

Unofficial Rules of Cycling Etiquette

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www.womenscycling.ca

Be polite – with everybody, even the idiot who cuts you off! Manners matter especially when you represent the rest of us of the road. Your actions affect the attitude others hold toward all cyclists.

Ring that bell – when passing pedestrians or other cyclists, roller bladders, etc, on recreational paths. Not everyone can hear the whir of wheels, and a bell is less offensive than someone shouting. Just do it early enough so they have time to react.

Communicate – nod your head, wiggle a few fingers from the handlebar, say hello whenever another cyclist passes by. We're all together in this two-wheeled world so let's keep it friendly. Unless you are doing road intervals, slow down when passing another rider and chat with them for a few minutes. Find out why they cycle. Sharing the road has more than one meaning.

Offer help – to any cyclist stuck by the side of the road even if you don't know how to fix a flat. Stop and offer assistance anyway. They might just need a tube or a tool or a cellphone. And remember, what goes around comes around and next time it could be you needing help. Even if they don't need anything, it boosts morale to know there are others about and they're not alone.

Stop at kids' lemonade stands – doesn't matter whether you're thirsty or not. Buy a cup of kindness while encouraging community enterprise and boosting junior's self-esteem. This girl might be a cyclist someday and this is a chance to make a good first impression for cyclists.

Ask before drafting – the faster person will probably let you enjoy his energy-saving wake, but not always. Some just don't like hangers on who don't do any of the hard work. If you get the okay, try to take a turn up front if you can. It's safer for both of you if the "puller" knows you are tucked in behind. Signalling when slowing or changing lanes will keep you from "kissing wheels" and crashing.

Be thoughtful – If you stop on a recreational pathway to fix something or to chat make sure you move your bikes all the way off the path so other cyclists are not impeded. We can prevent dumb accidents.

Encourage little cyclists – praise them for wearing cool-looking helmets, for stopping at corners, for ringing their bells when passing, or for anything positive that will keep them safer.

Encourage adults – if you invite a neighbour or friend who is a novice cyclist out for a ride, make sure you ride WITH them. Don't hammer away and expect them to stay with you, don't brag about how many miles you've ridden, rather focus on them and their cycling progress.

Show them one specific thing that might help improve their cycling, but don't preach about all their failings. Positivity is priceless. Don't be a bike snob.

Don't spit or blow out your nose – unless you know for sure someone besides or behind won't receive your undesirable offering. As for a call of nature while outdoors, be discreet!

Pay for peeing – if you use the bathroom at a convenience store or gas station, remember to buy something, even if it is only a bottle of cold water. Store owners will be glad to see you again.