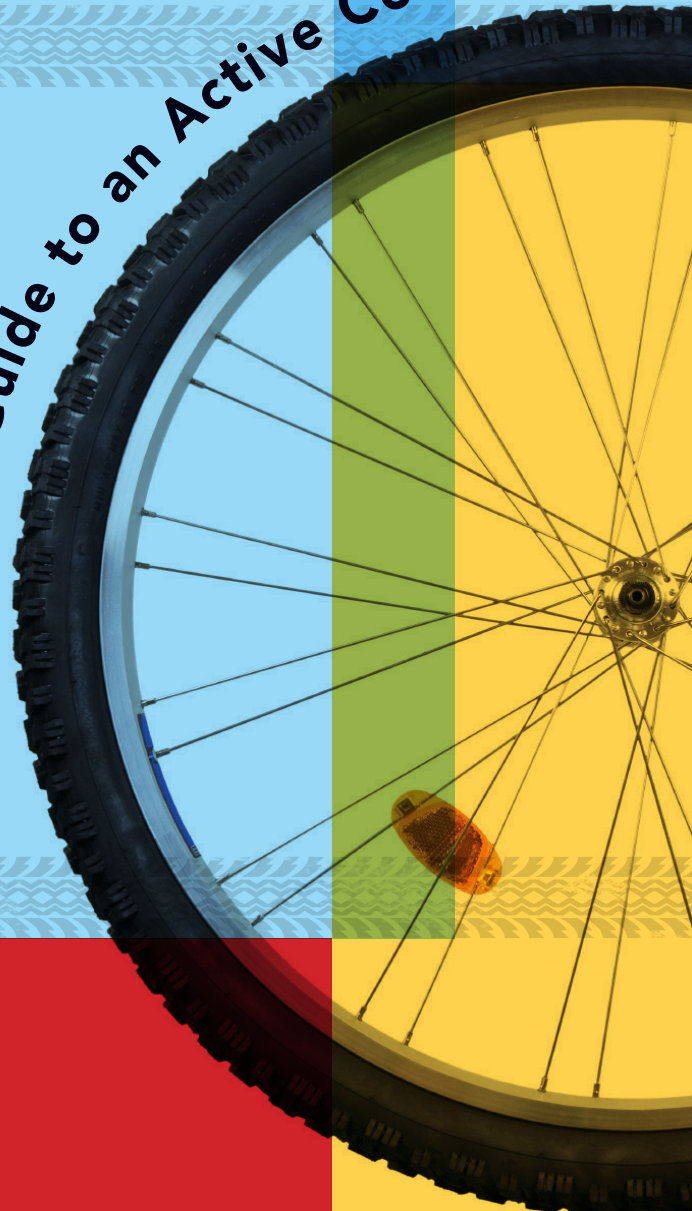


# Bicycling for Transportation

*Your Guide to an Active Commute*



Houston-Galveston  
Area Council

# BICYCLING FOR TRANSPORTATION

**WHY TRAVEL BY BICYCLE** .....3

**GET STARTED** ..... 4-7

**TRAVEL SAFELY** ..... 8-9

**BICYCLES AND EQUIPMENT** ..... 10-11



# WHY TRAVEL BY BICYCLE

There are MANY reasons to choose bicycle travel: high gas prices, concern for the environment, traffic, expanding waistlines and more. It's a healthy, inexpensive, and fun alternative.

- **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

- Keep your change by not paying for tolls or parking.
- Save money on gas and vehicle maintenance.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

- Travel without polluting.
- Conserve fossil fuel resources, such as oil.

- **TIME EFFICIENCY**

- Make short trips by bicycle as fast or faster than by vehicle.

- **HEALTH BENEFITS**

- Improve fitness (without the gym).
- Relieve stress.
- Be outdoors.



## GET STARTED

*Leaving the car in the garage for the first time may be a bit intimidating, but with a bit of preparation you'll find that biking is an enjoyable and easy way to travel. If riding to work, think ahead to find the optimal route and time it during a test-run to ensure your first trip is stress-free.*

### FIND THE RIGHT ROUTE

Thinking like a cyclist means picking the most pleasant route, which may not always be the most direct.

Look for a route with less or slower traffic, smooth pavement, trees, and scenery. Part of the charm of bicycle commuting is that the slower pace allows an opportunity to enjoy your surroundings.

