



COMMUTER E-BOOK



WELCOME BY CHRIS BOARDMAN



I hope the information in this e-Book helps you to enjoy your commute and not just survive it, because I know sometimes, that's how it feels.

It's not an exaggeration to say, that people who choose to ride to school to the shops and to work are helping tackle the biggest problems facing our species. So whilst we work to create safe, attractive space that will enable more people to join you, I wanted to acknowledge that whether you ride a lot or a little, you are making cycling visible, showing it's doable, leading the way. And for that, I just wanted to say thank you.

Chris Boardman



REASONS TO COMMUTE



If you're reading this e-Book hopefully you're already commuting by bike or at least considering it. If not, here are a few reasons to start:

GOOD FOR YOUR BODY

A five-year study of 250,000 UK commuters by a team at Glasgow University found those that cycled had significantly less risk of developing cancer and heart disease than less active commuters. A larger global study indicates that participation on cycling is associated with a lower risk of mortality.

It has also been shown that cycle commuters have approximately one day less sickness absence per year compared with those who commute to work by other means.

GOOD FOR YOUR BRAIN

There is evidence that participation in cycling is associated with lower levels of perceived stress, higher levels of commuting enjoyment, better perceived general health and higher perceived quality of life. In short, pedalling makes you happier and less stressed.

GOOD FOR THE PLANET

The level of air pollution in major cities around the world has frequently made headlines in recent years, and emissions from road vehicles are, of course, a significant contributor to this. A number of studies have used computer modelling approaches to estimate the effects of different transport scenarios on levels of air pollution in urban locations around the world. The evidence from these models unequivocally demonstrates that increasing the number of cycling journeys and reducing the number of car journeys could lead to substantial reductions in air pollution emissions and thus lower pollutant exposure to the general population.

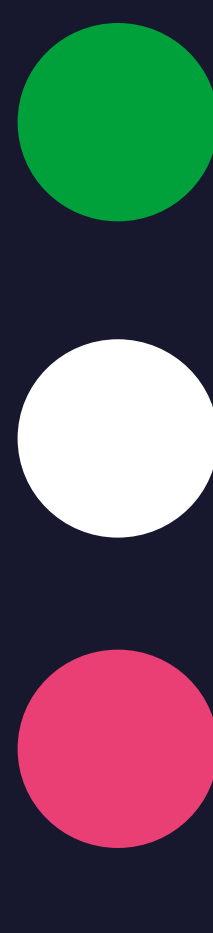
GOOD FOR YOUR POCKET

The financial outlay per kilometre of travel by cycling is less than a quarter of travelling the same distance by car and even taking into account the cost of additional time taken to cycle, commuting by cycle reduces the economic costs of commuting by more than half.

GOOD FOR THE NATION'S POCKET

Doubling cycling from its current level of 1.5% of all journeys made in the UK to 3% of all journeys would lead to a benefit to the economy that adds up to £2.09 billion per year. If we could increase this to 10% of journeys made in the UK, the economic benefit would rise to an incredible figure of £6.4 billion. Elsewhere, a study which looked into the impact of people increasing cycling by three kilometres per day and walking by one kilometre in towns and cities in England and Wales stated this could result in £17 billion in savings to the NHS over 20 years.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COMMUTING



Ten of the most common barriers to commuting by bike and hints on how to overcome them.

I'M NOT CONFIDENT IN MY CYCLING SKILLS

If you learned to ride a bike as a child, you'll be amazed at how quickly it'll come back to you. However, even if you never learned to ride a bike or aren't sure how to ride on the road, there's no reason why you can't discover the freedom and joy of cycling as an adult. Bikeability training is about gaining practical skills and understanding how to cycle on today's roads. There are courses and instruction available for all ages and abilities.

I'M NOT FIT ENOUGH

Commuting by bike doesn't have to be a frantic fitness activity; it's about getting to and from work - not beating records. Back off your effort level to the same as walking and you'll be surprised how easily you can cover the miles. Learn to use your gears and maybe even consider getting an **e-Bike** to give you a bit of assistance.

I WOULDN'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO GO

It might take a bit of research to find the best cycling routes to and from your work but there are plenty of resources at your disposal including dedicated maps and route planning apps. Check out the **Planning Your Commute** section in this e-Mag but probably the best thing to do is to talk to other cycle commuters in your office.

THERE ARE NO SHOWERS OR CHANGING FACILITIES AT WORK

Commuting by bike doesn't have to involve getting sweaty. It's easily possible to ride at an effort level no greater than walking and not break a sweat. An **e-Bike** can help combat sweatiness too and there's always the option of freshening up with some wet wipes if necessary.

IT'S TOO FAR

You don't have to cycle the full distance or every day and can easily, with a bit of planning, combine cycling with public transport or even driving. Check out the **Bikes on Public Transport** section.

I'VE TOO MUCH STUFF

Look into whether there are lockers at work where you can store your kit and if, on non-cycling days, you can leave a few days' supply. You'll be surprised what you can fit into well packed panniers and/or frame bags and, if you need even more load carrying capability, how about a trailer or a cargo bike. Check out the **Luggage and Packing** section.

I'VE NO ROOM FOR A BIKE IN MY FLAT OR OFFICE

This can definitely be an issue if you live in a small flat or studio or work in an office without bike storage facilities. For home, there are a number of internal storage hook options or, if you have some outside space, secure bike bins. At work can be trickier but a folding bike can easily fit under your desk. Don't forget also that in some towns and cities there are hire bikes available.

IT ALWAYS RAINS

It's true that poor weather can make cycle commuting more challenging but clothing technology has advanced massively and effective and breathable waterproofs are now widely available. You also don't have to commute by bike every day and, if the forecast doesn't look to your liking, you can always opt out. You might also be surprised how infrequent heavy rain actually is. Check out our **Commuting Clothing** section for tips on staying dry and warm.

