

Frequently Asked Questions: Cycling and Health

1. What makes cycling a good workout?

Cycling is an easy, low-impact workout that works out all major muscle groups in your body. It increases your strength and stamina and allows participants to work out at varying intensities.

2. What are some of the health benefits of cycling regularly?

Cycling is an aerobic activity. This means your heart, blood vessels and lungs are all worked out at the same time. An aerobic workout results in a higher body temperature, deeper breathing and calorie burning, which improve your overall fitness level. Long-term benefits of cycling include increased muscle strength and flexibility, improved joint mobility, decreased body fat levels, and more.

3. Does cycling reduce stress?

Like most regular exercise, cycling can reduce stress and depression while improving well-being and self-esteem. By cycling outside or with a group of friends, you can get your mind off of everyday stress, even if it's just for 30 minutes.

4. I want to start cycling, where do I start?

Consult your doctor first. Many people cycle, but your doctor can counsel you on your limits and capacities with the activity. It's also important to remember to know where to begin. Start small (ex. Cycling three times a week), and work your way up to more workouts and higher speeds.

5. What does “base training activity” mean?

Base training activities provide endurance and aerobic training simultaneously, like cycling. It is important that this activity is your starting activity each week and all other workouts should complement the benefits of your base activity.

6. What are some important tips to remember?

- *Always wear a helmet:* Almost 85 percent of biking-related deaths are a result of head injuries. While most state helmet laws only apply to children and adolescents, it's important to always wear a helmet no matter how short the ride is.
- *Visibility is important:* When cycling, it is smart to wear bright clothing. Biking during the day is best, but if night riding cannot be avoided, wear reflective clothing. The National Safety Council also recommends bikes be equipped with reflectors, a horn and a rearview mirror
- *Know when you ride:* It is best to avoid morning and afternoon rush hours as well as bad weather.

7. Where can I find a cycling group?

The Durham Bicycle Cooperative is a local nonprofit organization that wants to make the community a better place by promoting cycling as a healthy fitness and wellness activity. This organization provides cyclists to network with each other through volunteering and through social events designed to expand the cycling culture.