

# Saturday Group Rides

These rides take place every Saturday morning. We meet at Newcastle Football Club (ST5 3BX) where there is ample parking should you wish to drive there. We aim to leave punctually at 9am; please arrive and be ready to go before then so nobody gets cold waiting for latecomers.

We usually have three groups. The beginners group covers 25-30miles, the steady group covers around 40-60miles and the fast group rides around 50-60 miles. Rides may be slightly shorter/longer depending on the weather and time of year, so it is always a good idea to check with the Group Navigator in advance (see coaches rota) if you have time restrictions or are hoping to cover a specific distance. Able juniors are welcome to ride with an appropriate group but must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

The steady and fast groups usually stop for refreshments at a café somewhere en route. The routes for all groups are alternated week by week – so you should not become bored of riding the same roads every time.

As well as being a great way to get to know other members, these rides are ideal for building up your cycling confidence and endurance; the base miles will ensure that you are race fit for the summer, whatever your current ability level.

We ask that if you are considering participating in a group ride, please read the information on Group Cycling Etiquette. This contains some useful information on what to wear and bring and what to expect when riding as a group.

For further information regarding bike training please contact Lead Cycling Coach:  
Pete Swinnerton [peteswin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:peteswin@hotmail.co.uk)

# Group Cycling Etiquette

Group rides are great fun but with larger groups of riders comes higher risk and in order to ensure these rides remain safe as well as good fun training it is important that everyone follows a set of rules. Club rides are navigated by volunteers and the club is not responsible for our safety; **everyone on the ride must take responsibility to look out for others safety as well as their own**. Always bear in mind that everyone in the group may not be as confident or have as good bike handling skills as you.

**\*\*\*Newcastle (Staffs) Triathlon Club recommends that anyone who rides on public roads has appropriate Cycle Insurance cover (e.g. as provided by your BTA membership or the BCF/CTC)\*\*\***

Please apply the following rules when you are next on a group ride and where others don't please politely inform them of the proper cycling etiquette. More experienced riders can guide you if you are unsure, so please don't be afraid to ask and don't be offended if you are guided!

## *Do*

1. **Follow the Highway Code** at all times – it applies to ALL road-users.
2. **Wear a cycle helmet** and appropriate clothing/lights for the weather/time of day. It is always advisable to carry a waterproof jacket or gilet.
3. **Ensure your bike is road worthy**, brakes are fully operational and that your tyres are pumped up to the recommended PSI (as written on the tyre). Mudguards are recommended for wet days.
4. **Bring everything you might need**. Prepare for every eventuality. For example, puncture kit, tyre levers, 2 inner tubes, pump, multi tool (including chain tool), helmet, waterproof jacket, food, water, money, credit card, mobile, contact details in emergency, medication.
5. **Cycle a maximum of two abreast in 2 close parallel lines** where appropriate, focus on keeping it neat and tidy.
6. **Ride with 1ft approx. between your front wheel and the back wheel of the rider in front. There should also be 1ft between your shoulders and the rider beside you.** Ride directly behind the wheel of the rider in front. If you cycle in the middle of the two wheels in front of you, you WILL push the cyclist on your outside into the path of passing vehicles. Also, to following drivers it may appear that groups are "all over the road".
7. **Check over your shoulder for other riders or traffic** before moving out to the right/left/over junctions.
8. **Be prepared on small or busy roads to ride in single file.** If you need to ride single file: the cyclist on the right should ease off slightly and file behind. The cyclists on the left should maintain the same pace and allow for cyclists filing back.
9. **Brake as gently and smoothly as you safely can** when riding in a pack. Try to give warning before you slow down. Cover your brakes at all times.
10. **Ride at a steady pace, keeping the pack as a compact unit** – let people know if you or someone else is struggling to keep up. When asked to "ease up" or "slow a little" do not brake suddenly. Gentle ease your pace by pedalling less hard or freewheeling for a moment.

## **Don't**

1. **Overlap wheels, or nudge in between the wheels of the riders in front.** You will come off if they move off their line.
2. **Ride on tri / aero bars in packs** as you will not be able to brake or steer quickly.
3. **Make any sudden movements/changes in direction** off your line when in the pack. You are responsible for the cyclist behind you, they are following YOUR wheel they need to trust you.
4. **Ride off the front.** This is a group ride, not a race. If you want to go faster then let the others know what you are going to do and if no one wants to join you then go off and enjoy your ride alone.
5. **Stop pedalling if you are on the front.** The cyclists behind you will read this as you slowing and could be forced to brake and bunch up.
6. **"Zone out" on the wheel in front.** Keep aware of everything that is going on around you, look ahead and that way you can avoid most hazards.
7. **Whip round the outside of the pack to get to the front** unless in an emergency. Shout up the pack any communication. If you do need to get to the front then make sure you check in front and behind for cars, remember three abreast will push you out into oncoming traffic.
8. **Pull out at junctions without looking,** having heard the "Clear" call from a fellow cyclist. Check whether there is a vehicle coming yourself.

## **Calls**

These are some calls you might hear. It is essential that you repeat them down the pack so everyone can hear:

- **"Car Up/Front/Back"** : Keep tight to the cyclist next to you, and be prepared to cycle in single file
- **"Hole/Gravel/Mud"** : Upcoming obstacle to avoid. This can also be followed by a direction i.e **"HOLE LEFT"**.
- **"Slowing/steady"** : Usually accompanied by a hand signal. The cyclist in front needs to slow down for some reason.
- **"Stopping"** : Brake!
- **"Wait"** : Usually at junctions to indicate there is a car coming
- **"Clear"** : To indicate that a junction is traffic free. You must check yourself and not rely on others.
- **"Heads Up"** : Hazard ahead, pay attention.
- **"Single out/file out/ single file"** : Get into single file safely and promptly

## Hand Signals

These are some hand signals (other than the obvious left and right turns!) It is essential that you repeat them so everyone can see and pass it on:

- **Single hand in the air (arm up – be sure not to confuse other road users)**  
: Rider is signalling that he/she needs to stop or slow down. Followed by the call 'Slowing', 'Stopping'.



- **Pointing down at the road and call out (i.e. pot hole):** This is to point out hazards such as pot holes, manhole covers etc. PLEASE copy the signal and call, it stops accidents and punctures.



- **Arm out left or right :** Everyone in the pack needs to indicate when turning left or right.



- **Left arm signalling behind (also a call out i.e. car left) :** Signal the cyclist is about to move out into the road, e.g. to pass a parked car, to go round debris in the road.