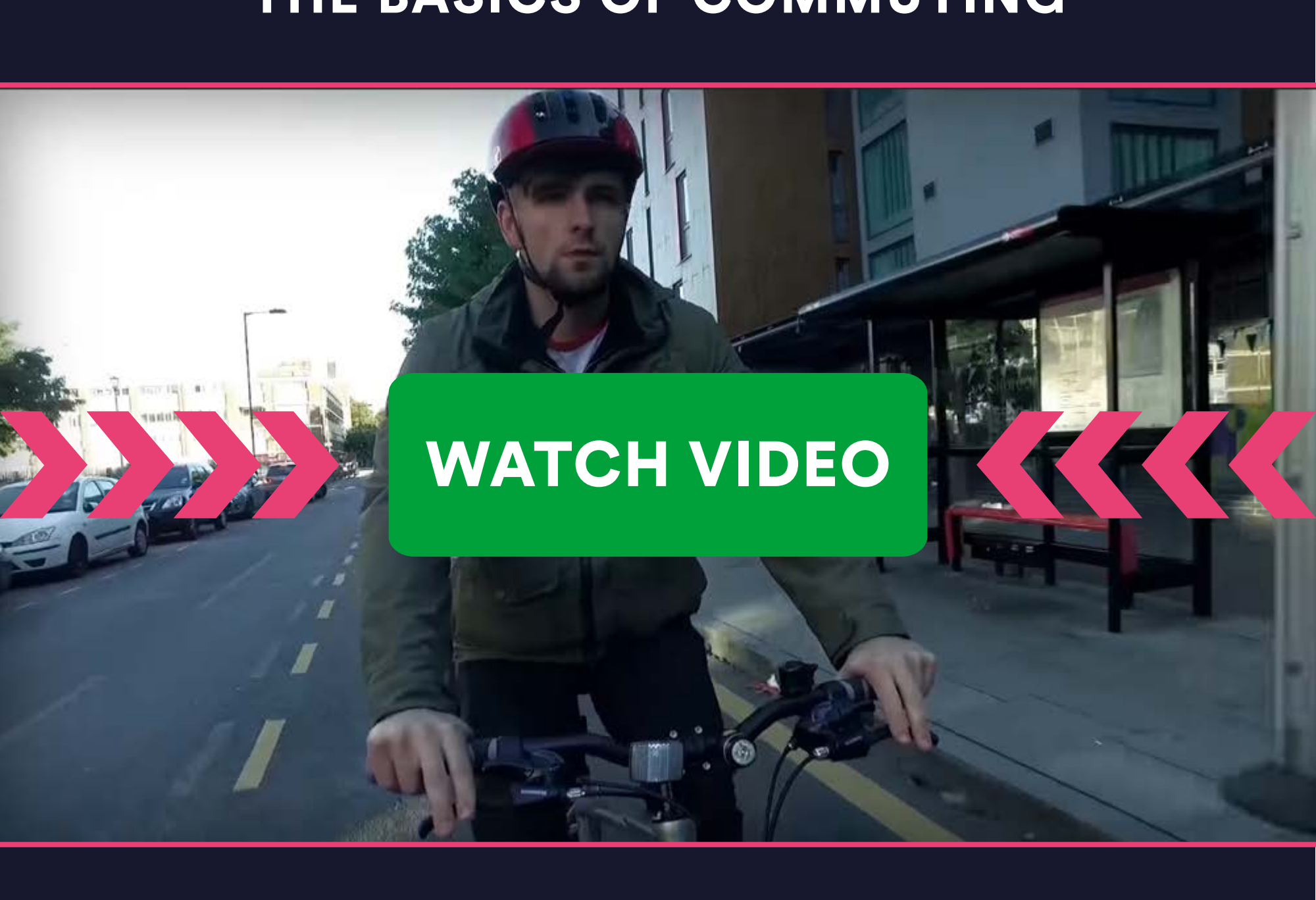
I CAN'T AFFORD A BIKE

Although a bike and the necessary accessories can represent a significant outlay, there are a number of salary sacrifice schemes that will offset a big chunk of it and spread the cost over at least 12 months. Hire bikes can also lower the cost, especially if you're not cycling every day. Don't forget that you'll also be saving money on public transport or fuel.

THE ROADS SCARE ME

Learning skills such as correct road positioning will make you a more confident cyclist and safer on the roads so, if you're unsure, consider some **Bikeability training**. By putting some thought and research into planning your route, you should be able to avoid busy roads and even find some traffic free options. It's also important to remember that the health benefits associated with cycling far outweigh the risk involved.

THE BASICS OF COMMUTING



CHOOSING A BIKE TO COMMUTE ON

What type of bike you choose depends on your budget, what you feel comfortable riding and the type of commute you're likely to be doing.

HYBRID BIKES

Hybrid bikes, which are essentially a road bike with flat bars or a mountain bike with slick tyres depending on your viewpoint, are probably the most common and popular type of bike for commuters.

There's a full spectrum of hybrid bikes available ranging from near mountain bikes with suspension to lightweight fully rigid carbon flyers. What you go for will largely depend on how much off-road your commute entails.

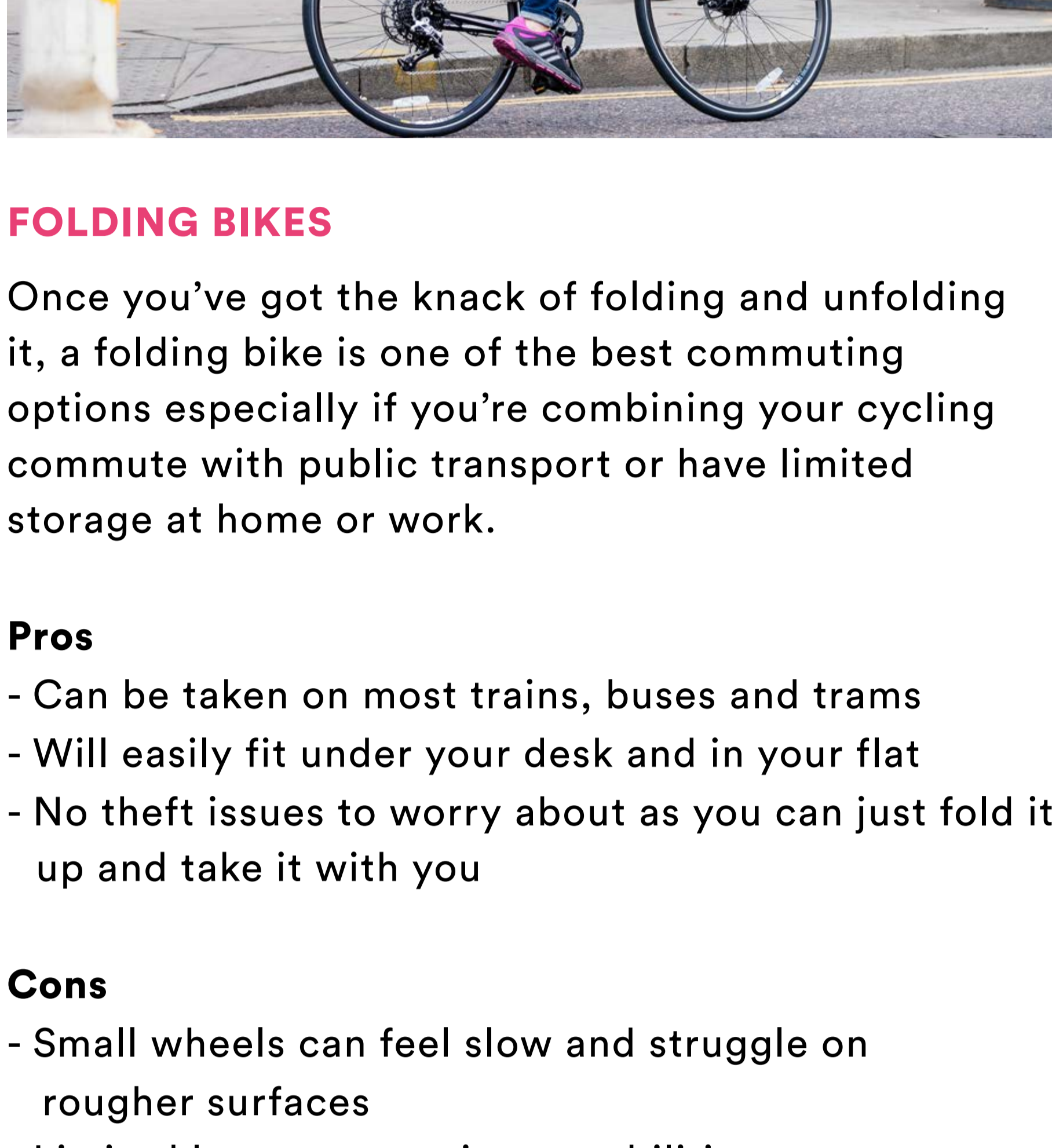
Obviously, if you already have a mountain bike in the shed, there's no reason why you can't fit slick tyres to it and create a perfectly useable commuting bike.

Pros

- Familiar feel to a lot of cyclists
- Stable, comfortable and upright riding position
- Often have a wide range of gears
- Most models have drilling for mudguards and racks for panniers

Cons

- Neither a road bike nor a mountain bike so, if you're keen to cycle outside of commuting, a hybrid could be a compromise - it won't be as efficient on the road as a road bike or as robust and capable off-road as a mountain bike.



