

Pointers for riding on a bike path

Before you start on the path, be sure the path is clear, that no one is close to you. Check in front of you and also look over your shoulder. If someone is going by on a bike or even walking right behind you, just wait a moment until the coast is clear. Getting going is the wobbliest time and it's good to have lots of room.

When it's nice and open, start riding on the right side. Once you confirm that you can go reasonably straight, you can pass people coming the other way. Always have your hands on the brakes as you pass someone, just in case.

The only time you cross the center line is for passing pedestrians or turning, which I don't recommend doing right away. Wait until you're pretty steady and comfortable being on the path. But, when it seems that you are ready to pass a pedestrian, look forward on the path in the left lane and see that there's nobody coming. If there is, just stop behind the pedestrian. Assuming it is clear in the left lane ahead of you for quite far ahead, look back to see if any fast biker is passing you. If a fast biker is passing you, just stop, but if that's clear, you can go out, well before the person, going way out into the other lane and going well beyond the person before going back into your normal lane.

The looking back routine also applies to turning left and to doing turns at the end of the path, if you want to turn back. Any time you change lanes, you need to look back.

When there are too many people or dogs or whatever, just stop. Whenever there seem to be too many people to comfortably start, just stay where you are until it clears out. There is nothing wrong with stopping or with waiting quite a while to start. When in doubt, stop.

If you want to announce your presence to people you're passing, feel free to say "passing on your left" or something like that. But be sure you never use this as a way of asking people to move over, assuming they will. If you ever do need for people to move over, you can say something, but wait to see if they do in fact move over before you go past. Stopping is usually the best thing for new riders, if the way isn't clear.

Happy trails,

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