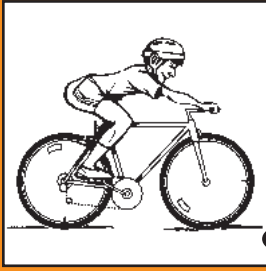
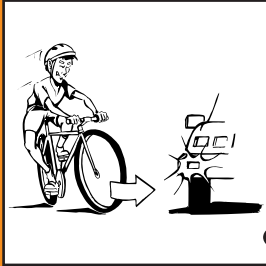


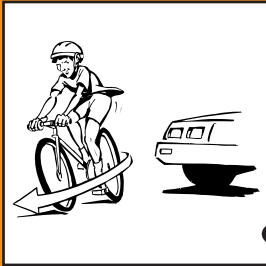
7: TROUBLE SITUATIONS



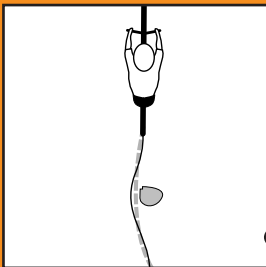
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EMERGENCY MOVES

When you're riding quickly and something gets in your way, slamming on the brakes might not be the best reaction. This section describes some emergency moves that you can practice in a quiet parking lot. Start slowly, then work your speed up. Practice—so when you need an emergency move, you make it automatically.

The Quick Slow-Down: When you stop fast, your weight shifts from your back wheel to the front. Even if you use both your front and back brakes your back tire can skid and start to lift. To slow down quickly: **1**

- a. Push yourself as far back on the bike as you can. This keeps weight on the back tire.
- b. Put your head and torso as low as you can so you don't flip.
- c. Squeeze both brakes evenly. If the rear tire lifts off the ground, ease up on the front brake. If the rear tire starts to skid or slide, ease up on the rear brake.

The Instant Turn: Use the Instant Turn when a car turns in front of you and you can't brake in time. To make a very sudden right turn, you steer sharply left—toward the car—which makes you lean right. **2** Then you turn right hard, steering into the lean and away from the car. **3**

The Rock Dodge: The Rock Dodge is just a quick turn of the front wheel to miss a rock or hole right in front of you. **4** At the last second, turn the front wheel sharply left and back right again. Both your wheels should miss the hazard.

How to Fall: Most serious bicycle injuries involve brain damage, so the best way to protect yourself in a fall is by wearing a helmet. Otherwise, it's not easy to prepare for a fall. But if you have time to think:

- ▶ When you're about to hit a car, don't try to wipe out first; instead, stay upright as long as you can. If you get low you risk going under the wheels or hitting the sharpest parts of the car.
- ▶ If you go flying, tuck your head, arms, and legs into a tight ball and try to roll when you hit the ground. If you stick your arms out you're likely to break them, or your collarbone, or both.

DOGS, PEDS, TRUCKS, TRACKS, & ATTACKS

Dogs: ⑤ Here are some of your options when a dog chases you:

- ▶ **Just stop.** The dog might stop if you do. If it does, slowly ride or walk away.
- ▶ **Stop and get off your bike, quick.** If the beast attacks you, try to keep the bike between you and it. Shout something commanding, like “Go home!”
- ▶ **Try to outrun it.** This might be a good idea if there’s more than one dog. *Don’t* try to outrun it if you’re not sure you can; too many cyclists have wiped out when running dogs get caught in their wheels. If you go for it, try a squirt with your water bottle to slow Fido down. *Don’t* try to hit the dog; you could lose your balance.
- ▶ **Use a dog-repellent spray.** ⑥ But be careful: wind could blow the stuff back into your face. If a dog bites you, get to a doctor or hospital right away. Report the attack to police. If you can identify the dog, you might avoid a rabies test.

Pedestrians: The law says you should yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. This can test your patience in busy commercial areas, where hordes of pedestrians cross against the traffic light when they see no cars coming. So what happens when you’re zooming down a busy street, come to a green light, and find a pack of people darting across the street?

- ▶ Warn them with a horn, bell, whistle, or shout. Remember: pedestrians look for cars, not bicycles.
- ▶ If there are still people in the crosswalk, slow down or stop to avoid a collision. If you go between pedestrians, make sure they see you and pass them carefully. Never go between parents and their kids.

