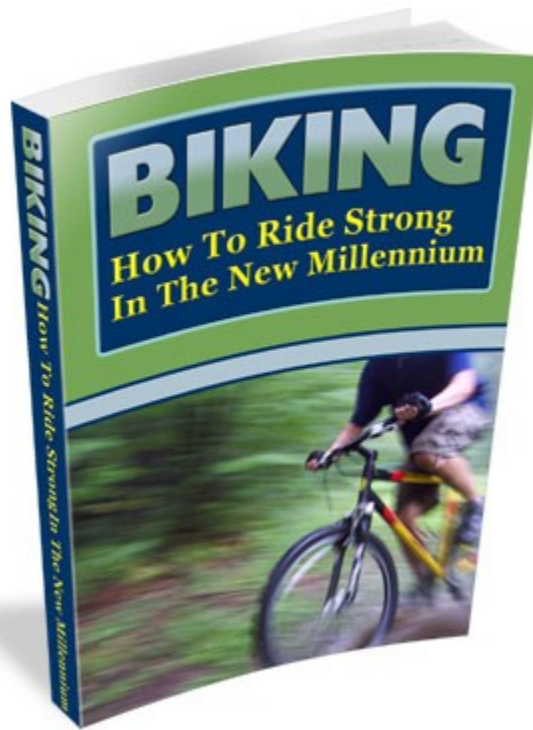




# BIKING



## **A Beginner's Guide to Biking**



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# BIKING

## **INTRODUCTION**

Biking is one of the most basic forms of human transportation. Bikes are used by millions of people worldwide. In many countries, bikes are the most popular method of transportation and there are hundreds of times more bikes than cars and trucks. Even in heavily industrialized nations such as the United States, there are still millions of bikes. Some are used for basic everyday transportation, but most are used for recreation or exercise rather than commuting.

Many people have fond memories of learning to ride a bike as children. For many children learning to ride a bike is a rite of passage and gives them their first real taste of freedom from parents. Biking has always been used as a form of transportation but in the last few decades biking has grown from just a mode of transportation into a major competitive sport, a fitness and exercise staple, and a career for the thousands of bike messengers and delivery people in major cities across the country. Since the invention of the first bike people have loved the ease and reliability of riding a bike and the fitness benefits that cycling brings.

Biking then fills many needs for many people. This book will describe some of the knowledge that is good to know whether one wishes to use a bike for commuting, recreation or fitness. This book will cover many aspects of how to choose a quality bike and how to use it.



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## The Growing Popularity of Biking

No matter how popular and necessary automobiles are, bikes remain popular in the United States. A study on the fitness habits of Americans found that more than sixty million Americans regularly go biking as a hobby or just as a way to enjoy getting outdoors. Sixty million people can't be wrong about the joys of biking. Biking vacations for singles, couples and families are growing in popularity as more families use their vacation time as a time for family activities instead of traditional tourist activities. Mountain biking has been a very popular sport for fans of extreme sports for the last few years and competitive bike racing has been rapidly growing in popularity due to the success of public biking figures like Lance Armstrong. Using a bike as transportation is very trendy among young environmentally-minded adults both for the environmental benefits and the physical benefits.





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## **Why Ride a Bike?**

Biking has many benefits, both for people and for the environment. One of the biggest benefits of biking is the pure joy of being outdoors. Biking is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and to be active. Biking is a wonderful activity for parents and kids to do together, and biking is just plain fun. Lots of community leaders and town leaders are realizing that biking is very popular as a family activity and are adding new bike trails, bike paths and the facilities that families need like sidewalks in their communities and towns to make it easier for people to get outside and go biking. Biking can be inexpensive. Biking is a great way to get fit, and biking has a lot of environmental as well as physical benefits. If you are concerned about the environment commuting to work by bike can be a great way to stay fit, get in a daily workout, and help the environment.

### ***The Fitness Benefits of Biking***

Tied into the joy of biking are the fitness benefits of biking. Obesity is becoming a huge crisis in the United States and more than 40 percent of Americans are overweight. To combat the growing health crisis caused by obesity and being overweight doctors and other health experts are strongly encouraging people to rediscover the joys of physical activity. Since so many people are out of shape low impact exercises like biking are highly recommended for people who live sedentary or nearly sedentary lives as a way to get started on the path to fitness. Like any other physical activity there are different levels of biking that range from a simple bike ride to training for biking marathons but just like a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step the journey to fitness begins with a bike ride around the block.





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For people who live in areas that don't have bike-friendly streets or have predominantly bad weather many gyms and workout facilities have exercise bikes in a variety of different styles for their members to use. In the last decade spinning classes, or guided cycling classes that combine the benefits of an intense aerobic workout with the benefits of cycling can burn up to 500 calories in 40 minutes. Many gyms offer spinning classes free for members. Spinning is not appropriate for beginning bikers because it can be very intense but people who want to increase their fitness and want an intense workout may really like spinning.

Biking is a great workout for the entire body, especially the lower body. People who want to develop great muscle tone on their legs, back end and hips while trimming their waists and increasing their cardio vascular health should try biking. Biking regularly can significantly decrease a person's risk for heart disease. Since heart disease is one of the biggest killers of Americans any activity that can decrease your risk of heart disease is something worth pursuing.

Biking is a low-impact activity that doesn't cause a lot of stress on joints so biking is a good exercise for people who may have limited range of motion or may not be able to handle an exercise like running which puts a lot of stress on the joints. Low impact activities like biking can also reduce cholesterol and can help lower blood pressure, which is a major health concern for millions of people. Bike riding can also reduce stress, and it's been proven that managing stress is a key component when it comes to staying healthy. Biking has a lot of health and fitness benefits, even just short bike rides daily can make a noticeable difference in your health in a very short period of time. You don't need to start out buying a fancy bike or any fancy equipment, just buy an all purpose bike and get outside and start riding.



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## ***The Environmental Benefits of Biking***

There is a lot of focus these days on the problems with the environment. Cars are a major source of the pollution that is contributing to the environmental problems we have today. Especially in large cities the huge numbers of cars driven by people commuting to work everyday have a huge environmental impact. Most people in the United States use their cars to make even short trips of a mile or less, causing major pollution damage. Commuting to work using a bike has become very fashionable among young, hip, environmentally minded adults but it becoming more popular among other adults as well because of the health benefits of biking and also because commuting to work can seriously reduce the amount of pollution that is damaging the environment. Commuting to work by bike or using a bike to run errands and shop reduces pollution and also reduces oil and gas use which has environmental benefits and also can save money.

Using a bike to commute to and from work reduces the amount of pollution and can be far less stressful than sitting in traffic for an hour or more each way. Riding a bike to work and home is also a great way to get in a daily workout without having to hit the gym everyday. You also can't get make an excuse to get out of riding your bike when it's your only way home! If you're not up to commuting to work everyday by bike, consider commuting just one or two days a week by bike to start out with and working up to commuting everyday by bike. Or consider taking a bike to the train station, bus stop, or ferry. Taking public transportation instead of driving has a lot of environmental benefits and riding a bike to and from the public transportation instead of driving a car will help the environment more.