

Before you ride:

Tune up

Make sure your bicycle is safe to ride. Bring your bicycle to a local bike shop for a tune-up. Each time you ride you should check the tire pressure. You should have a tire pump and a tire pressure gauge. Make sure your brakes are working. Test them before you get on the bike. You greatly reduce your injury risk when your tires are properly inflated and the brakes are working.

Practice

Start by going to a bike trail within a county/state park that does not cross roadways, or try an empty parking lot. Ask someone to come with you and ride behind you to help you evaluate if you are riding safely. It is important to listen to others' feedback or to be honest with yourself if you realize a problem. Spend time getting used to riding again. It is also important to wear a helmet. It is **not recommended** (once you are cleared by your physician) to start riding a bicycle aggressively. Avoid extreme or trick riding, racing, off-trail, mountain biking, fitness riding, riding on busy city streets or even popular bike trails.

Risk vs. Benefits

When anyone rides a bicycle they assume risks. Certain styles of bike riding have more risk for injury. You could be an excellent bicycle rider and still encounter safety hazards created by inattention of others.

It is highly recommended that you do not use cell phones, IPODS or other electronics while riding a bicycle.

Your best protection is to make sure your bicycle is in good working order and to wear a helmet. When you make that decision to ride again, please consider everything you have read in this pamphlet and do what is necessary to avoid a fall or crash and another brain injury.

Traumatic Brain Injury Center Mild to Moderate Brain Injury Program Knapp Rehabilitation Center

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www.hcmc.org/braininjury



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Bicycle Riding Following Traumatic Brain Injury



Am I ready to
ride a bicycle
following traumatic
brain injury (TBI)?



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If you have sustained a TBI, it may be difficult to know if and when, you should resume riding a bicycle. The information in this pamphlet can help you answer that question.

The most important considerations when getting back on a bicycle are: Are you fully recovered from your TBI and what is the risk of a fall or crash with another bicyclist, pedestrian, pet or vehicle, which could cause re-injury to your brain.

Am I ready to ride?

The old saying; “*You never forget how to ride a bike*” is not true following a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

There are many factors that must be considered before you attempt to ride a bicycle. The most important thing is that you are free of TBI symptoms. These symptoms include: headache, dizziness, vision problems, balance and coordination problems, decreased attention and concentration, or other physical, emotional or “thinking” changes since your brain injury.

If you are still having symptoms, it means the brain is still trying to heal. Do not start bicycling if you are still having symptoms.

You are at increased risk of having another TBI if you have an accident while biking with symptoms. This new TBI will likely be much more severe than your first one.

You must have:

- no symptoms of TBI
- approval from your physician
- good vision
- good balance
- good reaction time
- good hand grip strength
- good endurance
- a bike in good working condition
- a good helmet

Types of bicycles

- BMX
- Mountain biking
- Road cycling
- Trail riding
- Commuting/transportation
- Touring
- Tandem
- Recumbent Trikes
- Recumbent bikes

Riding Styles

- Recreational
- Extreme
- Stunt/trick/park riding
- Racing/competition
- Fitness
- Cross country
- Off-trail
- Technical
- City riding
- Trail riding

What helmet should I wear?

You must wear a helmet to help prevent another brain injury. Your bicycle type and style of riding will determine what type of helmet to wear. Depending on how many different styles of cycling you enjoy or bikes you own, you may need more than one helmet. Match your style of riding with the appropriate helmet below:



BMX style helmets



Extreme/mountain



Mountain



Recreational



Racing

Make sure your helmet is certified by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).