget to look to the left (priority does not equal safety).
6. Turn left following a wide path.
7. Stay about one metre from the edge of the road.

Turning right

When turning right, **clearly** indicate your intention and make a **sharp** turn (still keep a metre from the side of the road for safety). Keep an eye out for pedestrian crossings.

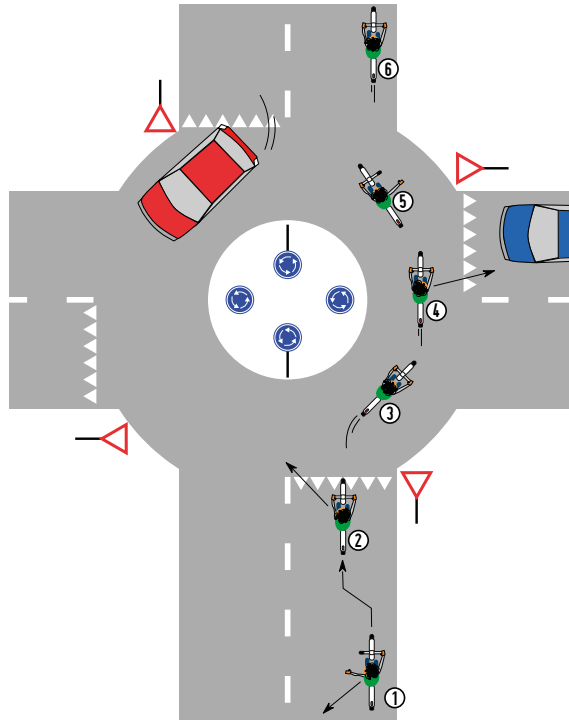


Roundabouts

It is important to be well positioned to avoid being cut off by a car.

A few rules to follow:

1. Before entering the roundabout, **look behind you** and **move towards the middle** of your lane to avoid getting stuck by a driver behind you.
2. Slow down as you approach the roundabout and **look left**. If necessary, **give way** to those who are already on the roundabout.
3. Position yourself **in the middle of the traffic lane** on the roundabout to remain clearly visible.
4. Even if you have priority, make **eye contact** with the drivers of vehicles approaching the roundabout.
5. Before pulling out, clearly indicate your intention by raising your **right arm**..
6. Stay about **one metre** from the edge of the road.



Notes:

- If a car is putting pressure on you, extend your left arm to indicate your intention to continue into the roundabout.
- If the roundabout is bordered by a cycle path, this is compulsory (although this type of infrastructure has been disappearing).

Did you know?

A cyclist who is pushing their bicycle becomes a pedestrian and can therefore use the pavements.

As a general rule, cycling on pavements is prohibited, except for children under ten years of age (whose bicycles have wheels with a diameter of less than 50 cm).

Passing a line of cars

When vehicles are at a standstill, you are allowed to pass a line of cars on the right or on the left. When the vehicles are moving, you can only move up the lane from the left. This is called “overtaking”.

Going over to the left is safer because you make yourself more visible. If you are not able to overtake from the left or the right, keep your position in the line of cars. The most important thing is that you do not become trapped by cars or be in a car’s blind spot!



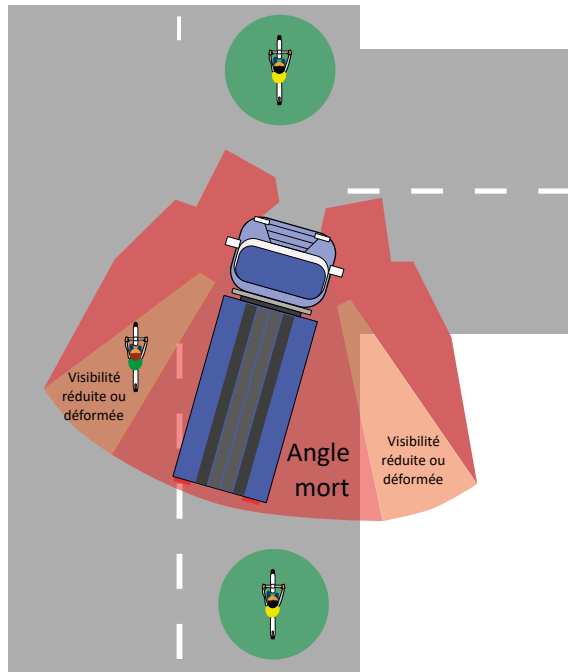
The blind spot

The blind spot is the area around the vehicle **outside** of the driver's **field of vision**.