FOLDING BIKES

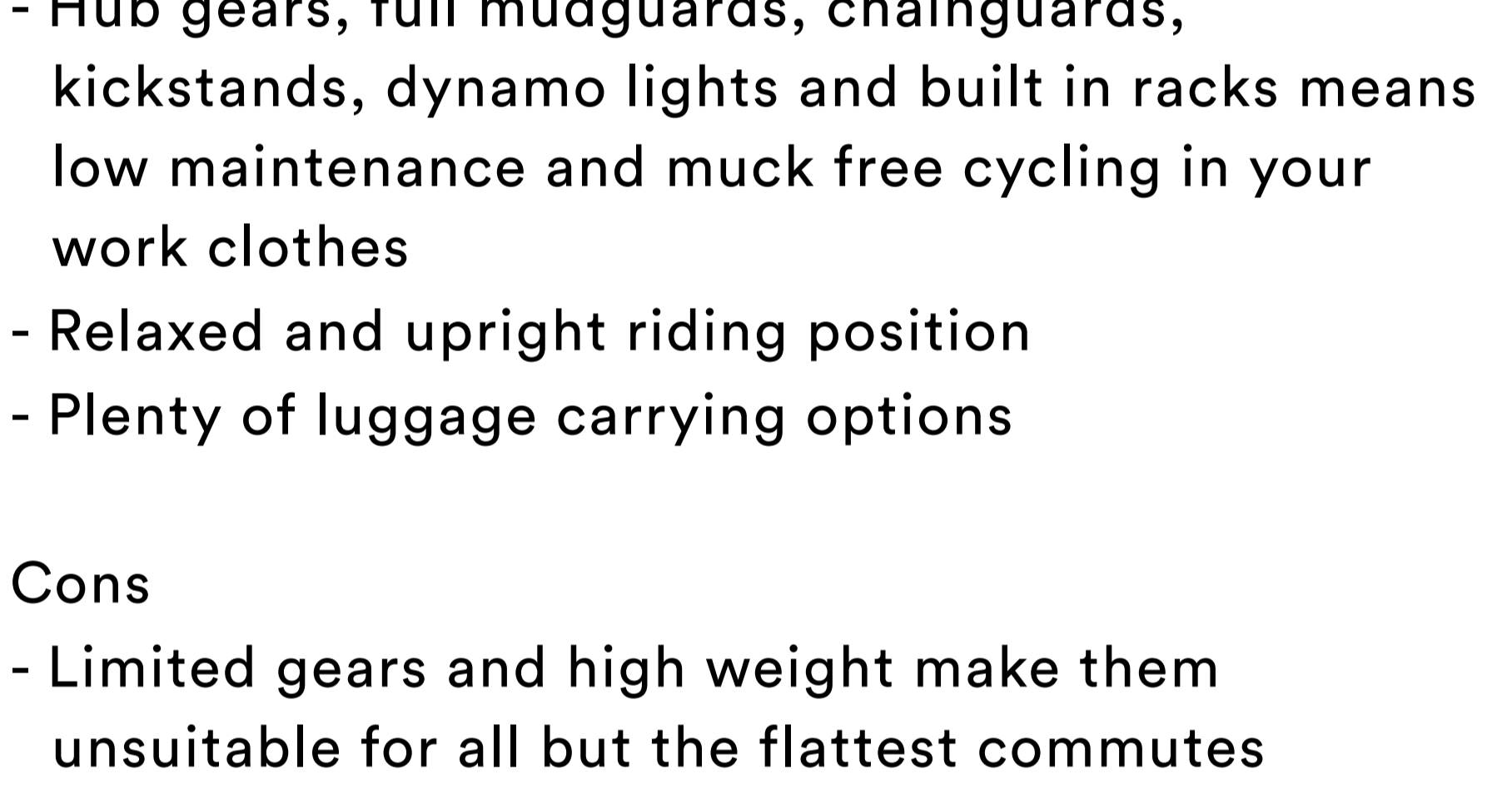
Once you've got the knack of folding and unfolding it, a folding bike is one of the best commuting options especially if you're combining your cycling commute with public transport or have limited storage at home or work.

Pros

- Can be taken on most trains, buses and trams
- Will easily fit under your desk and in your flat
- No theft issues to worry about as you can just fold it up and take it with you

Cons

- Small wheels can feel slow and struggle on rougher surfaces
- Limited luggage carrying capabilities



DUTCH/TOWN BIKES

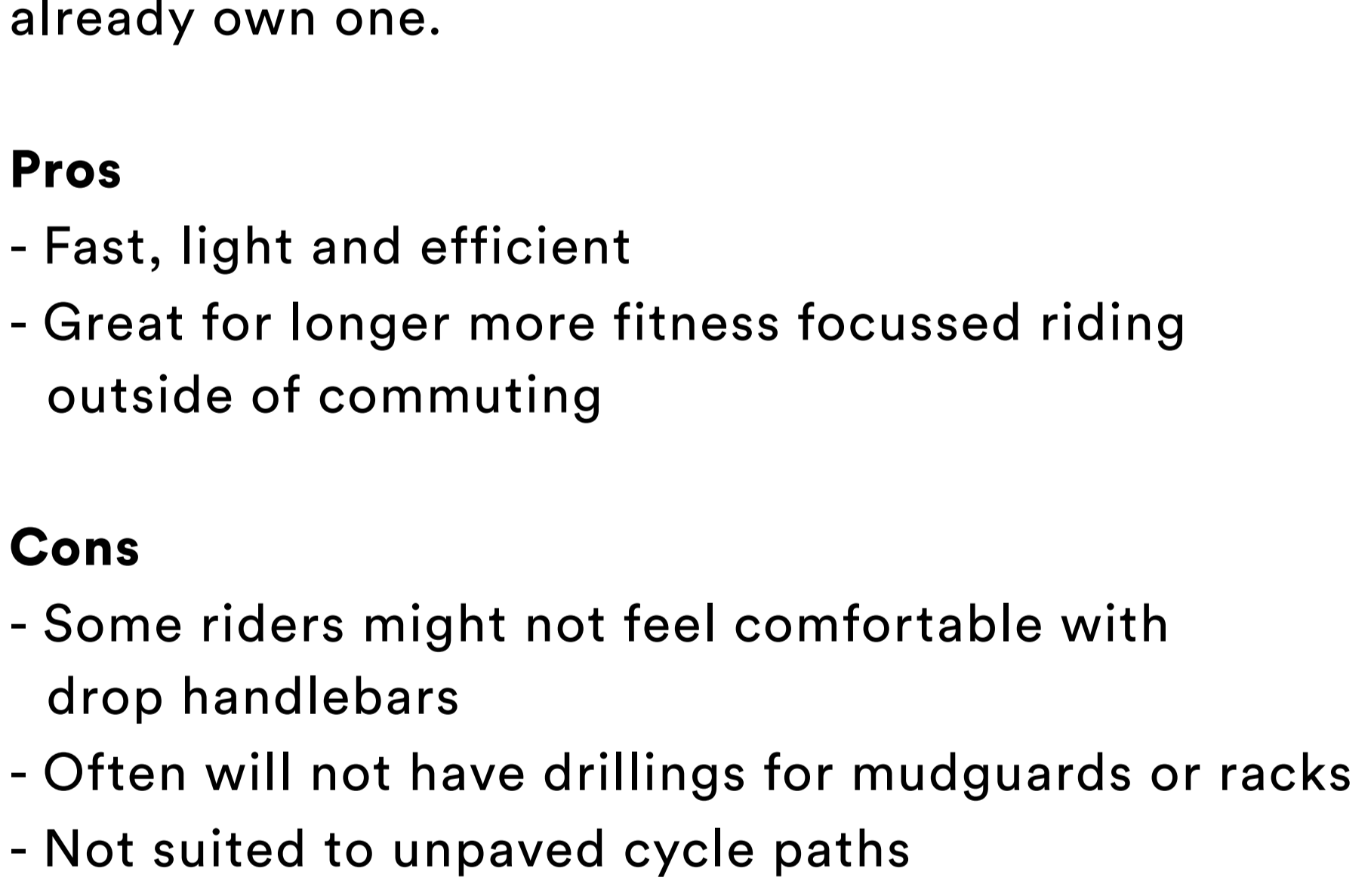
A traditional sit up and beg bike that's designed for practicality.

