

# Bank based coaching from a bike

Lots of coaches use bikes when bank based coaching, especially within the Racing community. Being on a bike enables you to observe individuals and the group, whether cycling alongside or sat watching them from a vantage point.

The following guidance includes some helpful hints and reminders when using a bike to support athletes.

## Check your bike works

Ensure you have working brakes and gears. If the bike isn't yours, ensure it isn't too big or too small, or try adjusting the saddle for a comfortable ride. Mudguards are useful in winter as well as quick release wheels to deal with punctures.

## Wear a well fitted cycling helmet

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) position regarding the wearing of helmets is that they strongly recommend that cyclists wear a cycle helmet, as it reduces the risk of suffering a serious head or brain injury in an accident. Cycle helmets do not prevent crashes from happening in the first place, nor guarantee survival, but they do provide a last line of defence for the cyclist's head.

For more information: [RoSPA Cycle Helmets Factsheet June 2020](#)

## Have your watch mounted on your handlebars, with a watch face that is easily visible

There are lots of bike accessories that can easily add your watch to the handlebars, this saves you riding along one handed looking at a stopwatch.

## Think about any extra equipment you might need

A hi-vis jacket, lights and padlock can all be useful depending on your session and the season. Make sure your bike is locked away or padlocked when not in use, to avoid it being stolen and ruining the session.

These are some options to have in your bike kit, either with you or somewhere close to you.

- Pump (big one at the club).
- Mobile phone
- Spare clothing and over jacket
- Throwline
- First Aid Kit
- Water
- Puncture kit and pump
- Boat spares – rudder, thumbnuts etc.
- Simple tools / multi-tool.

## Think about your cycling route

Be prepared if you have to change sides at a bridge, lock or road. Equally, think about the weight of the bike if you have to regularly carry the bike, for example up/down stairs or over styles.

## Think about your fitness level

Being on a bike doesn't necessarily mean you'll be able to keep up with your group.

## During the summer months, paths are often busier and there are more people around

During the summer months, paths are often busier with walkers who may have headphones in, dogs and their owners, families and picnics, etc. Walkers are often not paying attention or actively looking out for someone on a bike. People are often outside at pubs during the summer, there are more ice cream vans, etc.

Be aware of people fishing with their long fishing rods, as well as those who have moored boats, often on holidays, who aren't expecting a group of paddlers to be so fast.

## It can be a lot colder (or hotter) on a bike than paddling, if you're new to it

A bag with extra clothes for you or for your paddlers is a good idea.

## Top tips to follow

- **Use a bike bell**

A bell is often a non-threatening way to tell people that you're coming.

- **Stay on the left (same side of the road)**

This can be difficult on paths by narrow canals but it is worth remembering for wider paths.

- **Show courtesy to other tow path users**

Don't forget, you may pass the same people on your way and way back or again in the future. By showing courtesy, you build a rapport with those that you see regularly, especially with permanent narrowboat owners. This is useful when you have big groups going past with a large wash.

- **Where appropriate, get off your bike**

When going past dogs or walkers, it may be best to get off your bike. Some dogs do not like bikes, so getting off can save upsetting not only the dog, but also the owner. If on a narrow path, when overtaking walkers, either get off your bike or ring your bell.

- **Use tubeless tyres to help avoid punctures**

Tubeless tyres can be much more effective to avoid punctures. The initial outlay is higher but it often pays for itself in the long run.