This varies depending on the vehicle type. As a cyclist, you enter a vehicle’s blind spot when you start **overtaking** but also when a vehicle overtakes you, or changes course.

In order to reduce your vulnerability, here are a few tips:

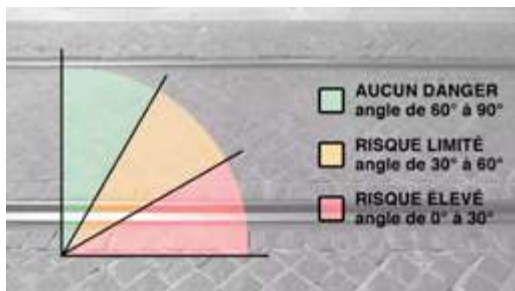
- Take your place on the road, and **be visible!**
- To avoid finding yourself in the blind spot, **stay well behind** the vehicle without overtaking it.
- Keep a safe **distance**.
- Only start overtaking if you have the time and space to do it and especially only if the driver has seen you. You can also use your bell to make sure you are noticed. Keep in mind that you may need to **widen your course**.
- When a vehicle overtakes and turns right, slow down and get a good distance behind it. If you need to, stop!



Tram tracks

Trams have priority over all other road users, including cyclists. If you have to **cross** the tracks (of a tram or railway), do so at an angle that is as **perpendicular** as possible to the tracks to avoid getting your wheels stuck.

It's best to cycle in **the middle of the tracks** if you don't have room on the right (to drive one metre away from parked cars).



Exiting cycle paths

When you're cycling on a cycle path, **you have priority** (except over trams). Cyclists can leave the cycle path to change direction, overtake, go around an obstacle or when the track is impassable.

When **the cycle path ends** and you have to re-enter the main lane, **you have priority** over other motorists as this is not considered a manoeuvre. But always be careful!

On the other hand, if you **leave** the cycle path to change direction, you **no longer** have priority.

When you enter a **bicycle crossing**, as opposed to a pedestrian crossing, you **lose** priority.



Narrow roadways

On narrow roads and one-way streets, maintain your position in the road if you feel that overtaking may put you in danger. In any case, remain courteous and do not take any risks.

Cycling two abreast

You can always ride two abreast on a cycle path unless another bicycle wants to overtake you or if a bidirectional cycle path is too narrow to allow for others to pass.

Riding two abreast is also permitted on the road, as long as it is possible for other road users to pass. Outside urban areas, however, you will have to get back into single file when a vehicle arrives from behind.



Legislation on bicycle allowances

If you use the bicycle to commute to and from work, your employer may grant you a bicycle allowance of €0.24/km (in 2020) for your journeys. However, your employer does not have to give you this. This right does not depend on your joint commission or area of work.

This allowance can be combined with a STIB/TEC/De Lijn/SNCB subscription. You are entitled to it even if you only commute by bike a few days a week. It is calculated on the basis of the number of kilometres cycled (the bonus does not apply to days off or sick leave).

This bonus is tax-exempt for the worker and is paid on the basis of a sworn statement.



For the coach

1. Your role

You will be taking a beginner cyclist under your wing who will take up the challenge of travelling by bike.

The new cyclist will be accompanied for the three (first) days on a regular journey.

The aim is for your Biker to be self-sufficient enough to get out into traffic on their own. You will therefore help them to overcome any fears and/or worries, teach them to adopt the right behaviour and master the main manoeuvres.

The way you coach will contribute to the Biker's self-confidence and even their desire to continue cycling.

So, your role is essential!



2. The Coach's behaviour

In the following, we will address some practical questions, but first we will highlight the behaviours expected of a Bike Experience Coach.

