THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS since 1880

THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS PRESENTS

YOUTH LEARN TO RIDE MANUAL

2024 EDITION

INTRODUCTION

The League of American Bicyclists believes in the power of the bicycle to make life better for everyone. It's why we work every day to build a **Bicycle Friendly America** (bikeleague.org/bfa) where all people have access to the joy of bicycling, both through education and by identifying safe places to ride. The earlier we can empower people through bicycling, the better. This manual is a tool to teach children how to bike and give them a lifelong tool for happiness and health.

Cycling is fun, and the experience of learning to cycle should be fun for children, too.

This manual helps educators understand what makes a Learn to Ride class fun, safe, successful, and supportive. It provides the basic stages and steps to teach youth how to ride a bike and it offers key learning objectives throughout the process, important things to consider for organizing a class, and ways to encourage and support children in their experience.

Photo: Woom

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: THE BALANCE-FIRST APPROACH

The League approach to learning how to ride involves learning how to balance first. The balance-first method has proven to be efficient, effective, and less frustrating for the child and the teacher. Increasingly, parents and cycling instructors have moved away from training wheels, as training wheels only delay the process of learning to balance.

The balance-first method allows the child to be more autonomous and self-sufficient when learning. They can learn at their own speed and typically learn other cycling skills faster once they've mastered balance.

Learning how to balance on a bike is the best first step in learning how to pedal, steer, brake, and turn. While there are bikes that are built specifically as balance bikes, any bike can be transformed into a balance bike by removing the training wheels and pedals. The seat should be lowered to a level where the child should be able to place both feet on the ground with knees slightly bent while sitting on the seat.

TEACHING YOUTH

Working with youth can be very rewarding and fun. It also comes with unique considerations, especially when teaching young students. Children will learn at different rates and experience different levels of emotion when learning to ride. Some kids may be pedaling after only an hour while others may take multiple days or even weeks to learn to ride. Children will have different skill levels but one thing is certain: as an instructor for youth, you will need to have patience, stay positive, and be supportive in order to help your students succeed.


Photo: Bike New York

ORGANIZING A LEARN TO RIDE CLASS

CLASS SIZE

Teaching young students to ride should be as close to a one-on-one situation as you can manage.

Managing multiple students with varying levels of skill in a single class can have its challenges. If possible, try to organize classes according to ability, i.e. one class for children who do not yet know how to balance, and another class for children who can already glide and are ready to pedal. Allow children to progress through the steps of learning to ride as they exhibit their readiness. Some may be ready to progress along the steps quickly, while others will take more time. Much like shifting gears at the appropriate time, accommodating each child's learning speed will help keep them engaged and active.

In other words, do not have the entire class move through the steps together, have children move from one step to the next at their own pace. This also means that when teaching a class with multiple children, having volunteers or multiple instructors is important. Ideally, there should be one LCI for every 1-6 students (depending on age, e.g. more instructors for younger students depending on the age), with a maximum of 20 children in the class.

Classes could also be conducted with one LCI and a few volunteers. Volunteers can be a big help with things like checking kids in, signing waivers, pumping tires, removing pedals, lowering seats, etc. Be sure volunteers understand their responsibilities prior to the day of the class.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR YOUR CLASS

- ☐ Pump
- ☐ Pedal wrench
- ☐ Set of Allen wrenches
- ☐ 15mm adjustable wrench to remove training wheels
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ Waivers
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ ABC Quick Check bookmarks
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Table and chairs
- ☐ Chain lube
- ☐ Grease
- ☐ Torque wrench
- ☐ Tennis ball halves
- ☐ Small cones

SELECTING THE RIGHT LOCATION

Learning to ride a bike requires an open, smoothly paved space free of potholes, debris, and obstacles. Empty parking lots, basketball courts, hard-surfaced running tracks, and side-by-side tennis courts are all areas that work nicely. There should not be any other activities that have the potential to interfere with the children on their bikes.

The area should be fairly flat so that kids do not have to push themselves uphill and there is minimal chance of going too fast on a downhill. A slight downhill is okay and can even be beneficial for beginners to help them gain speed when learning to balance.

There should be ample space for kids to move on their bikes without bumping into others. At a minimum, the riding area should be 100 feet x 60 feet for a class with multiple kids. If teaching one-on-one, the space can be slightly smaller. Consider having bathrooms nearby, shaded areas in case the sun is hot, and nearby car parking.

PROMOTING YOUR CLASS

The next step in creating a fun, safe and supportive environment begins with organizing and promoting your class. Parents/caregivers and children should know what to expect when registering for the class. League Cycling Instructors have access to an online registration system where they can promote the class, provide a description, location, length of time, and an electronic waiver. Consider working with a local partner such as a bike-advocacy organization, bike club, school, or other youth or bike-focused organization to promote and organize the class to reach a broad audience.

