



Insider

News and information to help Florida's aging road users



March 2019

The Safe Mobility for Life Program and Coalition honors March as Florida Bicycling Month. Bicycling can help Floridians stay connected to their community and increase their health and well-being.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle that allows people to stay connected to their community, beyond the driver's seat, begins with knowing The Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life:



Understand



Be Proactive



Plan



To request outreach materials:
Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center
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Understand

Older adults embrace bicycling as a way to get around

As people age, getting around independently can become difficult. Remaining active and mobile is important for people of all ages and abilities. Older adults are prone to facing isolation because they are unaware of their transportation options.

Knowing how to safely ride a bicycle could be the difference between remaining active and independent or taking fewer trips to social activities and medical appointments. Riding a bike can reduce the occurrence of many serious illnesses and help you live longer according to a study published through The BMJ. This may be the reason why more aging road users have taken up cycling.

Bicycle ridership among adults 60 years and older is growing faster than among other age groups, according to data collected by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Riding a bike is a fun way to exercise and a good transportation option for people of all ages. But, before starting a new bicycling routine, speak to a doctor



about any health issues that could limit or prevent riding.

To find a community of bike riders, The League of American Bicyclists is a good place to start. Go to their website and enter your city, ZIP code or state to find a wealth of information about the Bicycle Friendly America (BFA) program. The listing will include bike shops, clubs, classes, events and bike instructors in communities near you. If you are thinking about biking or are already an avid cyclist, the Florida Bicycle Association provides information on bicycling, road and path rules, and bike clubs in Florida.



Be Proactive

Bicycle safety workshops for older adults

In recent years, Florida updated and upgraded bicycling efforts, which earned a top ten ranking in bicycle education and encouragement in 2017 (according to The League of American Bicyclists). With more older adults riding bikes as a means of transportation, exercise and recreation, it is important to provide resources to help them be safer bicyclists. The Safe Bicycling for Life workshop (formerly known as Bicyclists are Golden workshop) can teach older adults to become safer bicyclists and pedal with peace of mind.

The Safe Bicycling for Life workshop provides in-class instruction and outside bike skills training to older adults interested in bicycling as a safe transportation option. The workshops are generally five to six hours and use a train-the-trainer model to teach individuals. Course participants, in turn, teach other older adults (e.g., senior recreation center



staff, county/city staff, independent/assisted living staff, and other community professionals).

Safe Bicycling for Life is designed by The Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program (FTBSEP) and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation's Safety Office. The program helps teach individuals how to be competent and safe pedestrians and bicyclists.

For more information about Safe Bicycling for Life, contact the FTBSEP at (352) 294-1685 or visit its website at hfp.ufl.edu/safety.



Does your bike fit you?

CarFit, a Safe Mobility for Life partner, does great work by helping older drivers maintain comfort and safety inside their vehicle. Cyclists also need to ensure they are comfortable and safe on their bicycles. Visit a local bicycle shop and ask an expert to help you find the correct adjustment for your seat and handlebars.



Try Bike Sharing: the no-commitment, low-cost bicycling option

A growing industry called “Bike Share” is making bicycling affordable to those whom cannot afford to own a bike or are concerned they would not use the bike enough to warrant the cost. Companies like Lime and CycleHop have opened locations across Florida to encourage commuters in metropolitan areas to limit their carbon footprint and increase mobility. Lime, perhaps the most well-known of the rising bike share companies, has a presence in 10 cities across Florida. Lime bikes work on a “hubless” system: a prospective user pays and unlocks a bike via an application on their smart phone and can relock the bike wherever their journey has ended.

Many bike share companies operate solar-powered hubs. Users check out the bikes and then return the bikes to another hub

once they have finished. CitiBike, which operates throughout the Metro Miami area, uses a hub-to-hub docking system along with a smart phone app that locates nearby hubs.