You will be

- **A model** with impeccable behaviour, who respects the highway code (do not run red lights, cycle on pavements, go the wrong way, do respect pedestrians' right of way, etc.), carries out manoeuvres correctly and adopts the right behaviour in traffic.
- **An advisor:** use your valuable cycling experience to give advice that will make your Biker more assertive and confident in traffic.
- **A guide** leading your Biker towards independence as your coaching progresses. When you think your Biker is ready, let them "test" themselves in traffic so that they can learn to cycle without you (see also "Positioning" on page 35).
- **Methodical:** prepare your itinerary before D-day and test it once on your own during rush hours so that you can calculate the time needed for your journey.



- **Positive:** point out the mistakes your Biker makes, but focus on the behaviours that should have been adopted instead. Promote cycling in a positive way and avoid negative words such as "danger" or "unsafe" as much as possible (talk about "risk" or "obstacles" instead).
- **Empathetic:** put yourself in your Biker's shoes and remember that riding a bike in the city is new to them. Keep your objective in mind: to give them confidence and to make them want to continue the experience.
- **Respectful, friendly:** be courteous towards other road users and promote mutual respect. Refer to the GRACQ- Les Cyclistes Quotidiens- for the defence and representation of cyclists.

Note: the Coach is not at the service of the Biker. Being a Coach does not necessarily mean that you have to meet all the demands of your Biker. Meet the commitment you make by participating in the Bike Experience, and there is no obligation to do more.

3. The process

Meet your Biker

Your Biker may already be able to ride a bike, but they probably do not (yet) know how to perform all the manoeuvres on their own and confidently.

Meeting your beginner cyclist is exciting, but you may also feel the weight of responsibility on your shoulders.

Relax and remember what is important to the cycling associations:

- Bike Experience should be as safe as possible.
- Biker and Coach must above all have a positive experience.
- Bike Experience should make the Biker capable of everyday cycling.



Preparation

As an experienced cyclist, you know that everything starts with good preparation.

In order to maximise your chances of success, here's what we expect from you: read this guide carefully before starting the Bike Experience.

Prepare and mark out the route:

- Choose a comfortable route: a diversion is not superfluous if it avoids difficult sections—especially on the first day (tram tracks, difficult junctions...). Distances can be easily calculated and routes drawn using Google Maps (or other route planning applications for cyclists). Experience or the cycling map can help you find a pleasant cycling route.
- Choose a quiet route: as far as possible, it is strongly advised to choose quiet roads for the first part of the journey. This will allow you to cycle and communicate quietly with your Biker and estimate their level of cycling proficiency. Don't forget that your Biker has to get used to traffic and especially noise- noise is a source of stress.

Be aware

When accompanying your Biker, you will need to allow more time than the journey will take.

Make a note of any more difficult sections so that you can explain them before departure. Think about how you are going to overcome them and the position you are going to take in relation to your Biker (see the "Positioning" section on page 35).

- Locate places where you can stop, especially at difficult points, to observe and analyse the situation together.
- Think of the tips and tricks that cyclists know to make life easier (lift from the Palais de Justice, the channel in front of the Royal Park to avoid the Mont des Arts, traffic light sequences...).



4. Coaching

Day 1

Before the first day, you will have agreed on times and the routes you will take together. On the first day of coaching, it is important to allow an extra 15 to 20 minutes (before departure) to discuss certain elements.

You may want to make a stop along the way to take stock and make sure everything is all right.

What should be discussed on the first day before departure?

- **Briefly repeat the goal of the Bike Experience:** to experience cycling in the best possible conditions and make it an enjoyable experience!
- **Repeat the goal of the coaching:** to adopt the right cycling behaviour and master the main manoeuvres so that the Biker is independent and can continue to cycle on their own in complete safety.
- **Find out about the Biker's state of mind:** ask how they feel and whether they still have any fears. Reassure them and above all ask them how you can help!
- **Encourage them** to share with you as much as possible throughout the coaching process.
- On the basis of this feedback, you will be able to adapt the way you coach them (positions, attitudes...).
- **Explain** that you are going to work gradually, by first observing their proficiency level so that you know how best to coach them, which justifies the detours and quieter streets at the beginning of the route.



