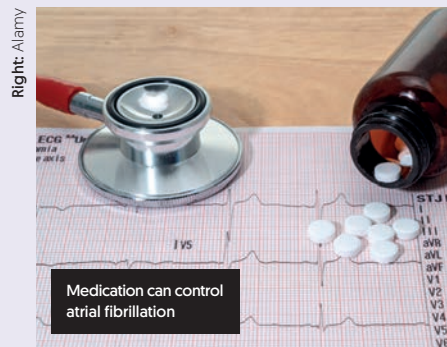


CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide



Health

Heart rate spiking

Q I wear a Polar heart rate monitor with a chest band. Today there was a five-second spike in my heart rate, peaking at 223bpm. I had a similar experience last week with a peak of 208bpm. At the time I felt nothing peculiar or unusual. I'm in my mid-sixties and this is new for me. Previously my heart rate would typically top out between 165 and 175bpm on hills. I know if I'm concerned I should seek professional medical advice

David2504, via the Cycling UK Forum

A The commonest cause of an intermittent fast heart rate in older adults is paroxysmal atrial fibrillation. This is a condition caused by abnormal electrical conduction in the heart. It can last a few seconds or much longer (hours, days), then the heart beat returns to normal. Typically the pulse is very irregular. It can be accompanied by breathlessness, dizziness, or tiredness.

By itself it is not harmful but there is a risk it can cause a stroke if untreated. It is therefore important to consult your doctor, who can arrange monitoring and treatment. Some fitness watches can provide a record of your heart rate, which would be very useful.

Once diagnosed the heart rate can be controlled with medication, and tests can

Technical

Older carbon bike

Q After not using this 2004 Isaac bike for years, I recently started riding it again. I'm a bit nervous about it. It hasn't been crashed or dropped, and the mechanic thought it was fine when I had it serviced.

A Am I being too anxious? I'm concerned that if it does fail then it is going to be quick and catastrophic. Would I be better putting all the bits on a steel Spa audax frame and retiring the Issac?

Paul Cope

A Carbon fibres have a near infinite fatigue life: they don't suffer from the type of failure in which a small crack propagates, or spreads, through a component which then breaks without warning. The resin that holds the fibres together is protected by agents in the paint or lacquer against degradation by UV radiation, so unless the frame is subject to severe impact, which can delaminate or break the fibres, it should have plenty of life left.

Regular inspection may be enough to reassure you of its reliability, but if you really aren't confident in it, then a new frameset may be needed to put your mind at rest.

Richard Hallett

Your Experts



DR KATE BRODIE
Retired GP
{Health}



RICHARD HALLETT
Cycle's
Technical Editor
{Technical}



RICHARD GAFFNEY
Principal Lawyer,
Slater + Gordon
Lawyers
{Legal}

Coronavirus

For up-to-date cyclists' advice regarding Covid-19, visit: cyclinguk.org/coronavirus

be done to rule out other conditions that may underlie it. The commonest of these would be high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Triggers for the condition might be excessive alcohol or caffeine intake or smoking.

Annoyingly for cyclists, it seems to be commoner in endurance athletes who like to run or cycle long distances, despite their healthy lifestyle. I suspect you fall into this group.

Dr Kate Brodie

Right: Robert Spanning



Legal

Cycle paths the 'wrong' way

Q Am I allowed to ride 'the wrong way' on on-pavement cycle facilities – that is, on the right-hand side of the road? I can think of three cases:

- No dedicated cycle lane, shared use by pedestrians and cycles.
- Dedicated cycle lanes with cycle markings.
- Dedicated cycle lanes with arrows as well as cycle markings on the pavement.

Ray Hitchins

A As per Rule 64 of the Highway Code, Cyclists MUST NOT cycle on a pavement. Cyclists are only allowed to use footpaths which are designated for them. There will be a blue sign to show if you are allowed to cycle on a footpath. However, pedestrians may use cycle tracks as well as the pavement unless there are signs prohibiting pedestrians.

The Highway Code sets out at Rule 63 the use of shared spaces. Shared-use routes can be used both ways, but usually cyclists keep to the left side.

Cyclists should always give way to pedestrians on shared-use cycle paths and be prepared to slow down and stop, if necessary. Cyclists should take care when passing pedestrians, especially children, older or disabled people, allowing them plenty of room.

Where separate cycle paths and footways merge into a single shared surface, users may be travelling across a shared area in several different directions.

When cycling on dedicated cycle lanes with cycle markings, Rule 62 of the Highway Code states that cyclists MUST keep to the side intended for cyclists, as only pedestrians (including wheelchair and mobility scooter users) may use the pavement or footpath.

Bicycles are considered vehicles under British law. Rule 69 of the Highway Code states that cyclists MUST obey all traffic signs. Cyclists should cycle in the direction as indicated by arrows as well as cycle markings.

Richard Gaffney

Technical

Triple jump

Q I want to swap my 24-36-44 triple for a 24-40-44 setup. The middle chainring is sucking the chain so needs replacing but the other rings are good.

The question is: will it shift from 24 to 40 okay? I'm on 26in wheels and 5-speed at the back. The shifters are friction levers. It's early an early '90s drop-bar MTB tourer.

Greystoke, via the Cycling UK Forum

A The answer is 'probably not', although it may be possible to get the mech working satisfactorily. The obvious problem is that the inner face of a triple front mech's cage will foul the 40t middle chainring if the mech is placed at the right height to work with the 44t outer ring, while the mech won't shift the chain cleanly onto or off the outer ring if set high enough not to foul the middle ring. In this latter case, it may shift happily from 24 to 40. Why not simply fit a 36t – or 34t – replacement middle chainring and avoid potential problems altogether?

Richard Hallett

Right: Alamy



Technical

QR lever & disc

Q The manual for my partner's new bike is adamant that the front quick release lever should be on the left side by the disc rotor. Why does the bike include this instruction?

TheBomber, via the Cycling UK Forum

A You state the manual is 'adamant' that the lever must be on the left side of the cycle but don't give examples taken from the manual of what disaster might befall the errant user. Perhaps there are none given.

A 'cranked' lever sitting to one side of the skewer head sits more easily facing backwards – desirable to prevent the risk of being flipped open by snagging – when tightened than if placed on the right side, but otherwise the system works equally well in either orientation.

There is a theory that the lever is more likely to vibrate loose if placed on the right side of the cycle, but the 'over-centre' design of the closing cam means that a correctly-tightened QR lever can't vibrate loose as it would have to tighten – generate additional clamping force – before it could come loose. The rear QR lever is usually placed on the left to avoid interference with the rear derailleur.

Richard Hallett

Get in touch

EMAIL your technical, health, or legal questions to editor@cyclinguk.org or write to Cyclopedica, Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ. We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished queries. But don't forget that Cycling UK operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, **TEL: 0330 107 1789**.