

First Time (learn to ride) Information sheet

This course is designed to teach people aged 14 or older how to ride a bike: for those who have never ridden or have not ridden in a long time. Also known as Learn to Ride.



Most First Time courses are held outdoors, so subject to suitable weather (must be dry). For this reason, courses cannot be confirmed until 36 hours in advance, based on the hourly weather forecast. You will receive an email letting you know if the course will proceed at this time.

You will need to provide a properly fitting bike and helmet. *We do not provide this equipment for you. **You will need to be able to sit on the bike's seat and have both feet flat on the ground (or close to flat) at the same time.*** If you own a bike now (not purchased new), or you are buying a used bike, I recommend that you take the bike to a bike shop for a tune up to ensure it's in good working condition. If you are going to buy a new bike, I can make a few recommendations, though I do not recommend bikes from places like Canadian Tire or Walmart. There are a number of different styles/types of bikes, so depending on what kind of cycling you plan to do long-term the type of bike you choose may differ. Proper fit for long-term use is different than for learning, but you should be able to find a bike that works for both. If you do not have a bike and are considering renting, there is a list on the next page but please buy a new helmet because you should not trust your brain to a helmet that you don't know what it's been through. You will be responsible for rental fees as well as transporting your bike to the course location.

Your helmet should be new, and fit properly. This video shows you how to fit and adjust a helmet: [video on helmets](#). You do NOT need to spend a lot of money on a helmet: a \$30 helmet will protect you just as well as a \$200 helmet, the difference in price is often a reflection of the helmet's features and fit adjustment. The most important feature is proper fit. Most helmets must be replaced after one impact with a hard surface, including falling off a closet shelf onto hardwood or tile or being dropped onto the sidewalk from 1m height, regardless of whether they cost a lot or a little (check the information that comes with a helmet to find out if it is certified for multiple impacts). If you aren't sure, get a new one: please don't take chances with your brain. Most department stores like Walmart or Canadian Tire will have a reasonable selection, but if you have difficulty finding one with a good fit, go to a dedicated bike shop. If you can't afford a helmet, contact [ProHAB Helmet Society](#) for helmets by pay-what-you-can donation. (A reminder that all children under 18 must wear a properly fitting bike helmet at all times when they are on their own bike or riding in a child seat or trailer attached to an adult's bike.) Please note: exemptions for religious headwear apply but many types of religious headwear including the hijab and some forms of burqa can accommodate a helmet (a kippah, turban or patka is unlikely to work with a helmet) but helmets will only work if they are worn properly: a helmet perched on top of a turban is useless.

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Places to consider renting a bike from, in no particular order:

- [Sports Rent](#) (4424 16th Ave NW)
- [Bow Cycle](#) (6501 Bowness Road NW)
- Rapid Rent Eau Claire (they don't have a website - 200 Barclay Parade SW)
- [UofC Outdoor Centre](#) (2500 University Dr. NW)
- [Rath Bicycle](#) (439 8 Ave SE)
- [Outlaw Sports](#) /Rapid Rent Heritage (903 Heritage Drive SW) my favourite simply because they're the ones I work with the most: they are walking distance from the Haysboro location.



Whichever place you choose to rent from, there's a few things to keep in mind:

1. **It is absolutely critical that you are able to sit on the bike's seat and get your feet flat or nearly flat on the ground.** The balls of your feet are ok but more is better. Do not worry about how a bike fits for appropriate long term pedalling because it doesn't matter at this stage; you need to be able to get your feet on the ground for learning.
2. I highly recommend hybrid-style bikes in general but any style will be fine for learning with the exception of road bikes (the ones with the curved down handlebars like Tour de France bikes). Road bikes are built to go fast, but are not appropriate for learning, in my opinion. If you have any challenges with your hips or general mobility, a bike with a low step-over top tube will make it much easier for you to get on and off the bike. The width of the tires is not a factor in learning how to ride.
3. You do need a helmet as well, but I do NOT recommend renting a helmet. Helmets are generally only good for one impact and you have no way of knowing what happened to a rental helmet before you got it. It will cost more to buy a helmet, yes, but your brain is worth it.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch!

Thank you,
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