

Safe Group Riding

BE A GOOD TEAMMATE!



Virginia Bicycle Traffic Laws

It's the law. But how about some courtesy. You are also driver.

- ▶ Obey street signs, signals, and road markings, just like a car. Yes we are required to slow down and come to a complete stop at stop signs and traffic devices signaling red.
- ▶ Motor vehicle drivers are required to pass cyclists at a safe distance of not less than three (3) feet in the same direction.
- ▶ You are required to ride with the **flow of traffic** as closely as practicable (debris, drain) to the right side of the roadway when traveling at a speed less than traffic.
- ▶ You must give proper signals that are visible to cars when turning and stopping.
- ▶ Full lane use is allowed when traveling at the normal speed of traffic, preparing for a turn, overtaking and passing, avoiding hazards, traveling in a lane too narrow to share, and avoiding a mandatory turn lane.



Virginia Bicycle Traffic Laws

- ▶ Sidewalk riding is permitted except where prohibited by local ordinances. You must yield to pedestrians at crosswalks and on sidewalks and give an audible signal when overtaking cyclists.
- ▶ You shall not ride more than two side-by-side, unless on bike paths and may not impede traffic. Cyclists riding two abreast must move into a single file if they impede the normal flow of traffic. On a laned roadway, cyclists riding two abreast must ride in a single lane.
- ▶ Virginia state law does not require cyclists to wear a helmet. But ask a nurse...
- ▶ At night, bicycles must be equipped with a front white headlight visible from 500 feet and a rear reflector visible from 600 feet.
- ▶ You may not wear headsets or earphones on both ears while riding.



Rules and Recommendations



1. OBEY THE TRAFFIC LAWS (You have driver's license, right?)
2. GEAR UP - Check your bike and gear the day before the ride. It is rude to hold the group right before the start because you are unprepared. You will need:
 - Previously checked and tuned bike
 - Helmet
 - Sun glasses
 - Gloves
 - Proper cycling shoes
 - Proper food and hydration
 - Toolkit with: 1 properly sized inner tube, 2 CO2s and valve, tools to change a flat
 - Bring some money in case you need to stop to fuel up.
 - Bring a cell phone for emergencies
 - HR monitoring unit and/or cycling computer with chest strap. Great tool for identifying overtraining members and who's just plain lazy

Rules and Recommendations



3. DON'T BE LATE - Many riders have busy schedules and want to get as much riding in as they can and get back on time. So group rides typically start within minutes of the official starting time. If you're late, you'll miss the ride. Plus if you hold the group, you'll make a bad first impression. Arrive at least ten to fifteen minutes before the start of the ride to gear up, reassemble your bike and pump up your tires.
4. OBEY THE TEAM CAPTAIN – He will remind everyone of:
 - Rules to follow.
 - Hand signals and other communication.
 - Short briefing of route to follow, intended stops and speed targets.
 - Decide on single line or double line formation for route.
 - Will name the start ORDER of riders within the formation.
 - Identify beginners (trouble with water bottles, gearing, cleats, etc...).
 - Identify riders equipped with cycling computers able to read speed.
 - Identify improperly geared bikes for intended route and suggest techniques.

Rules and Recommendations



5. THIS IS NOT A RACE. A group ride is NOT a race. You are not to "attack" off the front or try to show everyone how strong you are. That's what races are for. If you're stronger you are obliged to be patient and ride within the intended average for that ride. Testosterone and ego is a volatile mix (even for you females) and it get you dropped in a heartbeat.

If you're not a strong rider, we understand BUT don't be lazy. Cruising below 75% HRmax while back there is a quick way to lose other riders' respect. Make it your goal to keep as near the front of the group as possible. You will feel much more motivated and the group will shield you from the wind meaning less effort for you. Also the leader will not have to worry about riders off the back.

Our group rides are NOT RECREATIONAL. What we offer are instructional rides and drills, along with mechanics and technical workshops.

Rules and Recommendations



6. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

- Using hand gestures? Not really. What really happens to the paceline.
- Loud call-outs are good (Deer, dogs, meteorites...). But you are following a paceline, remember?
- Staff dedicated to cover the group lead will yell "SLOWING" when needed and before any upcoming stop.
- Staff dedicated to cover the group tail will advise traffic behind or any turn intentions.
- Staff dedicated to cover the group tail will yell "CAR BACK" if there's a vehicle approaching the group.