Railroads and Caltrain tracks:

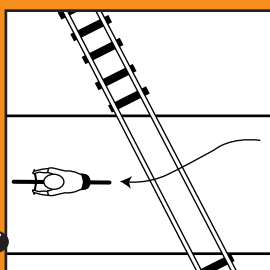
Some railroad tracks cross streets diagonally. If you go over these tracks without changing your direction, your tires might get caught between a track and the road. Instead, try to cross tracks at a right angle—especially when the street’s wet. ⑦



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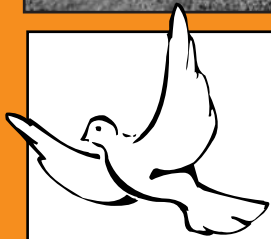
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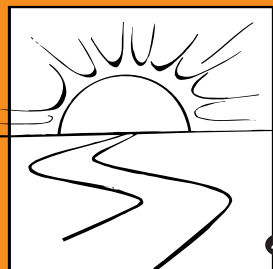
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Gravel and Sand: Turning or braking suddenly on gravel or sand can make you slide or wipe out. See “Braking” on page 30 to learn how to brake when it’s slippery.

Ventilation and Drain Grates:

❶ Avoid drain grates with long openings that can catch your tires. Also, avoid turning and stopping on grates in wet weather.

Truck Wake: When you’re riding on a highway and you’re passed by a large truck or bus, keep a firm grip on your handlebars. The suction of the vehicle’s wake could pull you suddenly to the left.

Assault: If somebody’s determined to attack you, they will—whether you’re on foot, bike, or in a car. If you’re afraid to bike in a certain neighborhood, don’t—or go with friends and stay on busy streets. Here are some other tips:

- ▶ The best defense is to stay alert. If you see someone who looks like they’ll hurt you, stay away from them.
- ▶ Don’t stop, for any reason, in places where you think you’re about to be attacked.
- ▶ Carry a defensive spray such as pepper spray, if legal in your area. Make sure you can grab it quickly. Be careful: A spray can easily be turned against you by the wind or even your attacker.

If you get mugged, don’t fight; your bike or other property isn’t worth your life. Try to remember the mugger’s features, then go the nearest phone and call police.

CONFLICTS WITH MOTORISTS

A lot of motorists act rudely toward bicyclists. Some will cut you off or curse at you because they don’t understand that you must observe the same traffic rules they do. What should you do?

Rule 1: Don’t start a fight. ❷ Don’t start a fight—no matter how mad you get. If you lose your cool, the motorist might decide to get back at the next bicyclist they encounter. Or, worse, the motorist might decide to smash *you* with their two-ton automobile—and speed off before you can even start to say “license plate.”

Rule 2: Report harassment. ❸ Motorists who touch you or put you in danger might be guilty of assault. Stop and write down everything you can remember: the license plate number, type of car, and where and when it happened. Then call police.



WHAT TO DO AFTER A TRAFFIC COLLISION

If you're hurt in a traffic collision, don't ride away or shake off what seems like a minor injury—you might find later that it's worse than you thought. If you're a victim of or a witness to a traffic collision, here are the steps to take:

- ▶ Call the police. If needed, get medical help immediately.
- ▶ Get the following information from every vehicle: driver name, address, phone number, driver's license number, license plate number, make of car, insurance company name and policy number.
- ▶ Get the names and phone numbers of witnesses.
- ▶ Get the police report number from police on the scene. Also get the police officer's name and badge number.
- ▶ Write down how the crash happened while it's fresh in your memory.
- ▶ Keep (or photograph) any damaged clothes or equipment.

Also, if you're a victim:

- ▶ Don't get mad at the scene. Keep a level head so you can ask questions and take notes.
- ▶ If you're injured, don't move unless you're sure you won't injure yourself more.



Rule 3: Take the long view. ④ If all cyclists follow traffic laws, motorists will see that cyclists belong on the street. You can help! Whenever possible, tell receptive motorists they should share the road. Meanwhile, governments and bike advocates are carrying the bicycling message to people where they learn best: in school and at work.