Other details to include when organizing and promoting the class:

- Consider conducting lessons that are no more than 90 minutes long. Be prepared to let an individual child leave the class early if they are tired and their parent/caregiver is present.
- Will you ask people to bring their own bikes or will you provide bikes?
- Encourage everyone to bring their own helmet, but have a few extra in case someone forgets.
- Advice on footwear: flat, closed-toed athletic shoes are best; laces should be tied and not dangling.
- Wear comfortable clothes: shorts, skorts & pants are good. A dress or skirt, depending on length, may interfere with wheel or pedal movement.
- Request that parents/caregivers bring drinking water for their child.

LEADING A CLASS

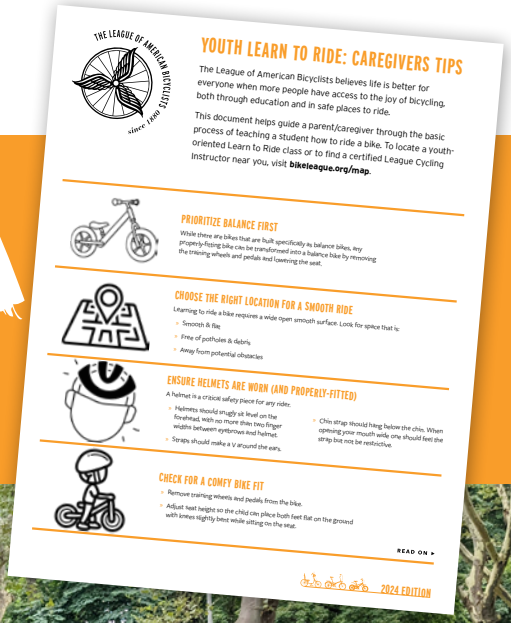
WELCOMING STUDENTS AND ADULTS

Greet youth and adults with a smile and introduce yourself as the instructor. Confirm that the parent/caregiver has signed the waiver for the youth and ask the child to wear a name tag. Using a child's name when giving instruction can go a long way in attracting their attention and making them feel more comfortable in the class.

Consider providing the Learn to Ride info sheet for adults in advance and at the class so that parents/caregivers know what to expect. Inform adults where they can sit and watch. It is beneficial for the parents/caregivers to watch and listen to the instruction on learning to ride so they understand the methods and can reinforce and encourage continued learning at home but they should be at a distance so they are not a distraction to the learning.

A one-page handout describing the steps of learning to ride is available on the League's website. This makes a great handout for parents/caregivers!

Visit bikeleague.org for more information.



PRESENTING INFORMATION TO YOUTH

Keeping the kids active and engaged is key to providing a fun learning environment. Children tend to have short attention spans. Talk too much trying to explain biking and you may lose their attention, so try to use your talking moments as a way of introducing key points and then as a way to offer breaks from their physical efforts of balancing and eventually riding.

Demonstration can be a great way to show the children what you are instructing them to do. Utilize the W-E-D model: WHY is this step important, EXPLAIN the technique; DEMONSTRATE the technique. Make your WHYS and EXPLANATIONS easily understood with age-appropriate vocabulary, make it fun, and be excited.

Children are perceptive. If you aren't having fun, they'll probably not be having fun either.

PREPARING TO LEARN TO RIDE

Learning Objectives

1. **Understanding correct and safe helmet fit**
2. **Achieving proper bike fit**

Stage 1 is the first step in getting kids ready to roll. This is where kids will learn proper helmet fit, confirm the correct bike size, and set the correct seat height. For those who bring their own bike, removing training wheels and pedals may be done here but be aware that these tasks can be time-consuming and will most likely add a lot of waiting time for kids. Encourage parents to remove training wheels and pedals at home and inflate tires to the proper air pressure, or to arrive early if they would like you to do it.

1 HELMET FIT

Helmets are a must for young riders. Typically, local/state laws require a child to wear a helmet when on a bike. Explain the three points of consideration for a proper fitted helmet:

- Helmets should sit level on the forehead, with no more than two finger widths between your eyebrows and helmet.
- Straps should make a V around your ears.
- Chin strap should hang below your chin. When opening your mouth wide one should feel the strap but should not restrict opening your mouth.

You can tell the student to remember "eyes, ears, mouth": you should be able to look up with your eyes and see the front part of your helmet, the "Y" of the strap should fit, right under your earlobe, and the chin strap should be snug enough to move your helmet when you open your mouth wide.

