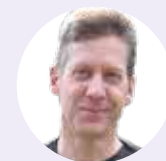


CYCLOPEDIA

Knowhow

Making sense of commonly misunderstood subjects



DAN JOYCE

Dan does all of his day-to-day journeys by bike – apart from those that take less than five minutes on foot

Commuting

I'd like to cycle to work but...

Cycling for transport is especially important right now. As well as promoting social distancing, it helps tackle congestion, carbon emissions, and obesity. Yet many employees, even some recreational cyclists, are reluctant to ride to work. Why?

TOO MUCH TRAFFIC

Busy roads can be intimidating. Assertive cycling, with correct road positioning, makes them easier to negotiate. The skills can be picked up through Bikeability training (bikeability.org.uk) or by reading Cyclecraft (£16.99, cyclecraft.co.uk). And the busiest roads can often be avoided. The best route from A to B by bike is seldom the way you'd go by car; it'll use quieter backstreets, minor roads, and perhaps cycling facilities (see 'Plan your route').

BAD WEATHER

Soakings are rare. Full-length mudguards (see page 5 if you have a road bike) combined with decent waterproofs or a poncho-style cape will keep you dry enough in all but the worst downpour. A cycling cap, which will fit under a helmet if worn, can prevent rain-blurred glasses.

IT'S TOO FAR/TOO HARD

You don't have to ride all the way to work and back every day. Maybe commute by bike two or three days a week? Or try mixed-mode



commuting, making part of the journey – or all of the return journey – by public transport. This is much easier with a compact folder like a Brompton. Or invest in an e-bike if you want to cruise up hills or commute longer distances.

NO SHOWER AT WORK

This doesn't stop millions of Dutch cyclists. Slow down: it's not a race so don't work up a sweat. Put your luggage on the bike instead of your back to prevent overheating. If necessary, take a spare shirt/blouse, underwear, and deodorant, then change in the loos. Nuclear option? E-bike.

WHAT IF I PUNCTURE?

While it's worth knowing how to fix a puncture and carrying the wherewithal to replace a tube (see cyclinguk.org/article/video-guide-how-repair-puncture-bike), punctures are relatively rare, especially if you fit tougher tyres, such as Schwalbe Marathon Plus or Continental Contact Plus, and keep them firmly inflated. Still worried? Commute by folding bike and phone a taxi if you have a problem you can't fix. ●

Plan your route

Google Maps (google.co.uk/maps) and the smartphone app of the same name have a cycling option. The routes generated are hit and miss; they can put you on busier roads. Cyclestreets navigation, used by Cycling UK's Journey Planner (cyclinguk.org/journey-planner) offers 'fastest', 'balanced' and 'quietest' routes, which are more suitable for less confident cyclists. If you prefer plotting your own routes, try the subscription-based OS Maps website (osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) or app; Cycling UK members get 20% off (cyclinguk.org/member-benefits). Trial your route(s) one weekend to see what they're like and how long they take to ride.

Commuting essentials

Things to buy for a better bike trip to work.



Waterproof luggage
Ortlieb Sport-Roller
City panniers
£85/pair, ortlieb.com



Full-length mudguards
SKS Bluemels
Longboard set
£42.99, sks-germany.com



Good lights
Exposure Trace
+ Tracer Mk2
Daybright
£85/set,
exposurelights.com



Tough lock
Abus Granit XPlus
540
£89.99, extrauk.co.uk



Cycling UK Membership
3rd party insurance & legal support
From £24/year,
cyclinguk.org/join

Cycle Friendly Employers
Cycle commuting is easier and more pleasant when your workplace supports cyclists. Visit: cyclinguk.org/cycle-friendly-employer