Other bike share companies use a hybrid system that directs users to unlock and pay from an app, but the user can only pick up and drop off bikes at designated hubs. BCycle, which operates in Aventura and Fort Lauderdale, uses the hybrid app and hub system.

If you don’t want to commit to purchasing a bike, try a bike share program like CycleHop. They operate the Juice Bike Share program in Orlando and the Coast Bike Share program in Tampa and St. Petersburg.





 **Lifelong Communities Spotlight:**

Biking in The Villages

The Villages is home to several active bicycle clubs. Panthers Tandem Club, Sumter Landing Bike Club and The Village Bicycle Club each meet three times a week. The Villages' Enrichment Academy also provides courses on bicycle safety and skills throughout the year.



Bike Riding 101: what you need to know to get started

Bicycling is a great form of exercise and often a highly enjoyable one, too. Many older adults use bicycling as a form of exercise and recreation, and it is also a greener and healthier way to get around town rather than using a motorized vehicle.

Before riding, implement a few extra safety precautions to prevent injury and ensure a safe ride.

Ride the right bike. Part of being safe while cycling is choosing the right bike. Select a bike that is the correct size for your height and comfort. Find one that is designed for the terrain on which you will be riding. A general rule is that when you stand over the frame, there should be:

- One to two inches between you and the frame of a road or hybrid bicycle.
- Three to four inches between you and the frame of a mountain bike.
- A slight bend in your knee when the pedal is pushed all the way down for beach cruisers and step-through/low-entry frames. You should also be able to touch the ground with your feet flat when seated.

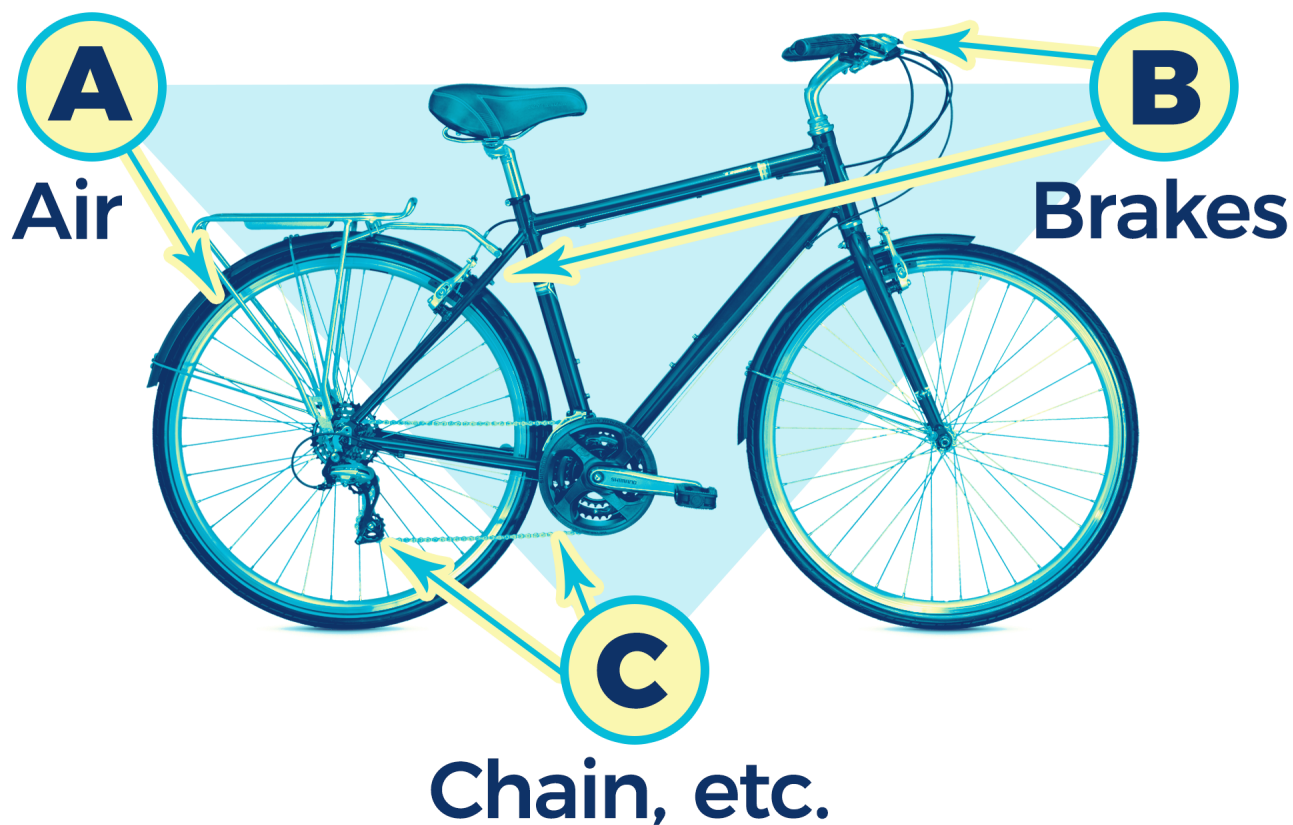
Choose the easier routes. Choose routes with flat surfaces or that have the least amount of incline. To avoid dealing with traffic, city parks (or municipal trails) can be a good alternative.

