



Bike New York

Bicycle Education Program

Learn to Ride

The “Balancing First” method that will have your kids riding in no time!



Overview

- Adjust helmet fit
- Remove training wheels
- Lower seat height
- Explain “Balancing First”
- Remove pedals
- Walk and roll
- Reattach pedals
- Reintroduce pedaling
- Explain starting and stopping
- Success!



Adjust Helmet Fit

1. Adjust the back of the helmet for a snug fit.

2. Be sure the front of the helmet sits flat, covers the child's forehead, and is 1 – 2 finger widths from the eyebrows.

3. Adjust the front and back straps so that the buckle comes to a "V" under the child's earlobe.

4. Tighten and clasp the bottom strap so that it is 2 finger widths from the chin.





Remove Training Wheels

The “Balancing First” method requires no training wheels!

Tools: Adjustable Wrench

1. On both sides, unscrew and remove the bolt that holds the training wheel in place.
2. Remove the training wheels and place them aside.
3. Be sure to **REINSTALL** the bolts, which hold the bike’s wheels in place!





Lower Seat Height

Your child should be able to sit on the bike's seat with her feet flat on the ground.

Tools: Adjustable wrench

1. If the bike has a quick-release seat adjuster, simply open the lever and rotate it to release.
2. Lower the seat to the desired height and lock the quick-release by rotating it back and closing the lever.
3. Without a quick-release, use an adjustable wrench to loosen the bolt at the base of the seatpost.
4. Lower the seat to the desired height and tighten the bolt.





Remove Pedals

By removing the pedals, your child will be free to roll his bike without any pedal interference (or bruises).

Tools: Adjustable wrench or pedal wrench

1. Using the pedal wrench or adjustable wrench, loosen and remove each pedal from its crank arm.*
2. Pedals are threaded differently, so remember to turn the wrench this way to loosen:

Right pedal – counter clockwise
Left pedal – clockwise

3. Place the pedals aside.

*Find a tip on the next page!





Tip: *Wrenching Pedals*

- To remove each pedal easily, point the crank arm forward.
- Position the pedal wrench so it points backward.
- Push down hard on the pedal wrench.





Explain “Balance First”

With the helmet and bike adjustments done, your child is ready to walk and roll!

Tools: Patience!

Explain the method this way:

- Use your feet to walk or row the bike forward.
- When you have some speed, pick up your feet and roll.
- Roll, holding a straight line, for as long as you can.
- When you feel yourself tipping to one side, use your feet to keep walking or rowing the bike along. Try to keep moving.
- Keep your eyes focused ahead.
- Now, practice!





Walk Your Bike...





...And Roll!

Helpful hint:

New riders usually find balancing easier when they focus their eyes on a fixed object directly ahead of them in the distance, like a sign or park bench.





Practice!





And Practice Some More!





Reattach Pedals

Once rolling in a straight line is a breeze for your child, reattach the pedals. (Avoid reattaching the pedals before your child is ready!)

Tools: Your hands
Adjustable wrench or
pedal wrench

1. Find the “L” or “R” label on the end of the bolt on each pedal.
2. Using your hands, reinstall pedal into the appropriate crank arm by rotating this way:

Right pedal – clockwise

Left pedal – counter clockwise

3. Use adjustable wrench or pedal wrench to tighten.





Reintroduce Pedals

Kids use the same method as they learned earlier: walk and roll the bike and then lift their feet. This time they find the pedals.

1. Rotate the pedals so the right pedal is at 2 o'clock (or, facing straight ahead).
2. Explain the method this way:
 - Use your feet to walk and roll the bike like you did without the pedals attached.
 - When you lift them to glide, use your feet to find the pedals without looking down. This will take some practice!
 - Once you are able to find the pedals with your feet (not your eyes) start gliding, find the pedals, and push!
 - Now just keep pedaling!





Explain the Basics: Starting

Position one pedal (often the right pedal) to 2 o'clock. Have your child stand over his or her bike to start.

Explain the steps for a proper start:

- Put one foot on the pedal that is in the “power” position (pointing toward 2 o'clock).
- Keep the other foot on the ground for balance.
- Then, at the same time:
 - push down on the pedal foot
 - push back (“scooter style”) with the foot on the ground.
- Find the pedal with your “ground” foot.
- Keep pedaling!



Explain the Basics: Stopping

Your child will come to the point where it is critical that he or she learns how to stop properly.

A proper stop = no feet touch the ground until the bike is at a complete stop.

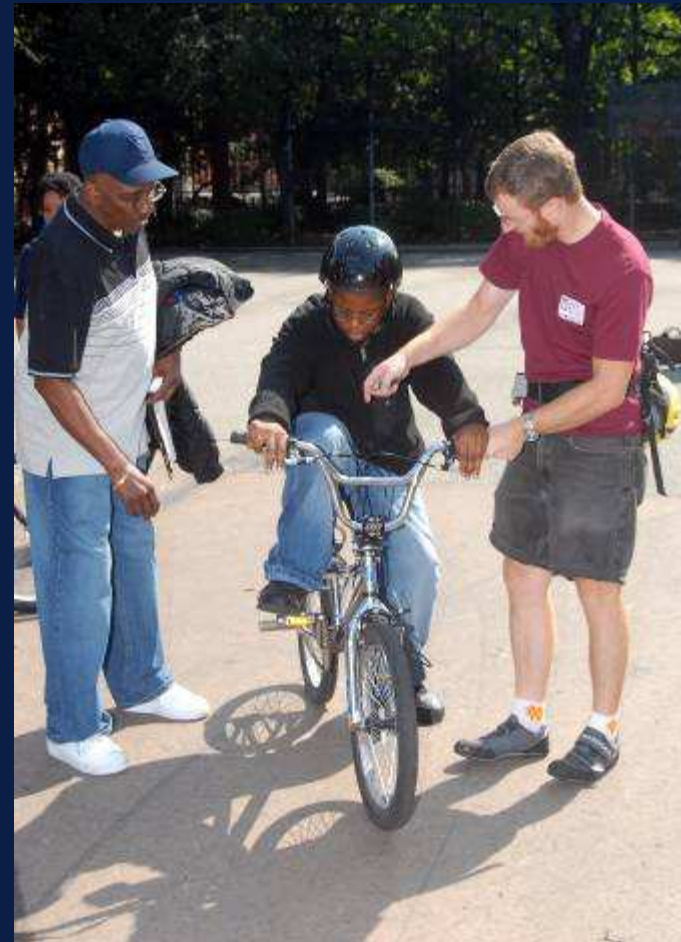
Encourage kids to practice a “no foot skidding” stop!

- Coaster Brakes

If riding with a coaster brake, explain how to push your feet backward to brake.

- Hand Brakes

Explain how to use hand brakes, if applicable and possible. Keep in mind that some children do not have the physical hand strength to use hand brakes.





Practice Again!





Success!

Congratulations, new cyclist!





Bike New York's Bicycle Education Program

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Join us in Bicycle Education!

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