2 BIKE FIT: COMFORT & PREPARATION

Bike fit is a critical part of successfully teaching a child how to ride. Too large of a bike and the child will not be able to push off the ground to practice coasting, they will have difficulty controlling the bike, and it will be hazardous for the child to ride. Too small of a bike will make it difficult for the child to practice balancing and transition to pedaling.

A properly fitted bike will allow the student to comfortably sit on the bike with enough room to pedal. They should be able to keep their hands rested comfortably on the handlebars when seated and turning. There should be at least 1-2 inches of clearance between the child's inseam and the frame, when straddling the bike.

When learning to ride, adjust the seat height so that the child can sit on the seat with BOTH feet flat on the ground with knees slightly bent. (Remember, pedals should be removed at this point.) As the child progresses and gains confidence, and can glide for 30' or more, pedals can be added and the seat can be slightly raised (about an inch or two) from this position to allow more clearance for their knees.

Many youth bikes are equipped with both coaster brakes (a.k.a. pedal brakes) and handbrakes. It is better to emphasize using handbrakes because they make for an easier transition to a bike with gears. It also can be difficult for the child to unlearn the action of backpedaling with a coaster brake.

3 HOW TO ADJUST THE SEAT (SADDLE)

Important: Do not raise the seat beyond the limit line on the seatpost. This can cause the seatpost to fail and/or cause damage to the frame.

If the bike frame has a quick-release seatpost clamp, flip the lever open to move the seatpost up or down. Be sure the seat is straight, level and the quick release is returned to its closed position before riding.

If the bike has a bolted seatpost, loosen the bolt at the top of the frame (where the seatpost goes into the frame) to raise and lower the seat. It may have a standard hex bolt (use a regular wrench) or an allen bolt (a six-sided hole requiring an allen wrench).

- Counter-clockwise to loosen
- Clockwise to tighten

4 TIRES

Both tires should feel firm when pressing down. Give air to underinflated tires.

PREPARING TO LEARN TO RIDE

REMOVING TRAINING WHEELS

If possible, encourage parents and caregivers to remove training wheels prior to the class, if they know how.

If a child arrives with a bike with training wheels, it is necessary to know how to remove them.

- Use an adjustable or 15mm wrench (preferred).
- Remove only one axle nut at a time to keep the rear wheel centered and the chain tight.
- Place the training wheels in a bag with the students name to keep track of them.

REMOVING PEDALS

Pedal removal can be time-consuming so if you have a fleet of bikes that students will be using, consider removing the pedals prior to your class time or investing in quick-release pedals for your fleet.

If students bring their own bike, have a system in place to keep the right and left pedals together as a pair. Place them in a bag and write the child's name on the bag. This will save you time when re-installing.

Note: The left pedal is reverse-threaded and thus screws in the opposite direction of the right pedal. That being said, the following applies to both pedals: When standing behind the rear wheel of the bike and looking down on the pedal, turn backwards to loosen and forward to tighten.

LEARNING TO RIDE

Learning Objectives

1. Gain comfort and confidence while using handbrake(s)
2. Understand the difference between the right brake and left brake
3. Gain comfort, control and confidence while walking beside a bike

1 USING THE HANDBRAKES

Many kids' bikes may only be equipped with a coaster brake and not handbrakes. If this is the case, this step will not be necessary. More and more youth bikes are being equipped with both coaster (a.k.a. foot/pedal brakes) and handbrakes. It is beneficial to teach kids how to use the handbrake so their transition to using gears is easier.

Demonstrate how to use the handbrake(s) on the bike. Teach kids to use the handbrakes to stop—even if they have a coaster brake. Many kids' bikes are only equipped with the right (rear) brake. If both left (front) and right (rear) brakes are present, instruct children to use both brakes. Explain that they should never use only the left brake since this may send them over their handlebars. Have students raise their right hand and place it on the handlebar and squeeze the brake lever. Explain that the right hand brake activates the rear wheel. Then have students raise their left hand, and place both hands on the handlebars and squeeze both brake levers.

A fun way to practice stopping and slowing is by playing the game, "Red Light Green Light." Start by having the child place both hands on the handlebars and walking with the bike on their right side. Say "red light!" and have the child squeeze both brake levers to stop, then "green light" to start again. Yellow light or "slow" can be used to teach the child how to gradually apply the brakes to slow their roll. Repeat until they grasp the concept of slowing and stopping, then play the game again once they have started pedaling the bike.

Emphasize to only use the left brake when also using the right brake—never use the left brake by itself.

LEARNING TO RIDE

Learning Objectives

1. Comfortably get on and off the bike
2. Rest all of one's weight on the seat
3. "Walk" or "Row" a bike
4. Eyes always looking ahead
5. Gain comfort when braking

Getting On and Off

We recommend children learn to mount the bike from the left side. If getting on or off from the right side, children will not be able to activate the kickstand, in addition to potentially getting grease on their clothing from the right "drive side" of the bike.

