

**Subject:** 2021 Ride Feedback & Safety/Courtesy Tips #1

**Date:** Monday, January 25, 2021 at 8:24:11 PM Central Standard Time

**From:** Ready2Roll Cycling

**To:** Steve Moskowitz

This is our first weekly collection of feedback and useful tips after the Saturday ride.

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Hello everyone!

This is our first Monday after our first beginner ride so it's time for our first Monday ride feedback and safety/courtesy tips note.

**Note - There are a LOT of useful and important tips in this email. Please read it, at least once, and more, if you need to. This information will make you a much safer, more courteous, and more appreciated/respected rider.**

On Saturday, 251 newbies and mentors enjoyed what had to be the wettest day it didn't rain, in Houston history. Everything was soaked and a number of the rider numbers were wiped out by the water soaking into the paper. Fortunately, our great group of riders arrived over a spread out schedule, like we requested, and we had a very safe, socially separated ride.

THANKS to everyone who came and help clean out a lot of Jan's Garage Sale stock and a lot of great stuff from the Igloo Factory Store. Note - Jan still has a lot of great stuff which will be back for Garage Sale #2 this coming Saturday and the Igloo store will be open again and our special 20% discount is still goo, until Feb 23, at the store and at the Igloo online store!

**I do want to include a shout out to our amazing Ride Marshals.** Yesterday, there were a lot of Ride Marshals present which we expected since they are GREAT mentors and we wanted plenty of mentors to teach our newbies how to ride in the group. To top things off, when we called for the last wave to depart, there were still several Ride Marshals lined up to ride which meant plenty of mentors were holding back to accompany our slowest new riders. **GREAT JOB to our Ride Marshal team!**

Speaking of keeping our riders safe, you will also regularly see many of our Bike Medics and Bike Police riders on each training ride. Please be sure to profusely thank all of our safety riders for all their hard work and if they need to manage a situation, allow them the room they need and stay out of their way.

We do have some great feedback/tips to help us improve so let's get to those now...

### **RSVP - Not Needed**

Several riders have emailed to say they missed the ride or asked if they need to RSVP for each ride. The answer is "No". The Ready2Roll Cycling Training Series is a series and all you need to do is enroll for the series, then come participate in the rides, as your schedule permits.

We don't need to know, in advance, who is coming. We use a very simple process to know who starts the ride, and who has finished. When you get to the ride, you sign in and go enjoy the ride. then sign out after the ride. Our sign-in/sign-out process (see below) tells

us everything we need to know about attendance at each ride.

That's it - no RSVP is needed.

PS - Those of you who are power users, and like using our Ride with GPS navigation app, we still have room for a few more testers to help us test, refine, and perfect our remote Sign-in/Sign-out process. This process will allow you to sign in, and sign out, from your smart phone using our Ride with GPS app. We're testing the process this year to make sure we understand the full implications of remote sign-in and aren't missing anything. If it works well, we'll make it available to anyone next year. If you want to join the testing team, reply to this note, and note, at the top of your reply, that you want to help test and perfect the Ride with GPS remote check-in process.

### **No Headphones, etc...**

We had a volunteer who reported seeing two riders with earbuds and one with a speaker mounted on the bike, who all clearly had the volume cranked to max as they were oblivious to any attempt to verbally communicate with them.

Hopefully, this is pretty obvious but the Ready2Roll Cycling training series is focused on teaching all our riders to ride safely, and courteously on the road. One of the keys to accomplishing this goal is great communication. Headphones prevent you from effectively hearing riders approaching and passing as well as local traffic, emergency vehicles, etc. Headphones, or loud music isolate you which reduces the ability of others to effectively communicate with you, and many riders tend to zone out and lose focus on their surroundings. **Headphones/earbuds are not permitted at Ready2Roll Cycling rides – period.**

A speaker on your bike is permitted, as long as the volume is at a level which permits you to easily hear traffic, riders approaching/passing, officer instructions, etc. We don't have a specific decibel level but, if we have reports of a rider not hearing other riders, traffic, etc., then the speaker is too loud and you will need to lower it or turn it off.