Pros

- Hub gears, full mudguards, chainguards, kickstands, dynamo lights and built in racks means low maintenance and muck free cycling in your work clothes
- Relaxed and upright riding position
- Plenty of luggage carrying options

Cons

- Limited gears and high weight make them unsuitable for all but the flattest commutes
- Don't expect to get anywhere quickly



ROAD BIKES

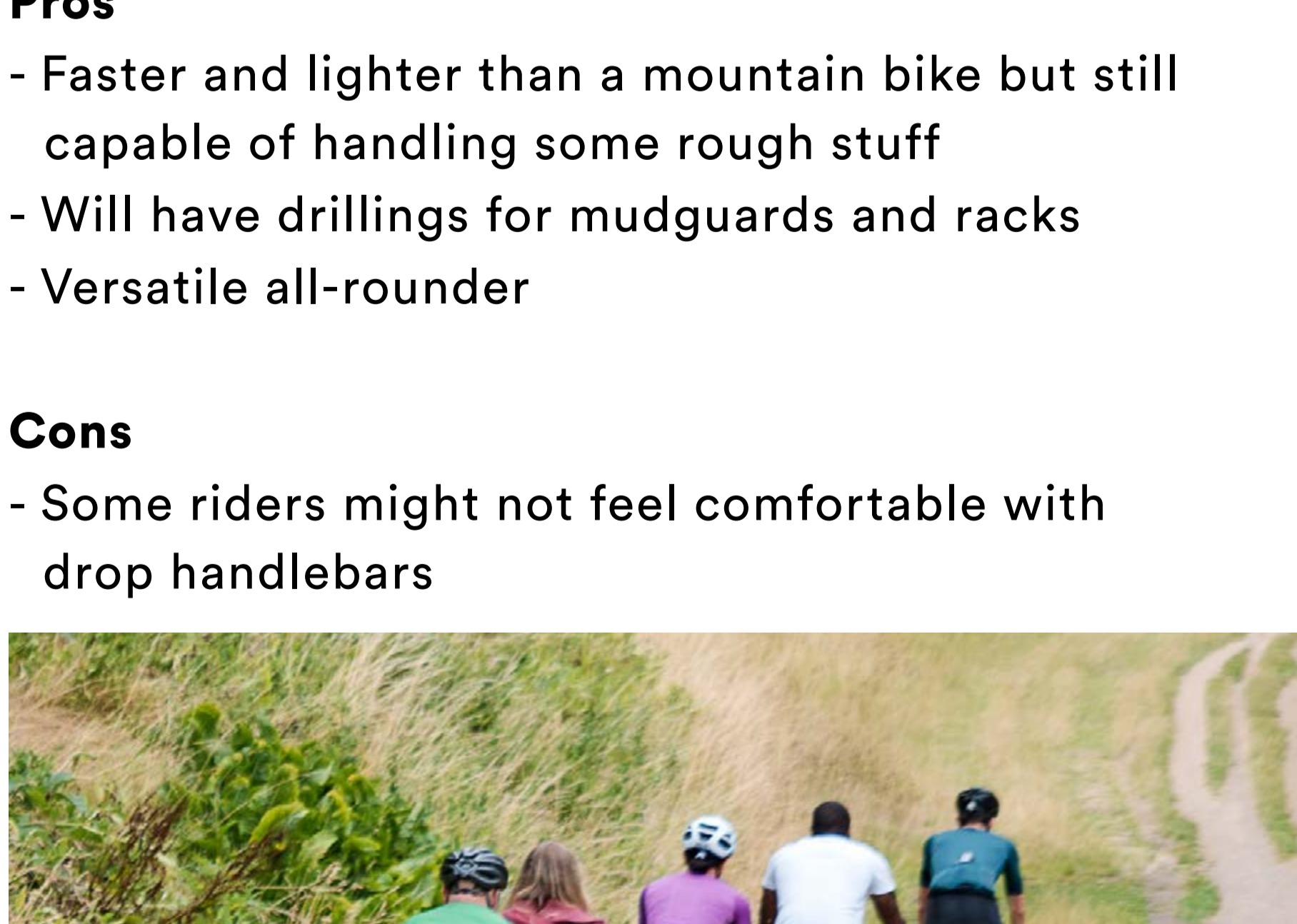
Drop bars and skinny tyres can make a road bike ideal for faster or longer commutes especially if you already own one.

Pros

- Fast, light and efficient
- Great for longer more fitness focussed riding outside of commuting

Cons

- Some riders might not feel comfortable with drop handlebars
- Often will not have drillings for mudguards or racks
- Not suited to unpaved cycle paths



GRAVEL/ADVENTURE BIKES

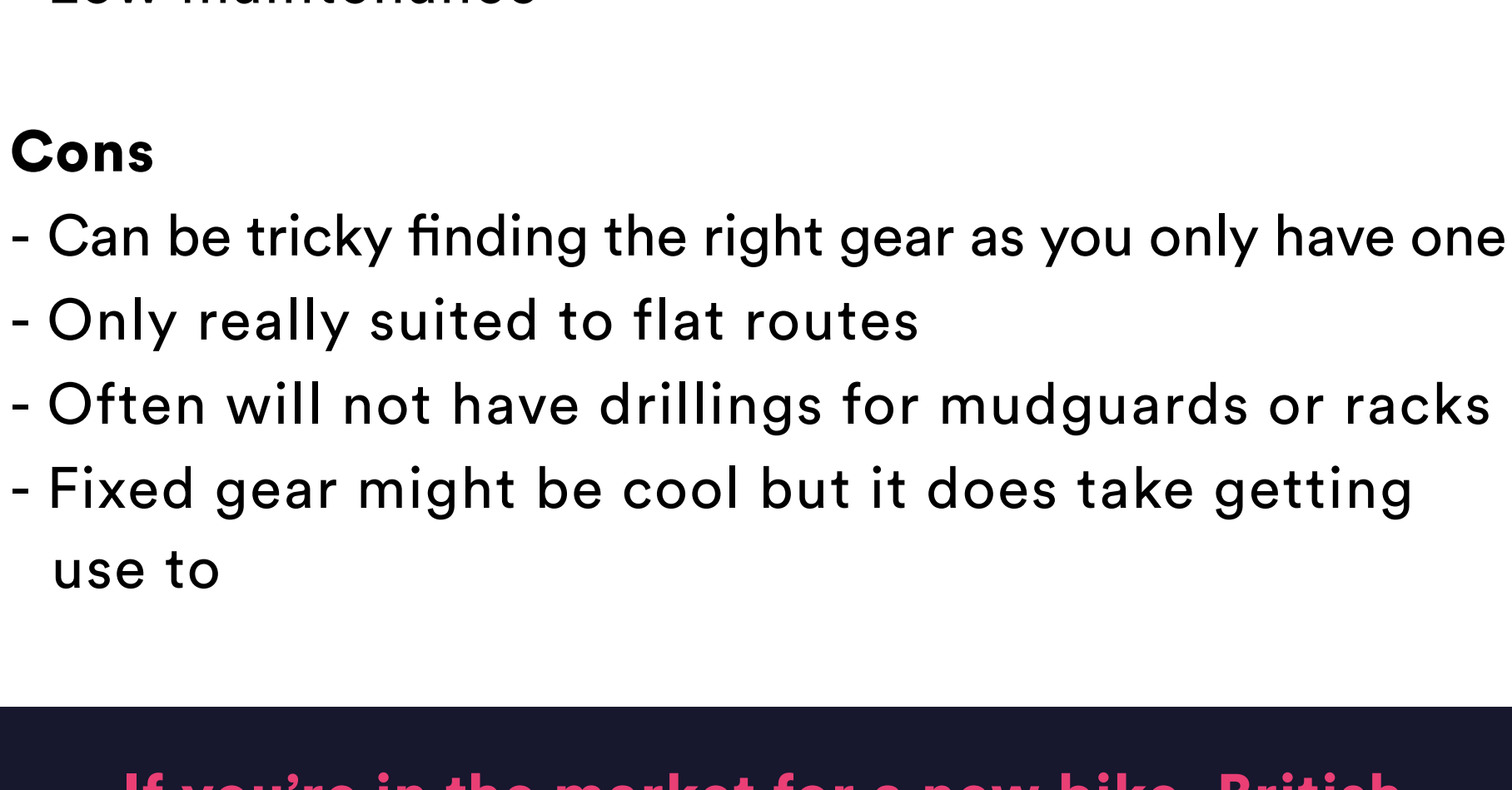
If you've got a mixed terrain commute, want something a bit racier than a hybrid or mountain bike and also fancy some weekend adventures, a gravel/adventure bike could be the do it all solution you're looking for.

Pros

- Faster and lighter than a mountain bike but still capable of handling some rough stuff
- Will have drillings for mudguards and racks
- Versatile all-rounder

Cons

- Some riders might not feel comfortable with drop handlebars



SINGLE-SPEED/FIXIES

The bike of choice for couriers and hipsters alike, either with drops or flat bars, a single-speed or fixed gear bike can be a no nonsense commuting option.

