

# BUILDING CYCLING CONFIDENCE



Cycling is a life skill and once you learn to ride a bike, you never forget but if you're lacking confidence or have never ridden a bike before, then you're not alone.

Nearly four million adults in the UK have never cycled and 80% of adults rarely cycle. So, it's a good idea to undertake some sort of cycle training or refresher course before you start commuting to work by bike. Usually, a one-hour lesson is all that is needed to get you cycling with confidence. You can organise cycle training for adults through [Bikeability](#) and they'll often have access to bikes you can use for the training session. Or you can contact your local authority to discover your local training provider.

Cycle training will cover: pre-cycling safety checks, how to own your own space on the road (avoiding the gutter and taking the dominant position), the importance of communication with other road users.

## Other ways to build and maintain confidence include:

- 🚲 Join a cycling club – there are clubs for different experience levels and some focus on helping women.
- 🚲 Bicycle User Group (BUG) – check to see if your workplace has a cycling user group also known as a BUG. Here you can get support and encouragement from co-workers who already commute by bike and get handy tips on the best routes and the ones to avoid.
- 🚲 Get a cycling partner – ask around to see if any of your colleagues or neighbours commute the same route as you and buddy up for the commute.
- 🚲 Check factors which could affect your ride, such as weather, season, light, visibility and road surface.
- 🚲 Dress for the weather. Consider wearing a hi-vis gilet or similar and check for dangling shoelaces or straps.

## PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY

With the right route, your commute to work can be pleasant so it's a really good idea to plan your journey before you start. With a pre-defined time for your journey's end, you need a route that is relatively quick but also not stressful.

- 🚲 Cycling UK has a great [route planning tool](#) on their website and there are also apps available to download. You can filter to show routes that are off-road, quiet, quickest, etc.. In some cities and towns there are dedicated cycle ways which makes commuting to work by bike a lot easier.
- 🚲 Once you've chosen your route, look at the map for landmarks that you can look out for one the way. This will help you learn the route quicker and become more confident in knowing your way around. It's a good idea to test it out on a weekend first when you're not in a rush.
- 🚲 Your route might need to change according to time of day or time of year as some parks shut earlier during the winter so your winter cycle route may be different to your summer one.
- 🚲 If you plan routes down busy roads make sure you have the skills and confidence to cycle there. There are often quieter roads parallel to the main roads which have reduced traffic and less traffic lights so will be quicker.
- 🚲 If you plan to combine your bike with another mode of transport, such as trains and buses, check with the operator about the rules for taking bikes on board.
- 🚲 If you're using an ebike, remember to check your battery levels before you set off and take the charger if you need to.