### **Helmet Fit**

Many new riders probably don't realize that proper helmet fit is key to enjoying the protection offered by this critical safety gear. If your helmet is not in the right position, and/or if it's not properly secured, it may offer little to no protection, if you fall.

For example, on Saturday several of our experienced riders reported seeing numerous new riders, with their helmets sitting too far back on their head. As you know, we like to see helmets directly above the eyebrows, with the helmet sitting down in front covering the rest. Here's a short video about this and other aspects of helmet fit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyhyrITHDgw>

Before all our rides, our wonderful team of Ride Marshals will be roaming the crowd looking for helmets that need adjusting. If they offer assistance, please accept willingly and graciously, then, gratefully thank them for possibly saving your life! This year, they may ask you to please adjust the helmet and coach you how to properly fit it, from a safe distance.

### **Crossing Over the Yellow Line**

This next item was not reported this week - I think our rolling start helped alleviate this issue but it does get reported fairly often so we wanted to mention it. In the past, SAG drivers and riders have reported seeing riders moving across the yellow line into the oncoming lane to pass or because several riders were riding two, or more abreast. We also had several reports of riders riding in the lane, who there was a good shoulder to ride on, and riders taking the entire lane, when they should stay closer to the right side of the lane.

**Never, never, never** should you cross the yellow line into the oncoming lane. I did say **NEVER**, didn't I?

Riders should always ride as far to the right as practicable. Pulling out to pass should be the exception and be as brief as possible. Riders may ride two abreast (maximum), if they are on quiet roads with very little traffic and they should switch to single file, quickly.

safely and predictably, if riders, or traffic is approaching. Riders who don't have enough common sense to know when to go single file should not ride two, or more abreast – it makes the road unsafe for them and other riders and angers local drivers.

If you need to pass, let the riders ahead know you are approaching as soon as you are in audible range (bark out: "Rider approaching"). Then, call again when you are close to start your pass. If the riders are two, or more abreast, ask them, courteously, to please move to single file so you can make a safe pass. When they are single file, and the road behind is clear and it's safe to pull out, make a safe pass, then pull over to the right.

Riders do have the right to be on the road, except certain labeled, limited access roads and highways. When there is a wide, safe shoulder, common sense says you should ride on the shoulder as this is as far to the right as is practicable and it's much safer. If the shoulder permits, you can ride two abreast, but you do need to always be alert and aware of other riders and go to single file, to pass or to allow other riders to safely pass you.

We'll share a special topic note entirely about passing and being passed next week – just before Ride 1. We'll focus on this a lot at the beginning of the season as it makes us all much better riders (safer and more courteous) and improves the rider experience for everyone.

### **Consider Using a Mirror**

If it's hard for you to clearly hear riders approaching and/or you are a visual person (like me), you may want to try using a mirror mounted on your helmet or handlebars. It should be on the left side (passing on the right is unsafe) so you can see approaching riders and traffic.

Many riders say that the mirror really helps them be more aware of what is going on behind and reduces the need to turn around as they are constantly aware of what is going on behind them.

### **Seat Height/Bike Fit**

It's easy to have your seat in the wrong position. I helped two riders whose seats were too low. That meant that they weren't getting full leg extension. Seats at incorrect heights can aggravate your legs and knees, aside from not enabling you to maximize the power of each pedal stroke.

Here is a good video that Curt Martin, one of our wonderful Ride Marshals found, to demonstrate a quick, easy method, to get the right seat height, for you.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q5hkRPF8-M>

### **Shifting Gears**

Several riders weren't familiar with their gears. That is not unusual, especially here in the Texas coastal flatlands where gearing is not as obvious, or critical as on more diverse roads. Newbies do want to use these beginner rides (and days in between) to practice with those gears so that when we encounter those four letter cycling words (h\*ll, w\*nd) they'll be prepared to shift easily, into a gear that allows them to pedal more efficiently.