If you do opt for a fixie - no freewheel, it's a legal requirement to have a front brake. A single-speed with a freewheel must have a front and rear brake.

Pros

- Lightweight and nimble
- Low maintenance

Cons

- Can be tricky finding the right gear as you only have one
- Only really suited to flat routes
- Often will not have drillings for mudguards or racks
- Fixed gear might be cool but it does take getting use to

If you're in the market for a new bike, British Cycling Members receive a 10% discount at Halfords, Evans Cycling and Freewheel.



E-BIKES

An e-bike is a great commuting option if your route is hilly, you've got a lot of kit to carry or you're looking to minimise sweating.

WHAT IS AN E-BIKE?

An electric bike - also known as an e-bike, pedelec or EAPC (electrically assisted pedal cycle) - is a regular pedal cycle fitted with an electric motor that gives power assistance when the rider pedals. You pedal and use your gears as normal but can use the electric motor to do some of the work for you.

Some electric bikes can be electrically propelled without pedalling, known as "twist and go". These must be type approved to ensure they're safe to use on the road. A type approved vehicle will have a plate showing its type approval number and is likely to require registration, tax and insurance.

Currently in the UK, but not Northern Ireland, if you're over 14 you can ride an EAPC without a license and it doesn't need to be registered, taxed or insured.

To qualify as an EPAC the bike must have pedals that can be used to propel it. The electric motor should only engage when you're pedalling, have a maximum power output of 250 watts or less, and the motor should not be able to propel the bike when it is travelling more than 15.5mph, this doesn't mean you can't go faster than this, you just won't receive any assistance above this speed.

In addition your E-bike must display either the power output or manufacturer of the motor, as well as either the battery voltage or maximum speed of the motor, as defined by the manufacturer. When we refer to an e-bike, this is the type of bike we're talking about.

WHERE CAN I CHARGE IT?

Public charging points are becoming more commonplace but are still fairly rare. However, most e-bike batteries are designed to be removed, making charging at work or home easy.

HOW LONG WILL A CHARGE LAST?

This varies depending on the capacity, quality and age of the battery. In general though, you can expect anywhere between 40-120 km (25-75 miles) on a full charge.

ARE THEY HEAVY?

With the battery, they are heavier than a regular bike, typically around the 20kg mark but some road bike models are down below 12kg.

ARE THEY EXPENSIVE TO BUY?

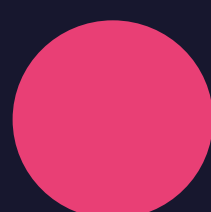
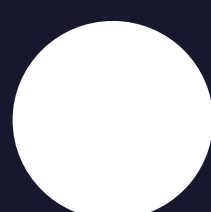
E-bikes tend to cost more than an equivalent non-assisted bike due to the addition of the battery and motor. Entry level e-bikes are typically around £1000.

ARE THEY EXPENSIVE TO RUN?

Running costs are low, about 5-10p per charge and you don't pay for any tax, MOT, license and, if it's saving you car journeys, petrol.



PLANNING YOUR COMMUTE



Taking some time to do some research into your route options will make your commute more enjoyable, safer and time efficient.

DON'T RIDE THE WAY YOU DRIVE

If you currently drive to work, don't try and cycle the same route. There will undoubtedly be a better route utilising cycle paths, towpaths, parks and quieter side roads that are either inaccessible or unsuited to other traffic.

SPEAK TO OTHER COMMUTERS

Probably the best way to find out about cunning traffic-free cut-throughs and quiet roads is to talk to other cyclists. See if there's anyone else in your workplace cycling in from nearby to you and ask if you can tag along with them. There are also now a number of route planning apps which use data and recommendations from other cyclists.

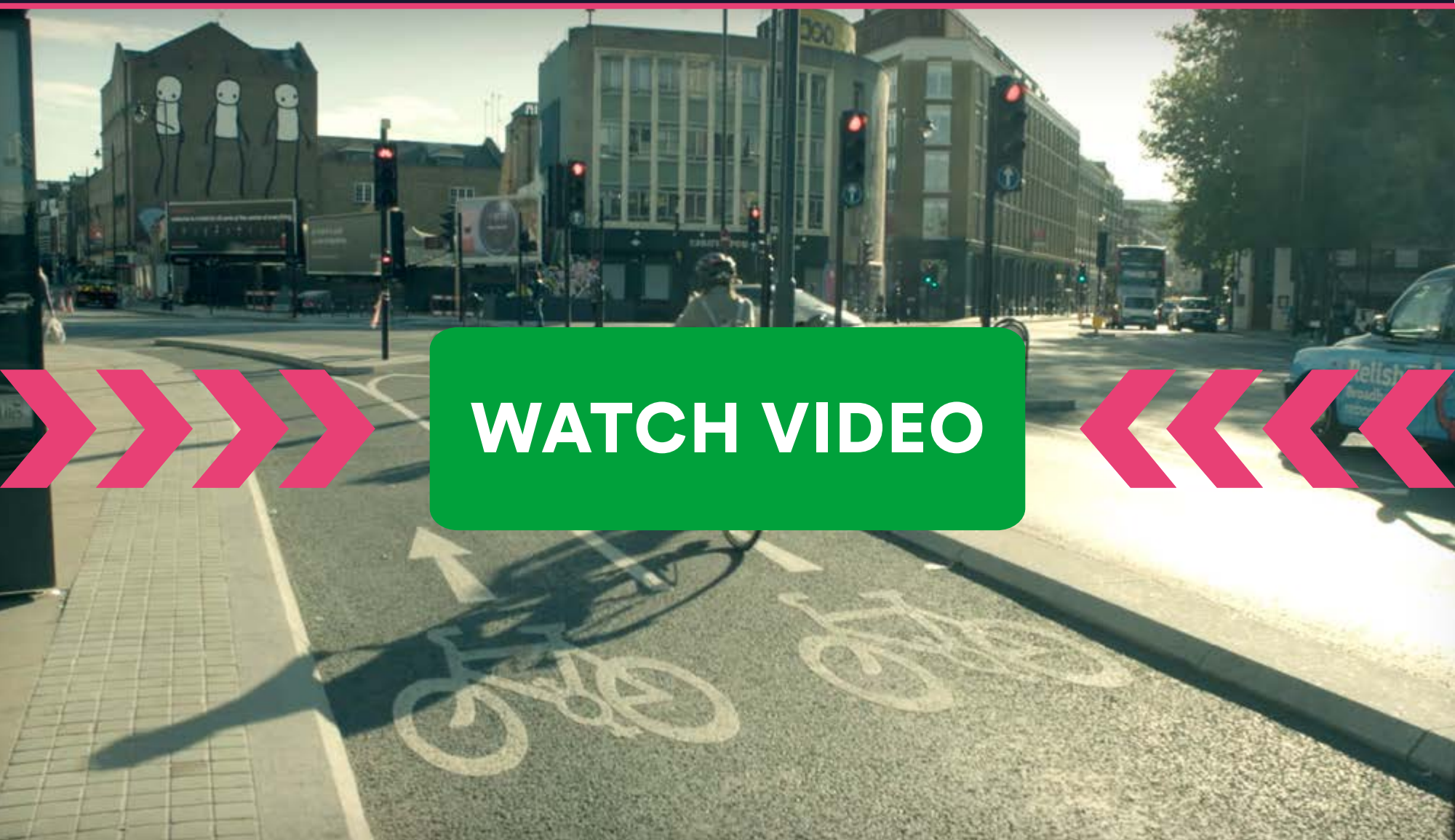
YOU DON'T HAVE TO RIDE THE WHOLE WAY

If you're worried about fitness, time or want a fail-safe option, see if you can plan a route that would allow you to cut it short by using public transport. Folding bikes can be great if you think this might be necessary and, as you get fitter and more experienced, you can always ride a bit further.

HAVE A TEST RIDE

Once you have a route in mind, have a test ride at a quiet time, such as a Sunday morning. It'll let you get a feel for the route without time pressure and give you an idea of how long it's likely to take.

PLANNING YOUR COMMUTE



WHAT TO WEAR WHEN COMMUTING



What you wear when commuting not only depends on the weather but also on the nature of your commute and what type of cycle commuter you are.