In practice

Briefly repeat the essential rules for comfortable and safe cycling in the city.

Check your Biker's equipment (see section "Equipment" on page 9 and 36).

Insist that they do not ride too fast at first. The art of cycling is to find the ideal rhythm to move forward without running out of breath. The Biker sets the pace. If it is still difficult, stop for a moment or walk with the bikes for a little while.

Ask them not to look directly in front of their wheel but to straighten up and concentrate on the whole road.



Day 2

The second day can go along the same lines as the first.

If your Biker is ready, you can let them ride in front of you as much as possible.

Always stay close, within earshot.

Suggest that they try a different route, one that is faster, or one that allows them to experience places with heavier traffic. It's preferable to try new routes in the morning. In the evening your Biker will probably be less able to concentrate.

Be aware

It is best to test a new route in advance.

If the Biker is riding in front, indicate the direction you will be taking well in advance so that they can be prepared for possible manoeuvres.

- Review the difficult parts of the route and explain how you will deal with them.
- Agree that you will shout “STOP” only if their safety is threatened. At this point, you and your Biker will need to stop as soon as possible and get out of traffic (go to the pavement).
- When you arrive, ask how they felt about the journey and give feedback, preferably in the form of practical advice and encouraging directions. A compliment (if sincere) can be good and constructive!

Allow for extra time. New manoeuvres require a lot of concentration on the part of the Biker, and riding too fast is never advisable.

It is still important to continue to give each other feedback in order to adapt your coaching to the needs and wishes of your Biker. On the basis of this feedback, you might consider specific exercises for more difficult manoeuvres.

You will be able to repeat the same part of the course several times, giving the cyclist more autonomy each time to help them become independent and comfortable on their bike!

Day 3

Your final day of coaching!

By the end of the day, your Biker should be able to cycle back and forth to work on their own.

- Are they ready for that?
- Have you found the best route?
- What points do you still need to pay attention to?

You have probably noticed that your Biker's confidence has grown after two days of coaching. Does the thought of not being able to count on you the day after still concern them? That's normal.

Being completely at ease on the road takes time and a lot of practice. Don't worry. Your role is to understand the reasons for their hesitation and to propose solutions for them to work on throughout this last day of coaching.

Finishing up

At the end of day 3, determine which route the Biker will take on day 4 and focus on it. Go over difficult sections and repeat the key tips they need most. All you have to do is encourage and compliment them to make them feel ready for adventure!

Mission accomplished! We hope that you have enjoyed the experience and that your Biker is ready to make their own way.

Of course, you can keep in touch with them to keep them up to date with Bike Experience news!



5. The Coach's positioning

There is no strict method for this. As a Coach, you have to adapt to the technical level of your Biker and how worried they are of traffic.

You need to take the environment (traffic density, manoeuvres carried out, width of the roadway...) into account and to change your position as the coaching progresses.



Observation

The rear wheel of the Biker's bike should be level with the front wheel of the Coach's bike.

This position is to be used at the very beginning of the coaching in order to assess their cycling proficiency, to protect them, and to enable easy communication. In potentially frightening situations such as at a junction or in a cycling contraflow system for example, the Coach can also be in front of the Biker, or even next to them.



Learning

The coach will be in front of the Biker.

The Biker watches, and copies what you do. This way, they learn how to position themselves in traffic but do not yet have to initiate the manoeuvres and know the route.



Independence

The Coach rides behind the Biker once they are able to perform the manoeuvres, position themselves correctly, and they know the route.

Gradually increase the distance between you and your Biker.



Practical information

1. Equipment

Before you set off, make sure you have:

- A Brussels Region cycling map
- A pump and a puncture kit

Check your Biker's bike, paying particular attention to:

- Both brakes – which must allow the bike to come to a complete stop.
- The tyre inflation (check the indicator on the tyre).
- The height of the saddle.
- Reflectors, bell and lights (if not worn by the Biker).
- The general condition of the bike (oiled chain, wheels not bent...).