Here's an article about shifting gears...

<https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/product-news/using-bikes-gears-efficiently-148101>

### **Cadence**

Cadence is related to shifting. The term refers to the rate you pedal in revolutions per minute. Understanding how cadence works and figuring out what is optimal for you, is one of the most critical components in enjoying a long, effective, efficient, and injury free life of cycling.

We had our usual first ride observations of several new riders "pushing a big gear" on Saturday. In other words, they were pedaling in a very high (more powerful) gear. This leads to a slower cadence (RPM of the pedals) and on a long ride will wear on your leg muscles. Working those gears and using a higher cadence (80-90 RPM) will let you pedal

farther with less effort.

Cyclist shift to maintain a consistent and optimal cycling cadence of between 80 to 100 revolutions per minute. Each rider's optimal cadence will vary depending on their condition and the type of build/muscles. If you have access to a spinning bike or bike trainer, or a way to experiment with gearing and cadence, this will be very useful to understand now and tweak as you get stronger through the training series.

This article discusses cadence and goes on to suggest some workouts to improve it <https://blog.wahoofitness.com/cycling-cadence-what-is-it-how-to-improve-yours/>

### **Sign-in Reminders**

Sign-in went very well, especially since this was our first ride of the year. We will get even better over the next few weeks.

Here are a few reminders to help you sign-in effectively and help us collect the information we need at each ride.

- Remember to look for your sign-in list. The master rider list is divided into 8 alphabetical sub-lists:  
A-B, C-D, E-G, H-K, L-N, O-R, S-T, U-Z
- The first time you show up to ride this season, you will be issued a rider number to **place on the center of the front of your helmet**. Before doing this, please print your number, very neatly, in the left-hand "Rider#" column on the sign-in sheet. (We'll have volunteers to sign you in, for at least the first 9 rides)
- Before the ride, initial in in the "Started" column.
- After you finish, initial out in the "Finished" column

(We change the pen color while you are riding so, after the ride, it's very easy to visually see who is finished and who is not)

If you forget to check out, we will give you time to get home and may call to make sure you are safe – at 2:00 am Sunday morning!

### **Useful Tip - How to Avoid/Minimize Flat Tire Issues**

Here are some very useful observations shared by an experienced rider who volunteered as a SAG driver. This is VERY useful information to help avoid a flat, make sure you don't have two flats in a row, and make sure your spare will work on your wheel...

*"Over the course of the short ride I stopped to assist with three flats and one thrown chain. One rider had a flat that she changed the first time but did not check the tire for foreign objects and ended up flattening the new tube. I checked the tire and found a small piece of radial wire in the tire that I removed before fixing the flat with one of my spare tubes and getting them back on the road. The second rider had a spare tube but it had been in her saddle bag for so long that it had dry-rotted around the base of the stem and was leaking air. She also had only one tire lever. I fixed her up with one of my spare tubes and got her back on the road. The last person had two brand new tubes but didn't realize he had aero rims so the stem wasn't long enough for my pump or his CO2 cartridge. Luckily, I use tubes with a 48mm stem so I gave him one of my tubes which was just long enough for the pump to grab and get him aired up and on his way."*

Please be sure you completely, and carefully check the inside of your tube for what caused the original flat before airing up the replacement tube and be sure you have spare tubes and other needed spares, that match the wheels and other equipment on your bike. If you are now, please feel free to take advantage of the knowledge at your bike shop to create a useful set of spares, patch kit, etc, that is appropriate for your bike.

OK, those are the key learnings for this first week of the series.

Please be sure to read this note, several times, if needed, so we all get a little better, a little safer, and a little more courteous for our next ride. We start out the year ahead of the curve and end the season near perfection – with the help of each and every one of you!

Thank you!  
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