2 LEARNING TO BALANCE

It's time to get kids moving *on* bikes. First, demonstrate how to get on and off the bike: Instruct the children to stand on the left side of the bike close to the handlebars, place both hands on the handlebars and lean the bike toward themselves. Swing the right leg over the back of the seat and rear tire and stand in front of the seat and straddle the bike. Next, have the children sit on the seat. Their feet should both be flat on the ground with knees slightly bent and both hands should comfortably reach the handlebars.

To get off the bike, make sure the bike is stable and have children stand in front of the seat. The rider should be straddling the bike. Have children step out with their left foot and lean the bike to the left. Swing the right leg over the seat and rear wheel so that the rider ends up with both legs on the left side of the bike. Practice multiple times to gain consistency and comfort with this movement.

Walk or Row

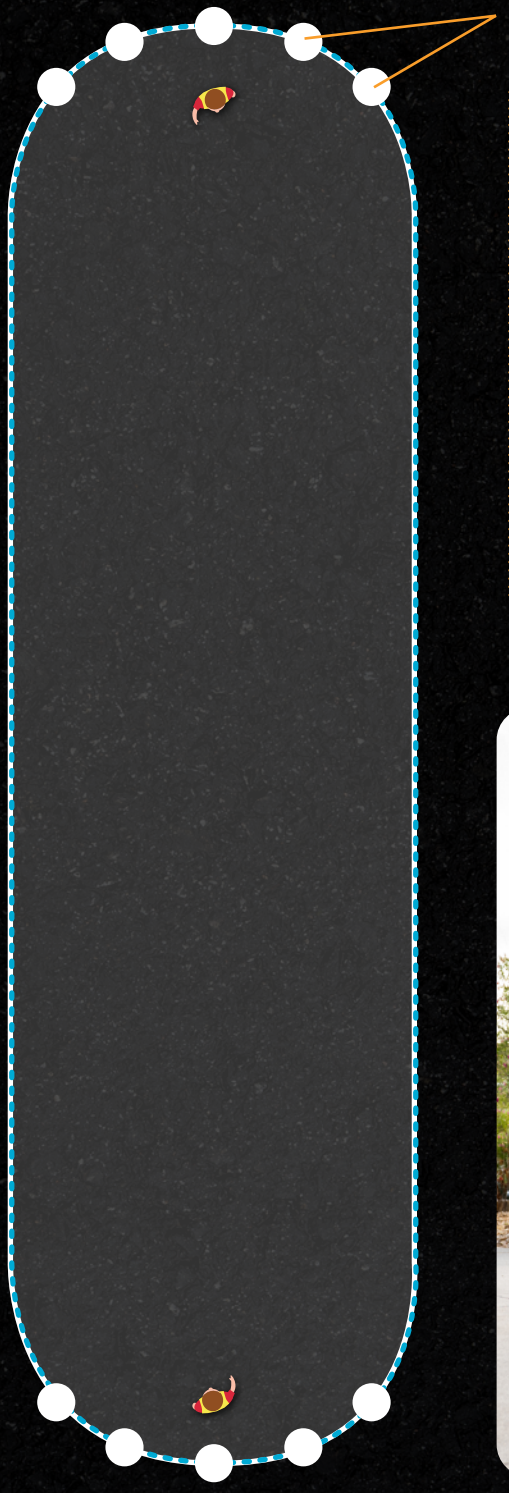
Demonstrate how to "walk" or "row". Have kids get on the bike and place their full weight on the seat. "Walking" means they will alternate their feet in pushing off with one foot, then the other foot, resembling a walking motion. "Rowing" means they are pushing with both feet at the same time. Either motion is fine, as long as they are pushing themselves and moving forward on the bike. Emphasize that the child must have their full weight sitting on the bike while in motion. It will be impossible for the child to pick up their speed and learn to glide or coast if their full weight is not on the seat. Also, double-check the seat height and ensure it's not too low.

While they are walking and/or rowing their bike, instruct them to look ahead as they move. It is common for new riders to look down at their feet or at the ground as they move—this is counterproductive. Point out a large object ahead for kids to focus on. A rider must be looking up for safety and to start learning a sense of balance that is essential for riding.

Stopping by Using the Handbrakes

Once the children have mastered "walking" or "rowing" on the bike, ask them to start using their handbrakes when they want to stop. Encouraging the use of handbrakes early on will help children develop the best reflexes to stop once they start traveling at faster speeds later down the road. Before they learn, kids may intuitively want to stop their movement by dragging their feet on the ground. Instead, reinforce that they should be using their handbrakes to slow or stop, not their feet.