Make sure your Biker has:

- A fluorescent vest with reflective stripes (not obligatory but recommended).
- A helmet (not obligatory but recommended)
- Rain gear such as a cape or rain trousers and a hat for protection.
- Several layers of clothing that can be easily removed along the way.



2. An accident? A collision?

If you are involved in an accident with a motor vehicle and the damage appears to be limited, still fill out a joint accident report. Complications may subsequently arise and, in this case, having taken the telephone number of the driver involved in the accident will not be sufficient.

When filling out the accident report, pay attention to these few points:

- Fill in one form and have it signed by both parties.
- If possible, include any witnesses.
- The sketch is the key element of the report: it must be detailed and agreed upon by both parties.
- Factually describe everything that happened in detail.
- Keep calm and call 112 if you have any doubts about the seriousness of the situation.

Cycling associations

Pro Velo is a service provider that helps authorities, schools and companies to promote more space for cycling. The association develops personalised solutions to facilitate and strengthen the transition to cycling and in that way contributes to a better quality of life.

www.provelo.org – Tel.: +32 (0)2 502 73 55

The **GRACQ** (Groupe de Recherche et d'Action des Cyclistes Quotidiens) helps everyone to get around by bike in the best possible conditions. Thanks to the support of its volunteers, GRACQ represents cyclists to the public authorities in Brussels and Wallonia and carries out awareness-raising, information and training work.

www.gracq.org – Tel.: +32 (0)2 502 61 30

Fietersbond defends the interests of all cyclists. By convincing the population and the authorities that cycling is a smart choice, Fietersbond hopes to make cycling safer.

www.fietersbond.be – Tel.: +32 (0)2 502 68 51

Les Ateliers de la rue Voot is a centre for expression and creativity which opened its 1st bicycle workshop in 1973. Under supervision, the participant learns the technical skills they need to become independent in the face of breakdowns they might encounter while cycling.

www.voot.be – Tel.: +32 (0)2 762 48 93

CYCLO is a social economy initiative that promotes cycling in Brussels through cycling technology, recycling, culture and innovation in this field.

www.cyclo.org – Tel.: +32 (0)2 512 68 90



Testimonials

"First win yesterday, on the way back, when we passed a line of cars on the way out of work. And to think that last week I was among them..."

"I realised that in less than a week, the 'cycling' habit is already well established. I've caught the cycling bug from my Coach! But I'm not too bothered, since the GRACQ says it's good for your health."

"My Coach is a real pro: she told me everything I need to pay attention to, the problems that could arise... And the most important thing: she was in a very good mood every morning!"

"A very positive track record, what seemed difficult to manage has become anecdotal."

"What a pleasure to arrive at work! I start my day with a lot more energy after 30 minutes of exercise and it's lovely to return home by walking next to the canal, perfect for these beautiful sunny days!"

"I feel like I'm better able to cope with the stress in the office. And the icing on the cake is that my jogging watch told me that this round trip consumes a few thousand calories. That's pretty motivating!"

"A humanly enriching experience. I still regularly (annually) see my first Biker, who still rides a bike."

"Fantastic, as a Coach I feel like I'm giving a taste of cycling to the new Bikers and I hope they're still cycling today. I even received a gift from a Biker, completely unexpected but always a pleasure!"



Conclusion

You have all the information you need to make your journey easier.

We wish you lots of fun and a great Bike Experience!

And if you still have any hazy areas or questions... Don't hesitate to contact our team.

We're here to help!



Have you been converted by the experience? Do you also want to promote cycling?

Here are a few ideas:

- Cycle whenever possible.
- Spread the word: there's nothing like word of mouth.
- Become a member of GRACQ.
- Become a Coach.
- Set up a cycling policy in your company: Pro Velo can help you with that.
- Encourage your colleagues by offering in-company training.
- Contact your company's mobility coordinator. Or apply for the position.
- Have a good trip!

More information about Bike Experience

bikeexperience.brussels

A question? Need advice?

Contact us

info@bikeexperience.brussels

02/318 84 07

More info on mobility in Brussels

mobilite.brussels

mobilite@sprb.brussels

0800/94 001

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www.provelo.org



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SERVICE PUBLIC RÉGIONAL DE BRUXELLES

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