

## Tip 8: Traffic light tactics

Never jump red lights. It infuriates drivers, gives cyclists a bad name and puts you at risk from drivers accelerating through on amber. Wait, and take your lane. That way nothing can dangerously squeeze past you.



**Top tip:** If traffic lights turn red as you approach them, remember to change down gears. It'll make it easier to pull away when they turn green again.

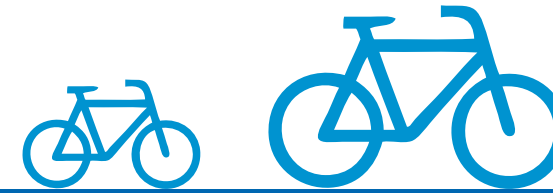


## Tip 9: Overtaking tips

In slow or queuing traffic, overtaking on the right is best for visibility. It's not advisable to filter up the inside, even if the traffic is stationary. Watch out for vehicle doors opening, vehicles turning left or right and pedestrians crossing. **Never** go up the inside of a long vehicle: the driver may not see you.

## Tip 10: Be courteous

Good manners cost nothing and it's courteous to wave 'thank you' to drivers when they let you in after your clear signal. Always obey the rules of the road, and don't give drivers reason to believe the stereotype that all cyclists are "irresponsible".



# Safe cycle commuting



## Leaflet 7

### Other leaflets in the series:

- Leaflet 1: basic bike maintenance
- Leaflet 2: clothing and accessories
- Leaflet 3: security matters
- Leaflet 4: with children
- Leaflet 5: electric bikes
- Leaflet 6: the right bike for you

### Acknowledgements

This leaflet has been adapted from articles on Bikeradar.com. It has been amended with the help of Swindon Bicycle Users Group and a variety of volunteers in Swindon; many thanks to you all.

Photos by Swindonweb / Calyx Pictures.

For further information about Cycling in Swindon, visit  
[www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/cycle](http://www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/cycle)  
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## How safe is it to cycle to work?

### Cycling is statistically a safe way of travelling.

Per mile, more people get killed walking than cycling according to the UK's National Travel Survey, and you're more likely to suffer an injury requiring medical care while gardening than on your bike.

However, there's nothing in life that's completely risk free. As a cycle commuter, managing risk means being assertive, and behaving like traffic so that others will treat you as traffic.

#### Tip 1: Plan your journey

If you don't feel confident cycling in traffic, then don't. There's over 100 miles of "off road" cycle track in Swindon and many journeys can be made without going on the road at all. Pick up a Swindon cycle map at any library or bike shop in Swindon, or download [www.swindontravelchoices.org.uk](http://www.swindontravelchoices.org.uk)



Keep in mind the angle of a rising or setting sun, as glare can pose a hazard for road users.

*When you travel can be a factor in safety too; it is quieter on the roads out of rush hour. Keep in mind the angle of a rising or setting sun, as glare can pose a hazard for road users. If it's dark or dusky (or going to be later), use good lights and wear bright clothing.*



#### Tip 2: Learn the skills

Cycling training today isn't aimed solely at children. National Standards training is a three-tier programme covering everything from basic bike control to complicated urban journeys. Even regular cyclists can benefit from confidence boosting training.

To find out more, or locate an instructor, see [www.swindonbug.co.uk/cycle-training](http://www.swindonbug.co.uk/cycle-training)

#### Tip 3: Assume other road users are idiots

This isn't true, of course, and most people behind the wheel are considerate and responsible. Once you operate under the assumption that a driver (or a pedestrian) will neither see you, nor do the right thing, you might see the world slightly differently.

Pay attention and be hyper-aware of your surroundings. You can never have too much information about what traffic and pedestrians are doing around you. Watch the road ahead, scan side streets, and take mental notes on how many cars are approaching from behind.

#### Tip 4: Get out of the gutter

You should always be at least 60cm from the kerb, and sometimes further. If there are double yellow lines on the road, imagine there is a third yellow line and stay to the right of it. Positioning yourself in the middle of the lane is called 'the primary position' or 'taking the lane'. It makes you more visible and forces cars to overtake properly or wait until it is safe to do so.



#### Tip 5: Eyeball drivers

Eye contact with a driver lets you know they have seen you. It's useful for almost any manoeuvre, whether you're turning right, using a roundabout or approaching a junction.

#### Tip 6: Signal like you mean it

Signalling broadcasts your intentions to other road users. You're not asking their permission; you are telling them unambiguously where you're going. Always look over your shoulder early so you can change road position smoothly and predictably. As well as letting you know about traffic behind you, you give other road users an "Early Warning" you are about to do something.



#### Tip 7: Magic roundabouts

Highway Code rule 62 says "you may feel safer keeping to the left". This isn't always the case; you're less visible to traffic on or entering the roundabout. Take your lane as you approach. Take it on the roundabout too, even if you're going left. Check, signal, and then peel off the roundabout at your exit.