### EXAMPLES FOR SAFE CARRY: REAR RACK AND WIRE BASKET



# GET STARTED

## CARRY ITEMS

Most bike commuters need to carry items when riding to work or running errands: laptop, papers, tools, lunch, change of clothing, etc.

For a more comfortable ride, carry your items on the bike and not in a backpack. Use front and rear racks, panniers (bags) and wire baskets.



## DRESS FOR THE RIDE

### Heat

Riding in our region can mean hot weather. Most people ride in comfortable clothes and bring a change of clothes to work. If you roll your clothes instead of folding them, they hardly wrinkle.

### Tips

- Ride at a slow, comfortable pace to perspire less and stay cooler.
- Check with nearby fitness facilities to see if they offer reduced rates to commuters who only use the showers.
- Carry water and hydrate often.

### Rain

Waterproof bike clothing and bags are available at most local bike shops to keep you dry when the weather is not. Rainy weather can result in slippery conditions and reduced visibility, so use extra caution, wear bright colors, and use your lights once the clouds roll in.



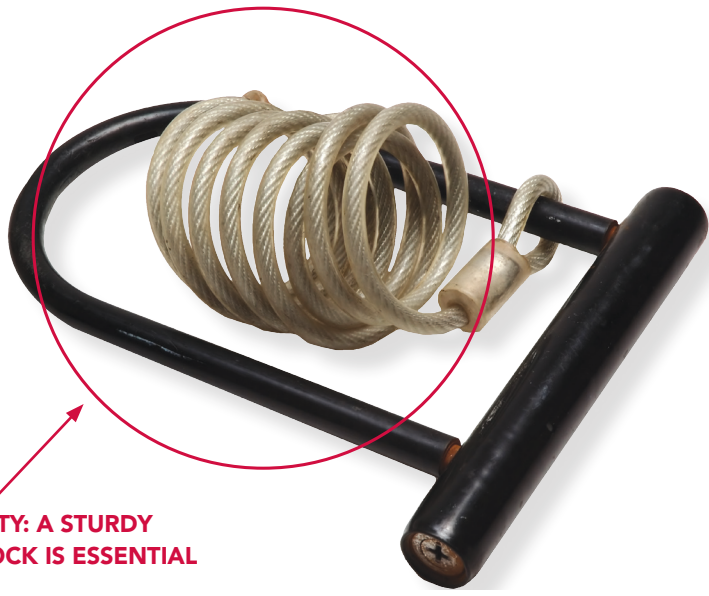
## GET STARTED

### KEEP EXTRA ITEMS AT WORK

If you are commuting to work, stash duplicate helpful items in

your desk. Having an extra comb, brush, deodorant or pair of socks at the office is ideal if you forget these necessities.





**SECURITY: A STURDY  
BIKE LOCK IS ESSENTIAL**

## COMBINE BIKING WITH TRANSIT

Your commute to work may be farther than you are willing to go by bike.

Consider riding to the nearest transit stop and bringing your bike on the bus. In the METRO service area, bikes can be carried on most buses and are allowed on METRORail with some limitations.

For more information visit [www.ridemetro.org](http://www.ridemetro.org)

## PARKING, LOCKS AND SECURITY

- Ensure you have a secure place to store your bike at your destination.
- Always have a good lock with you.
- Lock your bike in a well-lit area with lots of pedestrian traffic.
- If you're riding to work, perhaps there is space to store your bike in your office or a nearby closet or storage area.



# TRAVEL SAFELY

## TECHNIQUES FOR RIDING SAFELY

The safest way to travel is as if you're operating a motor vehicle. A bicyclist has the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of cars and trucks.

### PRE-RIDE INSPECTION

Before you ride, give your bike the *ABC Quick Check*: air, brakes, chain, quick releases. Make sure your tires are inflated, brakes are working, chain is in place and tight, and that tire quick releases are closed.



### FOLLOW THE RULES

Obey all traffic signs and signals. Cyclists who ignore stop signs and signals not only risk their lives, but also aggravate motorists.

### KNOW YOUR BICYCLE

Practice riding. Learn how your bike handles. Gaining confidence in your riding skills will improve your safety.

### RIDE PREDICTABLY

Ride with traffic, where drivers can see you. Stay in the traffic lane in a straight line. Never ride against traffic; wrong way cycling is extremely dangerous.