COURSE SET UP: LEARN TO BALANCE



- **With multiple students make sure they all go in the same direction.** Stop and switch directions to give them experience turning both left and right.
- **Course shown is the minimum needed.** A larger course will more easily accommodate larger classes and will give children more opportunity to glide farther.
- **Dashed line is for illustration only.** You do not have to mark the course.

3 COASTING OR GLIDING

Learning Objectives

1. Coasting/Gliding on a bike
2. Increasing speed on a bike
3. Mastering balance

Gliding

Now that the children are gaining a sense of balance through "walking" or "rowing" their bike, it's time to add the coast or glide. Demonstrate how to give yourself a big push with one or both feet and then pick up your feet to glide. Remind them to look ahead as they glide. Don't rush them. Allow the kids to glide at whatever distance they feel comfortable. These are magic moments for the child, as they feel themselves glide on two wheels for the first time. As they gain confidence and improve their sense of balance, they will glide farther and farther. This is where a slight downhill grade can help them gain the speed needed to increase their glide. Give praise for small successes along the way and encourage the students to work towards longer glides. First 5 feet, then 10, then 20, working way up to 30-40 feet of gliding.

Increasing Speed & Mastering Balance

When learning to ride, speed can be a good friend. A bike that is barely moving wants to fall down, a bike that is rolling faster is easier to balance and will work in a child's favor. Students should be encouraged to use big pushes off the ground to gain speed. Continue this drill until a child can coast at least 30 feet without putting a foot down. At this point, their sense of balance has developed and they are ready to add the pedals.

Re-installing pedals can take some time. This may be a good time in the class to allow students to get a drink of water, have a snack, and/or use the bathroom. This may also be a good time to stop the class and begin on another day. Young children tire easily and their attention span may be exhausted at this point. You may be exhausted too! Assess your level of energy and your students' level of energy and plan accordingly.

Ride the Course

Demonstrate proper balance and gliding technique for students that are ready to ride the course continuously. Remind children to steer with caution and yield to others when riding in a group. Have children ride in the same direction on the course, and encourage them to push with their feet and then pick up their feet and glide. Gliding will start with only a few feet, but typically gliding distance increases rapidly.

4 PEDALING

Learning Objectives

1. Adjust seat height
2. Review coasting and braking
3. Pedaling
4. Starting on a slight uphill

Adjust Seat Height

Raise the seat (saddle) about an inch. The adjustment can be made in the same fashion as when you lowered it. Raising the seat will make it more comfortable for the child to pedal, giving their knees a little more clearance from the handlebars. Raising it can be done incrementally as the child becomes more comfortable with pedaling and braking. Finding the correct seat height can come gradually, as the child gets more comfortable with pedaling, turning, and stopping on their bike. Eventually, you'd like to have a seat height that allows the child to be up on their tip-toes when sitting on the seat.

Review Coasting and Braking

Review the act of balancing and using the handbrakes with each child so they gain comfort with their slightly higher seat height. Once the seat is raised and the student can comfortably and consistently coast 30-40 feet on one push, it's time to add the pedals. Make a big deal of this—they earned their pedals!

Pedaling

There are two methods to introduce pedaling to the students. For most children, it's better to go with Method 1 from the start. However for younger children, we have provided Method 2, as well as other tips for those learning at a slower pace.

Before getting started, it can be helpful to do a small demonstration so that the students can visualize the effectiveness of the Pedal Power Position (PPP). Lift the back of the bike off the ground and show them the rear wheel spinning as you turn the cranks.

Have the student straddle the bike. The bike should be leaned slightly to the left so all of their weight is on that foot. Use the right foot to rotate the right pedal to a higher position. Ideally the crank arm should be parallel to the downtube of the bike, or at about two o'clock. Instruct the child to place that foot on the pedal.

Instruct the student to push down on the right pedal, while simultaneously using the left foot to push on the ground (like using a kick scooter). This can be a challenging maneuver for students and may take some practice. It should be noted that a bike with a coaster brake cannot be backpedaled into the PPP, since backward movement of the pedals will engage the brakes and stop forward momentum. It is helpful to hold the student with one or two hands on their back and give them a slight push and hold them steady the first few times.

Remind them to look straight ahead instead of at their feet or front wheel.

Method 1: Starting From the Power Pedal Position (PPP)

Ideally the crank arm should be parallel to the downtube of the bike, or at about two o'clock. This is called the power pedal position because it gives the rider the most forward propulsion from a stop.

Practicing the PPP on a slight downhill grade makes it easier and will help students get a feel for the maneuver, before trying it on flat ground.