YOUR WORK CLOTHES

As long as you keep your effort level steady and avoid excessive sweating, there's no reason why you can't just commute in your work clothes. You wouldn't give a second thought about walking in your work clothes and cycling doesn't have to be any more vigorous.

STAYING CLEAN AND DRY

If you are cycling in your work clothes, mudguards are a must for helping to keep you clean and dry. You'll probably also want to invest in a decent breathable waterproof jacket and maybe also some over-trousers. Don't forget, no matter how breathable they are, you'll have to cycle really easy in these additional layers to avoid sweating.

LAYERS

If you've got showers and changing facilities at work and are wanting to ride a bit harder or just don't fancy cycling in your work clothes, layers are the secret to staying comfortable on the bike no matter what the weather.

Start with a wicking base layer that'll pull sweat away from your skin. This will help you to feel dry and warm in cool conditions and prevent clamminess on warmer days. Merino wool is an excellent choice and there are also plenty of "technical" synthetic alternatives. In the summer you might find this layer is all you need.

If there's a bit of a chill, you'll want some form of insulating mid-layer over your base layer. This can be a traditional cycling jersey, a fleece, a sweatshirt or a tracksuit top. Choosing something with a zip can be handy as it'll allow you to tweak ventilation if you start to overheat.

Finally if it's cold, wet or both, top everything off with a shell layer. If it's dry this can just be a windproof, maybe just a gilet but, if you're commuting in the UK, chances are you'll need a waterproof at some point. It's worth spending a bit more to get a decent breathable one.

For your lower body, if you're going to be spending any significant time in the saddle, padded cycling shorts are probably your best bet. If the lycra look isn't for you, don't worry, you can always wear baggy shorts, tracksuit bottoms or regular trousers over the top. If it's too cold to have your legs out, go for full length tights.

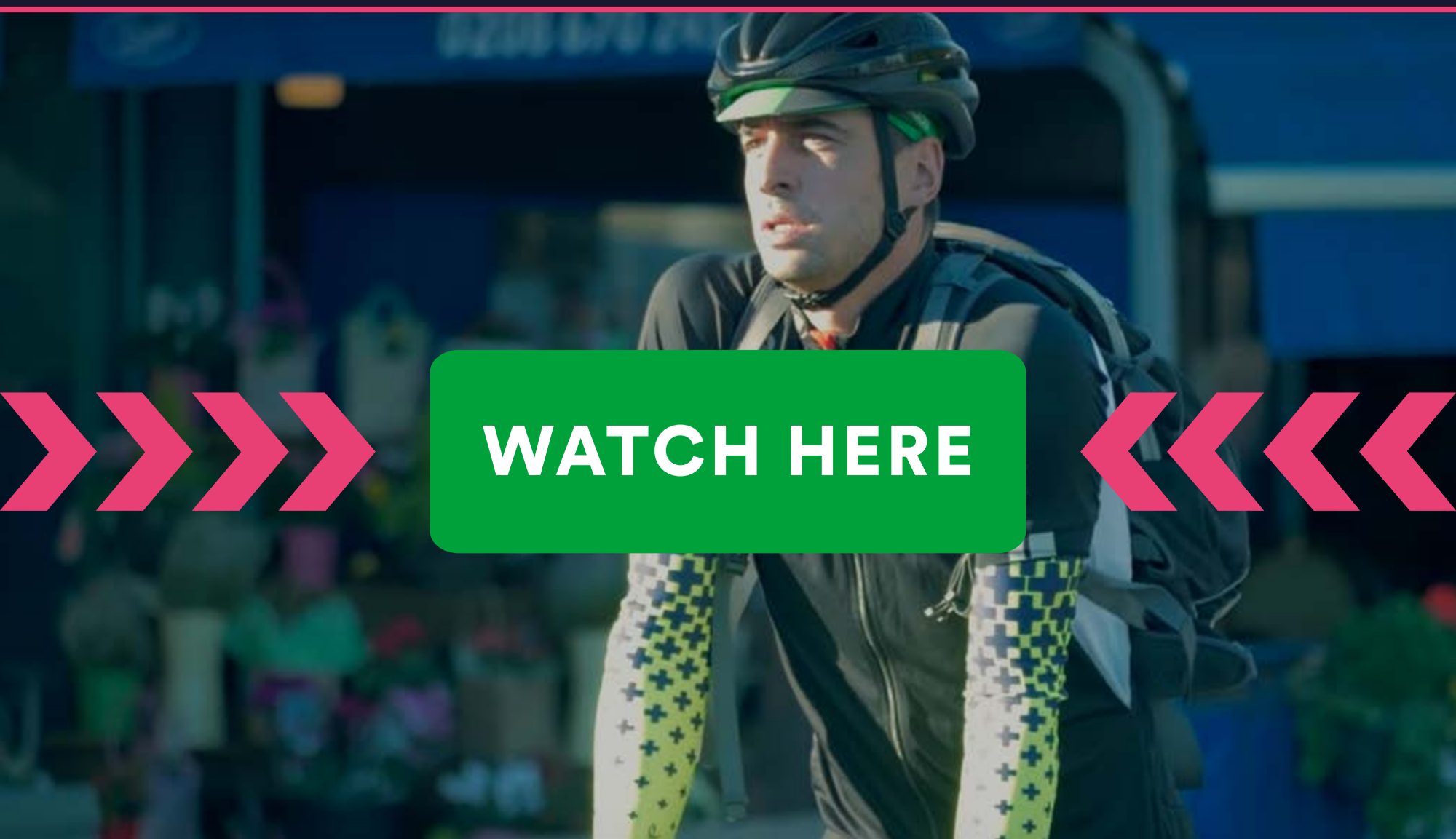
EXTREMITIES

If your hands, feet and head are warm and dry then you'll feel much warmer overall. An insulating and windproof hat, whether under a helmet or not, and decent gloves are essentials for all-weather commuters. For your feet, waterproof overshoes and/or waterproof socks are great options.

HOW TO DRESS FOR YOUR COMMUTE



HOW TO COMMUTE BY BIKE WHATEVER THE WEATHER



LUGGAGE AND PACKING FOR COMMUTING

Just like what you wear, what you need to carry will depend on your commute, your facilities at work and what kit, equipment and clothing you need for your job.

LOCKERS AT WORK

If you have lockers, changing facilities and showers at work, with a bit of planning and organisation, you should be able to cut your load down to an absolute minimum. If you're able to leave a towel, wash kit and several sets of clothes at work, it'll make your life far easier.

BASIC SPARES

Even if you're cycling in your work clothes or don't really have anything to carry, there are some spares and essentials that you should always have with you on a bike - check out the [Essential Tools and Spares](#) section. Most of this kit can easily fit in a compact saddle bag or a canister in one of your bottle cages. It's also usually fairly easy to mount your pump and lock on your frame. Don't forget, if you leave your bike in an insecure location, to remove these items when you lock it up.

JERSEY/JACKET POCKETS

If you're commuting in "cycling clothing", you'll have three decent sized jersey pockets to carry items in. If your spares and tools are in a saddlebag, you'll certainly have room for a mobile, a pass, maybe some clean underwear and socks in a ziplock bag and possibly even your lunch.

BACK-PACK

For fairly light loads, such as some clothes and maybe your lunch, a back-pack is a convenient and affordable option. If you're not convinced by how waterproof your pack is, you can get covers, dry-bags for must-stay-dry items or you can just line it with a bin-bag. However if you've got heavier kit to carry, such as a laptop, they can leave you feeling unbalanced on the bike, cause neck ache and, even in cool conditions, will tend to leave a sweaty spot on your back.

COURIER BAG

Ticking the hipster aesthetic box, a courier bag can be a decent choice for lighter loads. You won't get a sweaty back but they can feel unstable and unbalanced.

PANNIERS

If you got drillings for the rack, panniers are a great choice for regular commuters, especially if you've got a fair amount of kit to carry. There are a whole range of options many of which are fully waterproof and even include ingenious designs that keep clothes crease free. Anecdotaly the greater width they add to your bike can also give you a greater presence on the road. The downsides are weight, changing the handling of your bike and decent sets tend to be pricey.