### POSITION YOURSELF

Ride in the right-most lane that goes in the direction of your destination. Avoid riding too close to the curb or parked cars to avoid hazards.



**BE SEEN: CLEAN AND PROPERLY INSTALLED LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**





## TRAVEL SAFELY

### BE ALERT

Anticipate hazards including potholes, debris, open car doors, and drivers who may not see you.

### BE HEARD

Communicate with motorists, pedestrians, and other cyclists with hand signals, your voice and a bell or horn. Make eye

contact with motorists to be sure they see you.

### BE SEEN

Wear brightly-colored clothing. Be sure to have front and rear lights, especially when riding at night or when visibility is poor.



# BICYCLES AND EQUIPMENT



## BICYCLE TYPES

Just about any type of bicycle will work for commuting. It is most important for you to get the right fit and feel comfortable. Find a reputable bike shop and consult with the sales staff. Think about how you might use the bike, how far you'll be going, what you might need to carry, and what conditions you'll be riding in.

***Get the bike that suits you and your budget.***

## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Keep your chain clean and your bike will work well. Clean and oil

your chain frequently, especially after riding in the rain.

## REPAIRS

### The Most Common: Fixing a Flat

Sooner or later, you will get a flat. Be prepared by carrying extra tubes and an air cartridge or pump.

Practice removing your wheel, taking the tire off and changing the tube at home.

Many local bike shops offer free maintenance clinics where you can learn how to fix a flat and make other common repairs.

# BICYCLES AND EQUIPMENT

## Helmet

Your first purchase should be a helmet. Wearing a helmet can prevent 85% of serious injuries and even death.

## Lights

Supplement your bike's reflectors with a bright white headlight and red rear flasher.

## Tool Kit

Carry a lightweight tool kit with an 8mm or 10mm Allen wrench, screwdriver, or a multi-tool, tire levers, patch kit or spare inner tube, air pump, and latex gloves. *(The latex gloves will keep your hands clean if you have to do a minor road repair.)*

## Bell/Horn

A bell or horn helps to alert pedestrians to your presence. Don't be afraid to also use your voice to make yourself known.



**SAFETY: ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET**



## Fenders

A set of fenders, for the front and back tires, will keep grit off both you and your bike.

## Racks, Bags, Baskets

There are many styles and choices for carrying items. Check online or with your bicycle shop. Always carry bungee cords. These are a great way to secure items to your bike.

**BE HEARD: RING THE BELL AND USE YOUR VOICE TO GET NOTICED.**

# THERE'S NO EXCUSE!

## I'M OUT OF SHAPE

- Ride at a slow, easy pace until you are in better shape.
- Find and ride your easiest route to work on a weekend.

## IT TAKES TOO LONG

- Short trips are typically quicker by bicycle, especially in heavily congested areas.

## I HAVE TO DRESS UP AT WORK

- Keep clothing at work; rotate them on days you drive.

## THERE'S NO SHOWER AT WORK

- Ride at an easy, slow pace to stay cooler and dryer.
- Use a washcloth or disposable baby wipes to freshen up.

## IT'S TOO FAR

- Combine biking and mass transit to shorten your ride.
- Ride to a coworker's house and carpool to work.

## IT'S RAINING

- Bike fenders and rain clothes will keep you dry.
- Take transit or carpool to get home.

## THE ROADS AREN'T SAFE

- Obey all traffic laws.
- Wear a helmet and bright clothing.
- Take a cycling safety class offered through the League of American Bicyclists.

## I HAVE TO RUN ERRANDS

- Put a rack on your bike to help carry items.

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**H-GAC's Pedestrian-Bicyclist Program:** [www.h-gac.com/go/pedbike](http://www.h-gac.com/go/pedbike)

**City of Houston Bikeway Program:** [www.houstonbikeways.org](http://www.houstonbikeways.org)

**City of Houston Cycling Education:** Take an online bicycle education course certified by the League of American Bicyclists: [www.bikeed.org](http://www.bikeed.org)

**NuRide:** Track the trips you take using alternative modes and see how much you are saving in terms of dollars and air emissions: [www.nuride.com](http://www.nuride.com)

**Google Mapping Tool:** Map your route for whichever mode you choose, including biking: [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com)