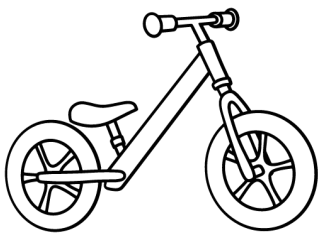




YOUTH LEARN TO RIDE: CAREGIVERS TIPS

The League of American Bicyclists believes life is better for everyone when more people have access to the joy of bicycling, both through education and in safe places to ride.

This document helps guide a parent/caregiver through the basic process of teaching a student how to ride a bike. To locate a youth-oriented Learn to Ride class or to find a certified League Cycling Instructor near you, visit bikeleague.org/map.



PRIORITIZE BALANCE FIRST

While there are bikes that are built specifically as balance bikes, any properly-fitting bike can be transformed into a balance bike by removing the training wheels and pedals and lowering the seat.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT LOCATION FOR A SMOOTH RIDE

Learning to ride a bike requires a wide open smooth surface. Look for space that is:

- » Smooth & flat
- » Free of potholes & debris
- » Away from potential obstacles



ENSURE HELMETS ARE WORN (AND PROPERLY-FITTED)

A helmet is a critical safety piece for any rider.

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



CHECK FOR A COMFY BIKE FIT

- » Remove training wheels and pedals from the bike.
- » Adjust seat height so the child can place both feet flat on the ground with knees slightly bent while sitting on the seat.

READ ON ►



2024 EDITION

STEPS AND TIPS FOR LEARNING TO RIDE

1. Walk or Row

Have the child get on the bike and place their full weight on the seat. Have them “walk” or “row” as they are sitting on the bike. “Walking” means they will alternate their feet by 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.

Tips

- » Rider’s full weight must be on seat
- » Rider is looking ahead, not down at their feet

2. Gliding

Once the child has gained a sense of balance, it’s time to glide or coast.

Tips

- » Have the rider give a big push, then pick up feet to glide
- » Eyes up, looking ahead
- » Speed makes balancing easier

3. Pedaling

Once the child is gliding for 30 feet or more, raise the seat about an inch and add the pedals.

Tips

- » While gliding, have the child put their feet on the pedals and pedal forward.
- » If the bike has gears, make sure it’s in an easy gear to start.
- » Remind the child to brake when needed.

4. Stopping

Stopping with hand brakes should be introduced when learning to walk or row. Coaster brakes, (i.e. foot brakes) can only be used with pedals attached, and should only be used as a secondary means of braking.

Steps for a smooth stop:

- » Stop pedaling
- » Apply both hand brakes simultaneously (or apply coaster brake)

5. Turning

It doesn’t take much handlebar movement to turn your bike—a little goes a long way!

Successful turning:

- » Start with wide turns
- » Brake before the turn, not during the turn
- » Slight lean in the direction of the turn
- » Inside pedal up (to avoid pedal striking)
- » Coast through the turn
- » Pedal out of the turn

OVERALL TIPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

- » **Stay positive** and provide lots of praise
- » **Have fun!**
- » Look for early signs of frustration and **offer encouragement**
- » **Reinforce** what the child already knows
- » Allow a child to **progress at their own pace**
- » **Celebrate** small victories

CHECK OUT 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 youth-oriented Learn to Ride class or an instructor near you, visit bikeleague.org/connect.

Enjoy the Ride!



Scan This to View The League’s Instructional Videos On YouTube



WITH SUPPORT FROM **woom**

League of American Bicyclists
1612 K Street NW, Suite 1102
Washington, DC 20006

education@bikeleague.org
202-822-1333