BIKE PACKING BAGS

With the rise in popularity of bike-packing, there's a whole range of luggage solutions available for bikes either with or without drillings and a rack. Capacious saddle bags, frame bags, top-tube bags and handlebar bags could all easily be pressed into commuting service. Best of all, you'll be kitted up for weekend cycling adventures!

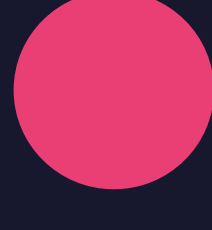
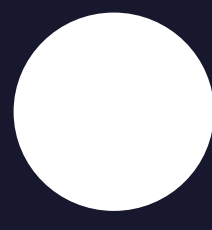
TRAILER/CARGO BIKE

If your work requires tools, other heavy kit or you're incorporating a school run into your commute, you'll need to look at trailer and cargo bike options. With an increasing number of people opting to reduce car use, these big load carrying options are becoming more common and there are even e-Bike options available.

HOW TO PACK AND CARRY YOUR KIT



ESSENTIAL TOOLS AND SPARES



No matter how short your cycling commute, there are a few tools and spares you should always carry.

MULTI-TOOL

A multitool should have a range of allen keys, screwdriver and torx heads that will allow you to adjust all of the important bolts on your bike. Your handlebars, stem and seat post clamps are the most likely candidates for tweaking.

PUMP

There are a whole load of options ranging from full sized frame mounted ones down to super compact mini-pumps and CO2 canister options. As a general rule, the smaller and easier to carry the pump, the more effort inflating a tyre with it will be. Most pumps give you the option to mount them on your frame but remember to remove it if you leave your bike somewhere insecure.

TYRE LEVERS

Getting a tyre off and back on a rim can be a thumb breaking and often impossible task without a set of tyre levers. Plastic ones are lighter and less likely to damage your inner tube or rim than metal ones.

INNER TUBE

Make sure it's the correct size and valve type for your wheels and tyres - check at your bike shop if you're unsure. Take your punctured tube home, patch it and re-use.

LATEX GLOVES

A pair of latex gloves mean you can avoid muck-covered hands if you do have to do any running repairs during your commute.

BACK-UP LIGHTS

A set of small clip on LED lights (red for the rear and white for the front) can be a get you home lifesaver if your main lights fail or you get caught out after dusk when not expecting to.

MOBILE PHONE

You'll probably have it with you anyway but, when cycling, you should have your screen lock off and an ICE (In Case of Emergency) number saved.

HOW TO CARRY IT ALL

This might seem like a lot but it'll all easily fit into a small saddlebag or a canister that you can carry in one of your bottle cages.

PRE AND POST RIDE CHECK

You can massively reduce the risk of a puncture or a mechanical by performing simple pre or post ride checks. Pay particular attention to your tyres and check for stones or shards of glass that may be embedded but haven't yet worked their way completely through.

HOW TO PERFORM A BIKE CHECK



Give your bike a good clean regularly and check that all bolts are tightened. If you're using your bike a lot and in all weather, get it serviced regularly at your local bike shop.

KNOWING HOW TO USE THEM

Of course there's no point in carrying spares and tools if you're not sure how to use them. Check out our [maintenance section on the Insight Zone](#) for videos and tips including [How to Change an Inner Tube](#). Also many bike shops and clubs offer courses in basic bike maintenance.



COMMUTING IN THE DARK

If you're planning to commute through the winter, it's highly likely that you'll be cycling into and home from work in the dark. So, what lights do you need to see, be seen and comply to the law?

RED AT THE REAR, WHITE ON THE FRONT

As a minimum requirement you need a red light mounted on the rear of your bike and a white light on the front. Both can be either flashing, constant or you can have a combination.

APPLYING A BIT OF COMMON SENSE

According to the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulation (RVLR), you also need to have a rear reflector and pedal reflectors. Many bikes don't have rear reflectors and, if you're using clipless pedals, you certainly won't have pedal reflectors. However there's no doubt that reflective decals on your clothing, especially your shoes or lower legs, are equally effective and will suffice.

Similarly, the letter of of the law is that your lights have to be mounted on your bike. However a rear facing red light clipped onto your rucksack or jersey pocket and a helmet mounted white front light are not really issues.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER ROAD USERS

The brightness of bike lights has improved massively and although this is great for you seeing and being seen it does make dazzling oncoming traffic a real issue. Be aware of this, angle your light downwards and, if necessary, dip to a lower power setting.

HOW TO BE SEEN WHEN COMMUTING BY BIKE



BIKE SECURITY



In an ideal world you'd have secure storage for your bike at home and at your office but, if you don't or you have to regularly leave your bike in public places, what can you do to keep it safe?

CHOOSE A FOLDING BIKE

If you have no secure bike storage options at home or work, make multiple stops during your working day or incorporate public transport into your commute then a folding bike could be a great choice. You never need to leave it unattended, it'll slot under your desk and into the smallest flat and you won't have any issues taking it on public transport.

LOCK IT

The sad fact is that a determined thief with the right tools - bolt cutters and a stubby bottle jack, can make short work of even the best bike locks. However a decent lock, or any lock for that matter, will often be enough to make opportunist thieves move on and look for easier pickings.

Choosing a lock comes down to a balance between portability and the deterrent offered.

At the lowest end of the deterrent scale but super high on portability are thin cable immobiliser or café locks. These are often favoured by club cyclists who'll carry them in their jersey pockets and just pop them on when they stop for cake and coffee. For commuters though they probably don't offer enough protection and can be snipped with pliers or even just scissors.



Thicker cable locks can appear to offer a bit more protection but again aren't really suitable if you're leaving your bike unattended for any length of time.



D-locks are one of the best options for commuters as they'll put off most opportunist thieves and can be carried on frame mounted brackets. Try to secure them around the downtube or bottom bracket area to make them less accessible and also, by filling the space in the D with frame and street furniture, you'll make it harder for thieves to utilise tools to remove it.



If you don't mind lugging the weight around with you, a motorcycle chain lock probably offers the best protection but even they can be bolt cropped.



VISIBLE

Try to lock your bike in places where it'll be seen by passers by and CCTV cameras. Don't hide it away or you'll just be giving thieves a quiet location to go about their work without being disturbed.

BIKES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Combining cycling with public transport is a great option for many commuters but are you always allowed to travel with a bike, is there a charge and are there restrictions?

FOLDING BIKES

Probably the best option if you're planning on combining cycling and public transport. As long as your bike is fully folding and its wheels are 20" (51cm) or smaller you'll be allowed on all forms of public transport without restriction.

TRAINS

If you haven't got a folding bike, this doesn't necessarily rule out taking your bike on a train but it might be a bit more problematic, restrictive and require some research. There is a lot of variation in policy between train operators and it's definitely worth checking what the situation is on your route before committing to a commute.

Some require no pre-booking but space for bikes can be extremely limited (typically 3-6 spaces) and, on busy commuting routes, you can easily find the guard refusing you boarding with your bike.

On some lines, you can pre-book a spot for your bike but again these are limited and this option only tends to be available on long-distance and mainline and intercity services.

If you're travelling in and out of London or Cardiff at peak time full sized bikes aren't permitted on any trains.

Replacement bus services are another pitfall as you won't be allowed to travel with your bike - check for engineering works.

TRAMS AND BUSES

Again a folding bike is the way forward as you won't be able to travel on any tram or bus service with a full sized bike.

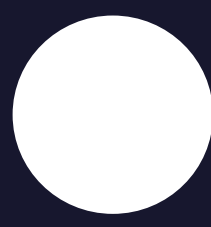
LOCK IT AND LEAVE IT

If you only need your bike for one leg of the journey, you could lock it up and leave it but this obviously has its risks. Some stations offer secure bike storage and hopefully this will become more common. Check out the [Bike Security section](#).

HIRE IT

Another option worth looking into is whether there are hire bikes available at either or both ends of your commute.

FUELLING YOUR COMMUTE



One of the benefits of cycling to work is that you'll burn off some extra calories but how do you ensure you don't run out of fuel?

LENGTH AND INTENSITY OF COMMUTE

If your commute is relatively short (less than 30 minutes), not too hilly and you're not trying to set any speed records, you probably don't need to worry too much about extra food. However, once you start approaching the hour mark or more and definitely if you're approaching your commute as training, you might need to up your intake accordingly.