Rules and Recommendations



7. MAINTAIN FORMATION

- Single line or double line
- Stay in your predetermined spot. NO OVERTAKING. It messes up the pace line behind you.
- DON'T EVER OVERLAP WHEELS (NO HALF-WHEELING). When you're riding next to someone, ride handlebar-to-handlebar.
- Stay as close to the rider ahead as safe as you can according to the staff instructions (4' beginners).
- Be in control. Don't sway (zigzag) around. You are the next rider's leader. You are responsible for the cyclist behind you. They need to trust you.
- On single lane roads, we always ride as far right close to the curb as safely as possible if riding single file. The leader will pull the group farther from the curb to evade obstacles. If everyone in the group follows exactly the rider in front of him, nobody will be in danger of potholes and other road obstructions.
- When riding two abreast (as decided by the staff), the paceline will ride in the center of the lane to allow a proper peel off from either side.
- If you only see the obstacle at the last minute, ride through it! Better to get a flat than to take down the whole group. Bunny hop?

Rules and Recommendations



8. KEEP THE PACE

- NO ABRUPT SPEED CHANGES. PERIOD
- Ride steady. Every reaction has a consequence when riding with others. Steady doesn't just mean speed. It means holding a consistent effort. Keep a high cadence and make only small speed adjustments. When you ride like this, life is good for everyone behind you.
- Adjust your speed by sitting up a bit and/or moving out into the wind a little to slow down, or tucking into the draft and pedaling a bit more to speed up
- Average speed is AVERAGE. Downhill the group will speed up beyond the predetermined average and well as slow down when uphill.
- If you loose efficiency your speed will drop or your heart rate will go up. Run the checklist: pedaling technique, posture, breathing, proper gearing and cadence, nutrition, and hydration.

Rules and Recommendations



9. BRAKING/SLOWING

- This is probably the biggest crash causer on group rides. When someone slows down ahead of them, many riders panic and lock their brakes, almost skidding and taking everyone down with them.
- Sudden braking will set off general alarms from everyone in the rear and make you very unpopular.
- To slowdown either stop pedaling to coast or feather the brakes. Use the wind. NO HARD BRAKING.
- Don't slow down while hydrating eating, etc.
- Listen to the freehubs!

Crosswind Paceline (Echelon)

An echelon always points the direction of the wind



The sheltered riders ride both slightly behind and to the side of the rider in front, instead of directly behind him.



The best you will ever see.

The Rotating Paceline

- Used mainly to distribute the effort among all teammates.
- Requires much more skill.
- Requires group practice.
- Unsafe on certain roads.

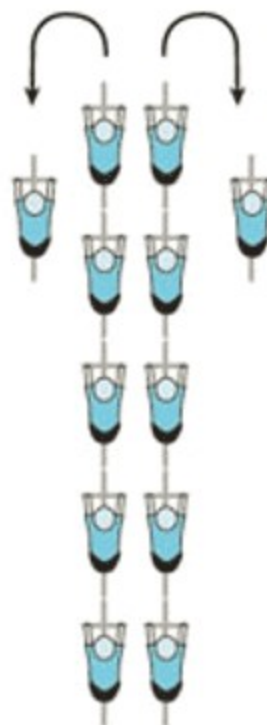
Single-file Pace Line

Ride single file when conditions are not suitable for riding two abreast



Double Pace Line

Riders line up in pairs



THE CYCLIST EFFICIENCY CHECKLIST

Once you are on the bike, it's a FULL TIME job.