Method 2: Continuation of Walking or Rowing

Have the child "walk" or "row" the bike, with pedals on, to get it moving, then, without looking down at the pedals, have them gently put their feet on the pedals and pedal forward. Many of them already know how to turn pedals. But when combining balancing and pedaling, they often press one of the pedals backward, which can activate the coaster brake, if present, and will stop the bike. With practice, they will gain comfort in pushing the pedals forward and avoid unintentionally backpedaling. If using this method, you will eventually want to teach the students the power pedal position described in Method 1. It is a much more reliable and effective method of starting.

TIP FOR SLOWER LEARNERS

Consider installing one pedal at a time for children who are learning at a slower pace. Using only one pedal to start can be easier and may be the middle step that some kids need to master this maneuver. Ask which hand is their dominant hand (which hand do they write or draw with) and install that pedal first.

Have the student practice "finding" the pedal without looking at their feet. Hold the handle bar of the bike and have the front wheel between your knees as the child sits on the seat with their feet on the ground and holding the handlebar grips.

The instructor and student are facing each other. Instruct the student to practice lifting their feet off the ground and place their foot on the pedal (positioned in a lower position) without looking down. Allow the child to practice a few times until they are comfortable with "finding the pedal." Once mastered, you can add the second pedal, and begin to practice the power pedal position start.

Starting on a Slight Uphill

After the student can start, pedal, and stop consistently on a flat or slight downhill, it is time to have them start on a slightly uphill road surface. It may be challenging at first and they may need to push off harder and get their foot on the second pedal sooner to continue the momentum.

Be very encouraging in this step, as they have mastered pedaling but sometimes starting on an uphill can take their new-found confidence away. If the bike has gears it is a good time to shift to an even easier gear if needed and possibly explain the benefits of having gears for different terrains, depending on the age of the student.

If your student is using a bike with gears, be sure they are operating in a middle gear. Being in either too hard of gear or too easy of a gear may make it more difficult for the child to begin the transition to pedaling.

5 STOPPING

Learning Objectives

1. Stopping position
2. Steps for a smooth stop

Stopping Positions

Now that kids are moving at faster speeds, it is important to offer additional instruction on stopping. Remind students that the first step in slowing or stopping is to stop pedaling. When the student stops pedaling with the intention to stop, instruct them to stop with their feet in the "stopping position."

For bikes with handbrakes, the best stopping position would be with the right foot in the 6 o'clock position. This preferred position will prepare the rider for a successful and smooth re-start, thus making it the ideal stopping position.

After the student stops pedaling, instruct them to apply both handbrakes gradually and when they reach the desired stopping point, pull both brake levers firmly. Once the bike stops, the left foot steps forward and is placed on the ground. The student slides their weight forward off the seat. Then the right foot can move the pedal into the PPP. Remind students that their feet should not come off the pedals until the bike stops.

Steps for a Smooth Stop:

