

## Buddying Tips

### Aim:

- to provide an **enjoyable** experience to *encourage* them to continue; and
- to instil **confidence** and impart **knowledge** to *enable* them to continue.

### Approach

- Patience is paramount  
The sacrifice is worth it, to empower another person to ride.
- Keep at their speed  
Frustrating or difficult as it is at times.
- Stay within their comfort zone  
Don't push too fast, they will need time to acquire skills & confidence. When you make decisions (go/stop for orange light, sufficient gap to turn right) always make it for their level of skill and confidence. Don't overestimate their ability. Be conservative.
- Don't assume skill level  
They may not know how to use gears or do other things you take for granted. I once explained it was easier to start at the lights by starting with the pedal near the top. I didn't realise she didn't know you could spin the pedal backwards to get it in place. Watch for or ask about things they may need explaining.
- Use running commentary  
To explain what is happening and what's next and to gradually impart knowledge. Tell them ahead of time where the next turn is; what to expect up the road; to watch at this intersection for cars from the left because they sometimes don't look; to watch out for opening doors around here, especially if parked car brake lights go off; avoid metal service covers when wet; hit kerb ramp lips at a good angle; etc. They won't absorb everything, so over time repeat the important things to look out for.
- Frequent feedback  
Regularly check how they feel about what they're experiencing. Is this speed ok? Are you comfortable with how we handled that driver back there? Make sure they are within their comfort zone and enjoying the experience – or they won't continue.

## Keeping safe

- Be clear and consistent in your decisions and body language  
Make the call on whether to stop/go at lights (but have an agreement that personal judgement can always override). Use body language to convey who goes through the tight bit/up the kerb ramp first (best to have a protocol of them first).
- Make decisions based on their skill/comfort level, not yours
- Suspend conversation at complex situations, to avoid distraction.
- Be ready for the unexpected  
From the traffic as well as from them – the unexpected wobble or fall.
- Ride more safely and visibly  
You will need to ride in a more “vehicular cycling” style: two abreast most of the time (yes, it’s legal) and wait in traffic rather than lane split through gaps in the traffic. The latter is too unpredictable to keep your charge safe, and the cars will give you more leeway if you’re acting like proper traffic. When two abreast ride on their right. When you do ride single file, ride behind and a little further out.

## Specific problems

- Hitting bollards or potholes  
New cyclists may concentrate too hard on the bollard or pothole they fear and may end up hitting it. Get them to focus just on the line they want to ride (between the bollards or beside the pothole) and the bike will follow.
- Too slow downhill  
Check they have confidence in their braking. Practice braking safely at faster speeds. Other than that it’s a very sensible fear of going fast which will only mitigate with time. Distracting them with conversation so they don’t focus too hard on staying slow can help.
- Trouble starting / riding slowly (eg. among pedestrians on shared path)  
Explain as much as you can and encourage them to practice these skills at every opportunity.
- Be prepared to fix a puncture  
Have the gear ready and preferably be practiced so you don’t make it look too hard. Or have a fall back plan (a maxi taxi number).

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