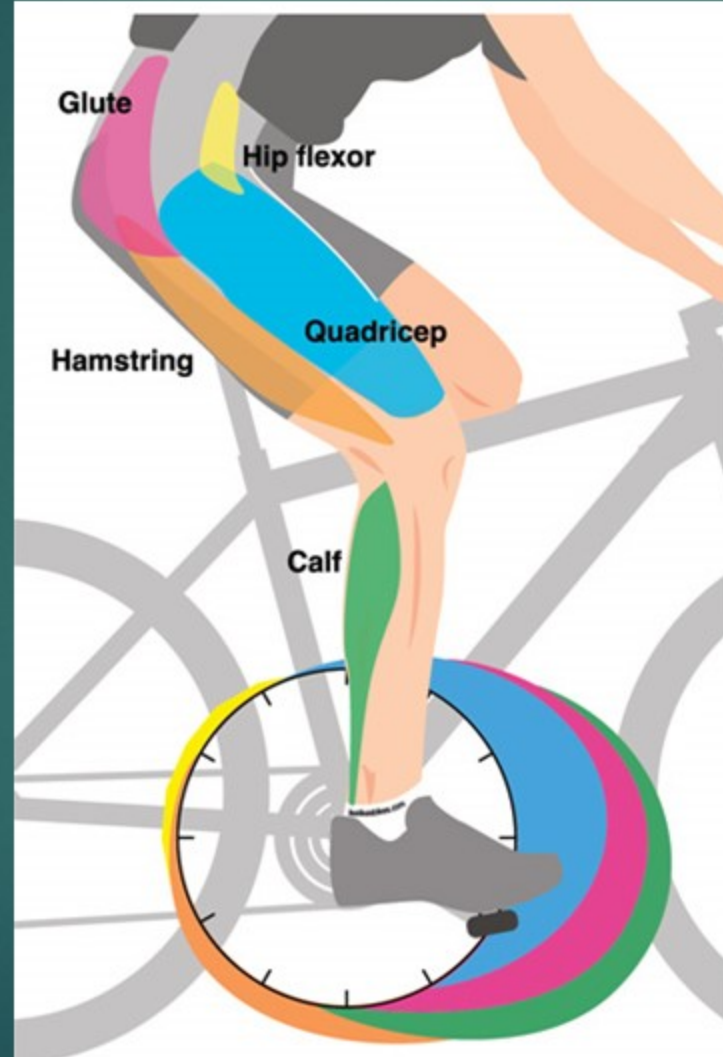
1. Shoe tightness. Don't over do it. You can always adjust.
2. Relax your feet/toes. Loosen up that anxiety.
3. CADENCE, CADENCE, CADENCE! Measure it. Feel it. Follow it.
4. Recruit all those leg muscles. Don't just hammer down.
5. Be fair with the stronger leg. Power asymmetry.
6. Saddle contact. Adjust.
7. Hip rotation. Adjust.
8. Recruit core muscles. Legs are attached to that pillar of strength.
9. Breathing rhythm and volume. Adjust to riding posture. Reset!
10. Relax shoulders, neutral neck (remember proper eyewear).
11. Eyes on the target, not the danger.
12. Hand/handlebar weight. Remember those core muscles?
13. Relax grip. Why are you chocking those hoods?
14. FEEDBACK: Read real time measured heart rate, power, speed, etc.



THE CYCLIST EFFICIENCY CHECKLIST

Once you are on the bike, it's a FULL TIME job.

The Seated Pedaling Stroke



Which muscles do the work

The thickness of each area shows the relative amount of useful power each muscle produces.

Your quads do most of the work at the top of the stroke. Your glutes and calves take over as your pedal approaches 6 o'clock, then your hamstring sweeps the pedal back to nine o'clock. Your hip flexors help lift the pedal to the top for another go-around.

Adapted from "Power output and work in different muscle groups during ergometer cycling" Ericson et al. (1986)

Riding Skills are a Life Saver

Come and practice these with us!



- ▶ Basic riding skills. Kids get more practice than you!
- ▶ Know your bike: Brakes, shifters, tire pressure, etc.
- ▶ Platform pedals or clipless? Why? Drive leg and landing gear.
- ▶ The mount from still (no cowboy mounts).
- ▶ Starting: Gravity makes it easier than Flintstone style.
- ▶ Riding: Managing speed, one arm steering, tight L/R turns, standing up, low speed handling, and 'The Bunny Hop'.
- ▶ Turning: Counter steering, target fixation, turn apex and sudden emergency turns.
- ▶ Stopping: Rim vs disc, front and rear brakes, skidding vs over the handlebars, sudden emergency stops, center of gravity and downshifting.