Wear a helmet. Wearing a helmet while riding is the number one golden rule when it comes to bicycle safety. Wearing a helmet can significantly reduce the severity of a head injury in the event of a crash. Bicycle helmets come in various sizes and styles. Taking the time to properly fit your helmet is important for both comfort and safety. When properly fitted and tightly fastened, a bicycle helmet should:

- Sit level on your head and not over your eyebrows or far back showing your forehead. There should be one to two fingers of space between your eyebrows and the helmet.
- The side straps should form a “V” under your ears.
- The center buckle under your chin should be secure and snug so that no more than two fingers fit between your chin and the strap.
- Check the fit. Make sure the helmet does not move when nodding or shaking your head.
- Any helmet involved in a crash, or impact, must be thrown away and replaced.

When in doubt about proper fit, ask your local cycle shop for help.

Check Your Bike Before You Ride: Know the ABCs to Safety



Conduct bike maintenance with the ABC Quick Check. The ABC Quick Check (Air, Brake, Chain/Cassette/Crank Check) helps you identify potential issues before you go out on a ride where they can become major safety issues. Stop by a bicycle shop for help if you have any questions with the following checks:

- **Air:** Make sure your tires have the right air pressure. The recommended air pressure can be found on the sidewall of the tire. Also check the tire itself to make sure it is in good shape. It is good practice to inflate the tires a few hours or a day before you ride to ensure there is not a slow leak.
- **Brakes:** Check brakes by lifting each tire off the ground and spin the wheel. The tire should stop smoothly and promptly when you squeeze the brake lever. Make sure the brake pads are clean and that they make contact with the metal rim when the lever is depressed.

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Check Your Bike Before You Ride: Know the ABCs to Safety

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- **Chain, crank, chain ring, cassette:** Inspect the chain, crank, chain ring and cassette for rust, looseness, or debris. Make sure there is no clicking or jumping gears when spinning the chain since this could be a sign of a mechanical failure.

Learn the rules of the road for bicyclists. As a bicyclist, you must always obey traffic laws. They are in place to keep you and others safe. Visit the Florida Department of Transportation's Alert Today Alive Tomorrow website at <https://www.alerttodayflorida.com/> to learn more about Florida bicycle laws.

Read about more bicycling safety tips by downloading the Safe Mobility for Life and Alert Today Alive Tomorrow bicycling booklet at <http://safemobilityfl.com/AgingRoadUser.htm#Bicyclists>.

Do you know a group of older adults who would be interested in learning more about the Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life? Email Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com to schedule a "You Hold the Keys to Your Transportation Future" workshop today.



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Safe Mobility for Life Program

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