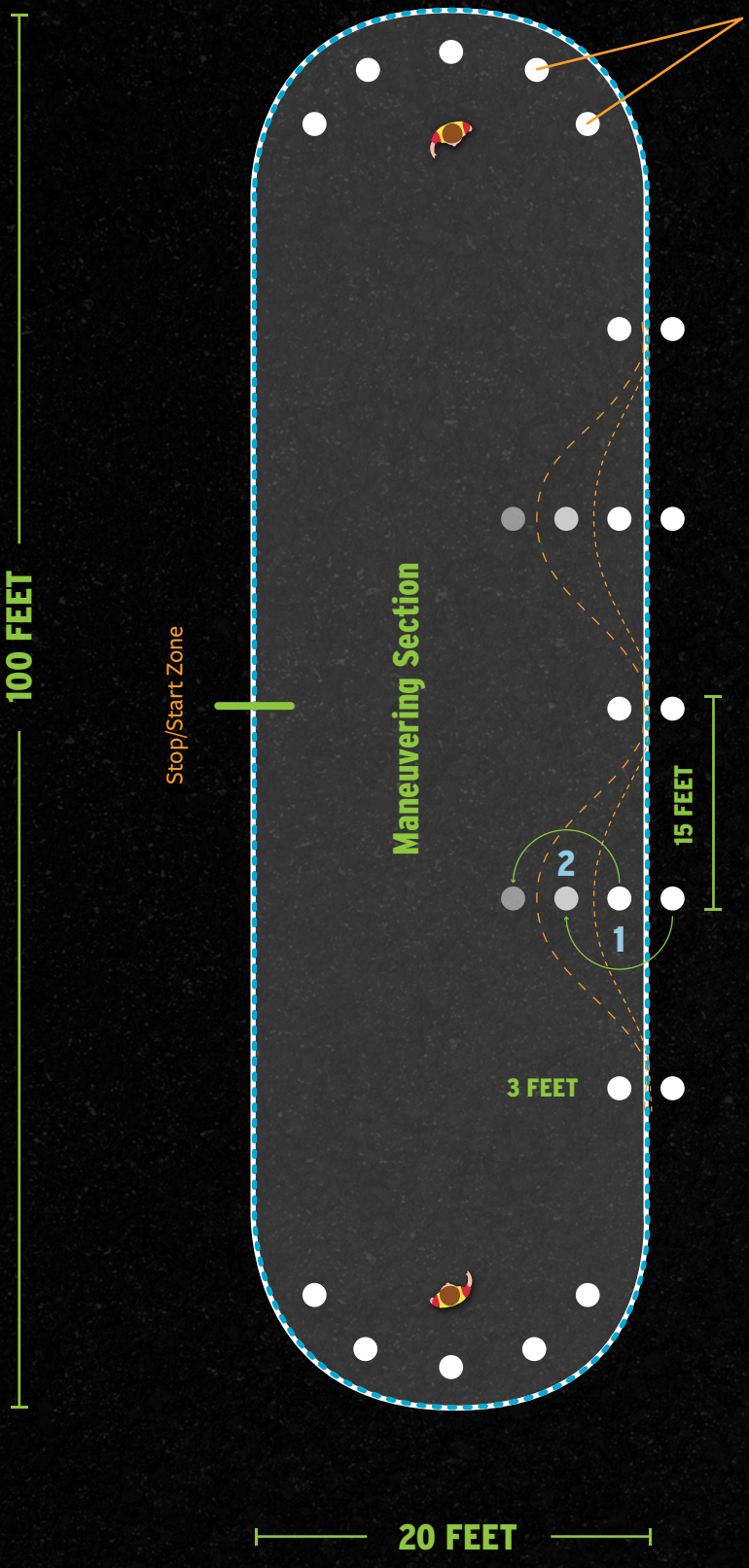
- Stop pedaling
- Pedals in stopping position
- Apply handbrakes or pedal brake to slow down and eventually stop the bike
- When the bike stops, step forward with the left foot.

Riding Skills Practice

The minimum space needed for the course is 60' x 100' but if there is more space available, use it! A larger space gives the children the opportunity to ride further and will also more readily accommodate larger classes ***(reference diagram on next page).***

For bikes with pedal (a.k.a. coaster) brakes, the stopping position is to have the non-starting foot in the 8 o'clock position.

COURSE SET UP: STOPPING, STRAIGHT LINES, AND TURNING



6 STRAIGHT LINE PRACTICE

Lay out tennis ball halves in straight lines in pairs at 15' intervals with 3' separating the pairs. Encourage students to ride down the middle between the two lines and look several sets of tennis balls ahead. Encourage students to also look ahead when turning

- **This is a minimum course with only 4 segments in the maneuvering section.** If more space is available, add more segments to give students more chances to learn and have fun.
- **With multiple students make sure they all go in the same direction.** Stop and switch directions to give them experience turning both left and right.
- **If there is a slope, make the course across the slope as opposed to up and down the slope.**

When it is time to increase the level of difficulty in the maneuvering section, simply move every other right marker 3 feet to the left side of the left marker.

7 TURNING

Learning Objectives

1. Tips for successful turning
2. Turning practice

Tips for Turning

Demonstrate turning with a slight lean in the direction of the turn, inside pedal up and coasting. Brakes should be applied before the turn but not during the turn. Instruct the student to coast during the turn and then pedal out of the turn. If the pedal on the inside of the turn is bottomed out, it may strike the ground and cause them to fall. When demonstrating the turn, point out that it doesn't take much movement to turn your bike—a little goes a long way!

Successful Turning:

- Slight lean in the direction of the turn
- Brake before the turn, not during
- Look where you want to go
- Keep inside pedal up
- Coast through the turn
- Pedal out of the turn

Turning Practice

Stagger the tennis balls that were set up in a straight line to make a slalom course. This will force students to look ahead at the next turn. Once they master this, encourage students to look way ahead, and lean into the turn. Make sure everyone is traveling in the same direction, keeping their heads up, and having fun.

Additional lessons can be conducted to increase confidence and provide additional practice with starting, stopping, handling, and shifting. The following could be offered to children who have mastered balancing and pedaling:

- Tennis ball halves can be configured in a narrow lane with left and right turns to provide braking and turning practice.
- For children with geared bikes, shifting can be taught by riding behind them and instructing them when to shift.
- If a hill with a slight grade is available, children can be taught how to modulate braking to maintain control going downhill.
- A slalom course can be set up on a hill which will help them practice shifting, braking, and handling skills simultaneously.
- A "snail race" is a fun challenge for more experienced children, who "race" to see who can go the slowest over a short distance without putting a foot down. This develops fine motor skills and further solidifies their sense of balance.
- Finally, encourage your students to continue practicing their cycling skills by taking a Youth Smart Cycling class. Here they'll practice signaling, scanning, avoidance maneuvers and more skills to help them ride more confidently and safely.

