

Learning to Ride a Bike

A challenge for kids and parents

Nothing compares to the freedom and simple joy a child feels when pedaling a bike for the first time on their own.

This accomplishment also has many physical and mental health benefits such as:

- boosting self-esteem
- helping socialize with other kids
- increasing endurance and muscle strength
- improving balance and coordination.

Learning to Ride a Bike

Learning to ride a bike is challenging. Not every child can do it easily.

It takes many different body systems to work together to balance and pedal a bike. Your child needs to be able to:

- be aware of the space around them
- sense movements and speed
- stay balanced and oriented
- have strength in their legs to pedal
- have strength in their core, chest and arms to control the handle bars.

If your child has trouble with any one of these, it can be more challenging to put it all together to ride a bike.

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Preparing Your Child to Ride a Bike

To help prepare your child to ride a bike, break down the tasks and practice them in different parts.

Before getting started, find a safe space to practice. Choose a traffic-free area that is large and smoothly paved where your child can learn to ride safely. Some good places include an empty parking lot or empty basketball court.

Getting started

- **Get comfortable with a bike that does not have training wheels.** Have your child hold the handle bars and walk with the bike, turn in different directions, practice using the kick stand and get on and off the bike. Support your child as they hold the bike, but do not support the bike yourself.
- **Do a few stationary drills.** Have your child get on the bike, lift both feet and balance in place, tipping side to side and using their feet to catch themselves.
- **Practice glide and balance.** Lower the seat so your child's feet are flat on the ground. Have your child propel the bike forward with their feet, gliding and balancing as they feel comfortable. Riding a scooter and increasing the glide time is another great way to work on this skill.
- **Put it all together.** Once your child has mastered balance, handle bar control and can consistently glide on their bike for 5 to 10 seconds at a time, they are ready to begin working on putting all the skills together with pedals.



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