



Sociable Group Ride Cycling Etiquette

The sociable group rides are aimed at our adult members and on our coaches advice, junior members aged 15-18, accompanied by a parent/appropriate adult. They are a great way to meet other members of the club and are guided by our ride leaders who have all acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a ride through their attendance on the British Triathlon Community Activator Course. The emphasis of the ride is to be sociable, aiming to keep the group riding together and not leaving any one behind. In order for these group rides to be enjoyable for all, please take time to read the following advice on what to do prior to and during a group ride.

KNOW YOUR ABILITIES:

Our group rides are open to all our club members as long as you are comfortable and confident with your bike and have cycled on the road with traffic. Before signing up to a ride please consider which ride would best suit your current ability and meets your training objectives. You do not want to overstretch yourself by going on a ride that is too fast for you but also respect that there may be riders within the group who are slower than you. The average pace of the ride will be adjusted to the slower member of the group rather than the fastest member to enable the group to stay together. As the rides are guided by club members who have volunteered to give their time to the club, consequently the pace and duration of a ride will be based on their ability and unfortunately our group rides may not cater for all our members.

Prior to the advertised ride, please feel free to contact the ride leader if you are unsure whether the ride is for you. Often we have feedback post-ride that a person was worried about not being fast enough, they'd hold up the ride, etc., when that person would have done no such thing. These are inclusive rides for our members.

PREPARE FOR THE RIDE:

When joining a ride, preparation is key. It is in your best interests to make sure your bike is in good working order, your tyres are at the adequate pressure for the conditions, you carry the necessary kit to deal with a minor mechanical problem, you carry the necessary nutrition and hydration to fuel the ride and that your helmet is well fitting. Remember as in British Triathlon Race Rules, **Unsafe cycles will not be permitted and No Helmet, No Ride!** The following links below will help you perform a safety check, a guide to the essential kit that can be packed in a saddle bag to deal with simple mechanicals and how to make sure your helmet is well fitting. Please note that you also need a means to be able to inflate your tyre should you get a puncture and of course know how to use the kit that you carry. It can also be useful to carry a mobile phone and cash in case of an emergency.

<https://www.britishtriathlon.org/training/bike-mechanics/bike-safety-check>

<https://www.britishtriathlon.org/training/bike-mechanics/packing-saddle-bag>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyhyrITHDgw>

COMMUNICATION:

In order to keep yourself and everyone in the group safe, communication is key. Alert other riders to potential hazards verbally and through the use of hand signals. Take time to learn the meaning of and always pass on the below hand signals. However, make sure you stay alert at all times and do not rely on someone else pointing out hazards.



1. STOP

Hand straight up in the air. Group is stopping because of a junction, mechanical or there is an obstruction in the road.

2. SLOW

Move one hand as is gently patting an invisible dog. Group is slowing or just easing back a bit.

3. OBSTRUCTION

Waving/pointing behind back indicates that there is an obstruction such as a parked car or a pedestrian and that the whole group needs to move in the direction indicated to avoid it.

4. TURN

Left or right hand extended out to the side. Direction of turn/change coming up.

5. BELOW

Pointing down at the road sometimes in a circling motion to obstruction on the road surface such as a drain cover or pothole that needs to be avoided.

BE AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE RIDING:

It is important that your movements within the group are consistent and predictable. Hold a straight line, do not weave and if you want to overtake, do so on the right hand side. Avoid any sudden changes in direction or sudden braking. If conditions allow, the group may be riding two abreast so make sure you stay at an even pace to the rider next to you. Be prepared to take your turn on the front of the group rather than always sitting on the back. When you do take your turn on the front then continue to keep the pace consistent and do not try and push a harder pace. If you wish to ride faster then leave the group, but please note, if you do not know the route and take a wrong turning, the group will not come looking for you! The following video is useful if you haven't ridden in a group before.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPXijIKgFVM>

OBEY THE HIGHWAY CODE:

Remember, when you are out cycling in club kit whether it be on your own or as part of a group you are representing the club. For your safety and the safety of other road users please familiarise yourself with the cyclists section of the highway code.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/rules-for-cyclists-59-to-82>

THE USE OF CLIP ON BARS OR TRI BARS:

You may choose to use clip on bars or tri bars to train and race with. The use of such bars within a group ride poses the same safety concerns as with draft legal races in that they can cause harm if you collide with another rider and delay your response to braking if there is a hazard. As a triathlon club we understand the time and effort it takes for you to set up these bars into your comfortable position. However we do discourage you having them on your bike during a group ride but if you are unable to remove them then do not use them during the group ride and take extra care.