WRAP UP / TEACHING TIPS

TEACHING TIPS

- **Stay positive and provide lots of praise.**
- **Have fun!**
- **Look for early signs of frustration and offer encouragement.**
- **Reinforce what the rider already knows and try to get their confidence back.**
- **Celebrate small victories.**

Offer congratulations to everyone on their progress and a job well done. (Congratulate yourself as well, as you have taught a skill that children will carry with them throughout their life!) Encourage students to keep practicing at home and make sure the parent is aware that training wheels are no longer needed.

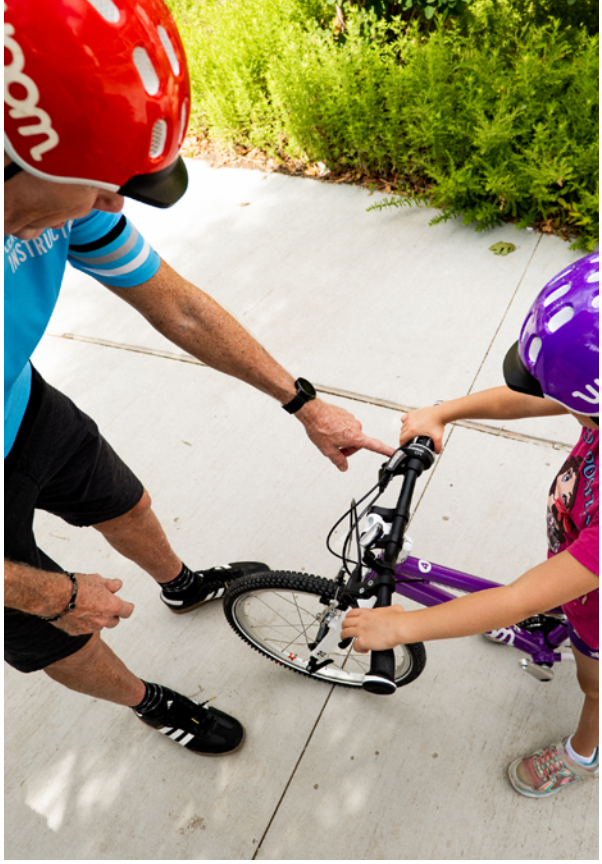
It is beneficial to have a Youth Skills class or a bike rodeo already scheduled and encourage parents/caregivers to enroll their child to continue learning good riding technique. The sooner kids get back on their bikes the easier and quicker they will continue their progress and improvement. Provide reward certificates, bookmarks, pins, or stickers as take-homes, if you have them.

NEED-TO-KNOWS FOR NEW YOUNG RIDERS

It's never too early to teach safe riding behavior. These "Need-to-Knows" are an important part of any cycling education. Take the time to introduce each concept in a simple and informative way. Remind students that as they build confidence and awareness with their riding, they should ride mostly on trails, multi-use paths, protected bike lanes, sidewalks, and low traffic streets.

- **Follow the Law:** Stop at stop signs and red lights. Always ride in the direction of traffic and use the right-most part of the space you are riding in.
- **Be Predictable:** Ride in a straight line. Use your bell or voice to tell people you are passing them. Signal your turns.
- **Be conspicuous:** Ride so that you are seen by others. Watch out for cars pulling out of driveways, parking lots and other spaces. Use lights and reflectors at night—white light in front and red light in back. When stopped at an intersection, make eye contact with drivers to confirm they see you.
- **Think Ahead:** Look ahead when riding and anticipate what other users will do. Use caution at intersections. Do not ride directly next to parked cars in case someone opens their door in your path.
- **Ride Ready:** Wear a helmet. Check that your tires are firm to the touch. Your brake lever(s) when pulled should stop your bike and have at least an inch between the brake lever and your handlebar. Check that your quick releases are in the closed position (typically on wheels and seat collar).

NOTES



REMIND STUDENTS AND PARENTS ABOUT THESE FREE RESOURCES

Learn more about the League of American Bicyclists' programs, watch our library of free instructional videos, purchase supplemental materials and more at ***bikeleague.org/ridesmart***.

To find an on-bike group ride class or an instructor near you, visit ***bikeleague.org/connect***.

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To create a bicycle-friendly America for Everyone, improving lives and strengthening communities through bicycling.