BREAKFAST

For shorter easy paced commutes just opt for your regular breakfast. However, if you're riding harder, you don't want anything too heavy in your stomach and might want to opt for a lighter pre-ride breakfast such as a banana and then something more substantial when you get into work.

More experienced riders, as long as they ride at a low intensity, might want to experiment with a **fasted ride** into work. The main benefit of this is improved fat burning and, for commutes of up to an hour, is an option worth considering. It's vital though that you have a decent breakfast as soon as you get into work and this should contain a 20g serving of protein to preserve lean tissue mass and support immune function. Porridge with yoghurt and nuts/seeds would be ideal.

If your morning commute is over 90 minutes in length, you'll need to take on some fuel while riding, especially if your breakfast pre-ride has been light.

DURING THE DAY

Even if you have got a reasonably long commute both ways, there's no need to overeat purposely during the day but it is important to snack regularly to maintain energy levels. Especially if you ate your breakfast early before riding in, you should make sure you have a mid-morning snack. Fruit, nuts and seeds are all good and will keep you feeling fuller for longer than sugary biscuits and cakes.

AFTERNOON SNACK

Like your mid-morning snack, if you'll be riding home and then having a gap until your dinner, you should ensure you have an afternoon snack to keep you going. What you have again depends on the length and intensity of your ride home but, at the very least, a banana and maybe some nuts and seeds would be a good idea.

If you're extending your ride home either for training or just for the joy of riding, you might need to take on additional fuel during the ride. Our free **Cycling Nutrition e-Book** is an ideal reference containing loads of tips and recipes for performance focussed cyclists.

HYDRATION

Even if your commute is fairly short and sedate, carrying a water bottle and taking regular sips is a good idea. Most bikes have a bottle cage and, especially in warm weather, you'll arrive at work feeling fresher and more energised if you're hydrating as you ride. Plain water is fine for commutes of up to an hour but, for longer, you might want to consider a sports drink.

British Cycling Members receive a 30% discount off the entire SiS range

USING YOUR COMMUTE FOR TRAINING

The general health benefits of cycling to work are well known but what about if you're looking to improve your performance on the bike and use it as part of your training?

GET STRUCTURED

With a bit of thought and planning, your commute can easily be incorporated into a structured training plan such as one of our [digital training](#) plans on TrainingPeaks. By doing this you can ensure you are getting the most out of your commuting miles.

GO LONGER

Especially in the summer months adding some distance and maybe some structure to your ride home can be a great way to fit training sessions in. View your ride in purely as a commute, possibly a recovery ride or carbohydrate fasted session, and save the quality work for your journey home when time is less of an issue.

PICK YOUR SESSIONS

There are some sessions that are particularly suited to commutes, watch the video for some suggestions.

AVOID JUNK MILES AND OVERTRAINING

If your commute involves a reasonable distance - more than about 30 minutes, you need to be careful that you're not overdoing it and, rather than benefitting from the riding, just adding unnecessary fatigue to your legs. The best way to do this is to plan your commutes with a training plan and then monitor riding intensity using a heart rate monitor and/or a power meter. Either ensure that you're riding super easy or doing specific focussed work; riding at an in-between intensity without focus will simply log junk miles.

FUELLING

If you're wanting to add some quality or distance to your ride home, you might well need an additional snack on top of your lunch 90-120 minutes before setting out. It doesn't need to be a huge amount - a banana and some yoghurt or an energy bar would be ideal.

If you're planning a longer ride home - more than 90 minutes, you'll also need some fuel for on the bike so don't forget to take that in with you. Check out our [Cycling Nutrition e-Book](#) for more information and recipe ideas.

HOW TO USE YOUR CYCLING COMMUTE AS TRAINING





CYCLE COMMUTING FAQ'S



Some of the common questions and misconceptions about cycle commuting and cycling in general.

CAN I CYCLE ON THE PAVEMENT?

The strict letter of the law is that cycling on the pavement (except where there is shared use indicated by signage) is an offence and can land you with a fixed penalty notice. There is clear guidance in place for the police to exercise discretion.

However if, for whatever reason, you feel unsafe, afraid or unable to ride on the road then you can dismount and wheel your bike along the pavement.

DO I HAVE TO USE CYCLE LANES?

No, use of cycle lanes is not compulsory. If there's a well designed, well maintained and segregated cycle lane on your commuting route, it certainly makes sense to use it. Unfortunately many cycle lanes fall far below this ideal and are nothing more than narrow painted on strips, strewn with broken glass and littered with pot-holes. We're doing our best to lobby and change this but, until better cycling infrastructure is provided, you're under no obligation to use second-rate cycle lanes.

CAN I "UNDERTAKE" SLOWER MOVING OR STATIONARY TRAFFIC?

You should watch our video on [How to Filter in Traffic](#) in the Road Positioning and Junctions section for more clarification on this but it's perfectly legal for you to filter past vehicles on the left. This comes with a few big provisos though as, although it might be legal, it's often not sensible or safe.

Never undertake long vehicles, such as a bus or lorry, unless it's completely stationary and will remain so until you're safely pass - if you're in any doubt don't risk it.

Be cautious if passing a junction of vehicles suddenly turning left in front of you - they should check their mirror and blind spot and signal but often won't.

Finally, although it can be frustrating if vehicles don't leave room for you to filter, don't try and squeeze through, brushing wing mirrors and possibly causing damage.

DO I HAVE TO RIDE IN THE GUTTER/CLOSE TO THE KERB?

No, definitely not and, unless you feel it's safe and appropriate to do so, you're under no obligation to let other vehicles overtake you.

Riding in the gutter makes you less visible to other road users, encourages them to try and squeeze past you and you're more likely to encounter hazards such as drain covers and debris. Watch our [Correct Road Positioning in the Road Positioning and Junctions section](#) video for more information.

CAN I BE STOPPED FOR SPEEDING ON A BIKE?

In general speeding offences are specific to motor vehicles and do not apply to cyclists although there are some debatable exceptions where local bylaws apply - such as in some Royal Parks.

There are however proposed offences of cycling carelessly and dangerously and the slightly comedic sounding and archaic offence of cycling furiously. If you cycle considerably and sensibly though there's no reason to fall foul to any of these.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A HELMET?

No, in the UK there's no legal requirement to wear a helmet when cycling and we strongly believe that it should be a matter of personal choice.

It's been shown in countries where cyclists have been forced or pressured to wear helmets that this has led to a reduction in cycle use. In Holland and Denmark for example the vast majority of people who cycle as part of their daily life will not wear a helmet.

Trying to raise the level of cycling infrastructure and use in the UK to the same level as these countries should be our priority so that whether to wear a helmet or not isn't even an issue.

WHAT ABOUT HI-VIZ CLOTHING?

Although there is some evidence that accessories such as reflective ankle straps make you more conspicuous in the dark, there is very little to support the assumption that hi-viz and bright clothing make a significant impact on a cyclist's safety.

It's a very similar situation to helmet use and should come down to personal choice. If a cyclist is involved in an accident through no fault of their own, whether they're wearing a helmet or hi-viz should be irrelevant and, rather than trying to focus and shift blame onto what the cyclist was or wasn't wearing, we should be looking at the culpable road user's actions and cycling infrastructure.

DO I HAVE TO GET OFF AT DISMOUNT SIGNS?

As opposed to the red outlined (circle or triangle) No Cycling sign which must be obeyed, blue and white Cyclists Dismount signs or variations of them are not mandatory. You should look upon them as a warning that probably warrants slowing down, good observation and, on some occasions, dismounting. Examples of this could be when a cycle lane crosses a road junction or is narrowed or obstructed by road-works.



COMMUTE MEMBERSHIP

British Cycling Commute Membership is designed specifically for cycling commuters and is available for £39/year.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Liability insurance and legal support for your daily commute
- Get 10% off cycling purchases in store at Halfords, Evans Cycles and Freewheel
- 20% off selected Muc-Off products
- Member exclusive rates on bike insurance from Bikmo
- 30% off See.Sense lights
- Add your voice to campaigns that support cycling
- Personalised membership pack



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