



# Top Tips to learn to cycle.

## Cycling is a complex activity.

To be able to cycle a child needs to have motor planning, co-ordination and balancing skills. Some children find it very hard to use all these skills at the same time, which makes cycling a very challenging activity to learn.

You can help your child learn to ride by breaking the whole activity down into small steps.



## Before you start!

- It is really important that your child wants to learn to cycle. Motivation is essential.
- Your child needs a bike that is the right size and in good working order.
- Find a safe, fairly flat, obstacle free space for practice.
- Ensure your child has a well fitting cycling helmet for safety.



## Good cycling habits.

The following are good things to make sure your child learns from the very first time they get on a bike.

- Keep all fingers around the handlebars (not the brakes).
- Remember to have the balls of the feet on the pedals (not the heels).
- Keep arms and back straight—sit up tall
- Look ahead, not at the ground in front of the wheels.



## 1 o'clock start position.

Help your child to decide which is his/her stronger leg, Have the pedal for this leg near the top "at 1 o'clock" then encourage your child to push through to start moving.



## Stabilisers or trikes.

Stabilisers or three wheeled trikes can be useful when a child first learns as they don't have to concentrate on balancing the bike while learning to co-ordinate the movements needed for pedaling and steering.



Ensure that they still follow the good cycling habits listed on the front of this leaflet.

Once your child has developed the strength and ability to pedal then it is probably time to remove the stabilisers and introduce the balance element of cycling.

**Think about breaking the activity into sections**

**Write a list, for example:**

- \* *Teach the start position.*
- \* *Teach how to use the brakes.*
- \* *Support cycling in a straight line.*
- \* *Use verbal reminders for the good habits.*
- \* *Encourage independent cycling.*

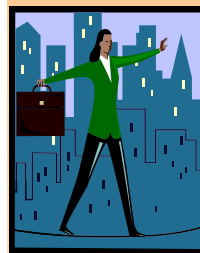


## Activity ideas.

Core stability and balance are important skills to have before being able to ride a bike.

Here are some activities that can help develop this skill:

Musical statues— helps to develop balance as your child tries to stay as still as possible.



'Walking a tight-rope' - draw a chalk line on the ground for your child to tiptoe along.

Exercise ball—learning to sit on a gym ball develops all those core muscles that are needed for good balance.



**Have a think and add your own ideas of activities to the list!**