

Know the rules (as of April 2025)

- Always yield to pedestrians, in crosswalks and otherwise.¹ Remember that some people may not be able to hear your bell or voice.
- Follow dedicated bike signals and signs when present; otherwise, follow the pedestrian signals. Often, you get a headstart on cars!²
- Stop at all red lights and stop signs (including school bus stop signs).³
- Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- You must use bike lanes when they're available and you're not turning.⁴
- On a multi-lane street without bike infrastructure, ride in the right lane.

¹ On an e-bike, you must *always* yield to pedestrians per New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws § 1242 (7).

² NYC Traffic Rules and Regulations, Title 34, Chapter 4 § 19-195.1; warning: not all cops and judges know this rule...

³ Idaho stops are not yet legal in NYC.

⁴ NYC Traffic Rules and Regulations, Title 34, Chapter 4 § 4-12 (p)



Report potholes and other unsafe conditions to 311:

<https://portal.311.nyc.gov/>



Contact NYC DOT:

<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/contact/contact.shtml>



View this zine on the web or download it to print:

<https://lizdenys.com/bikebk>



Ride respectfully

- Keep a safe distance between you and the person biking in front of you. Practice stopping suddenly in a safe place like a park to know how much distance you need to stop.
- Always make sure you have ample space to pass before you start, especially on really narrow two-way paths like the East River bridge crossings. Call out "on your left/right" to let other bicyclists know you're passing.
- You may need to go slower than you'd naturally ride to safely share bike lanes with other riders. This is especially likely if you're riding an e-bike. Don't put pressure on others to speed up by riding too close behind them.
- Look up alternate routes instead of going the wrong way on one way streets or riding on the sidewalk - there's usually one just a block over. You can always walk your bike a block instead, too!

- Grab a water bottle! If you're going on a long ride, make sure to bring enough water, electrolytes, and snacks along.
- Make sure you only have one earphone in so you can hear well and comply with the law.
- Make sure any panniers or bags you're carrying are secured to your bike. Make sure any bags you're wearing won't fall off while riding; avoid totes carried on one shoulder.
- Make sure you either have everything you need to fix your own flats or a plan to get home with a flat tire in case you can't find an open bike shop nearby.
- And most importantly...

*Have
Fun!*

Plan your route

Unfortunately, we still have a long way to go before it's safe and comfortable to ride a bicycle on every street in New York City.⁶ In the meantime, **you should plan to adjust routing to prioritize streets with safer bicycling infrastructure where possible.**

Online mapping tools incorporate bike lanes into their bike routing, but I haven't found one that consistently picks safe routes or prioritizes different types of bike infrastructure the same way I do. I **always cross reference routes against NYC DOT's official bike map.**⁷



NYC DOT's Bicycle Maps:

<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/bikemaps.shtml>

⁶ Make your rides - and everyone's rides - safer and more comfortable by advocating for safe bike infrastructure!

⁷ NYC DOT publishes the bike map annually in the spring, but new bike infrastructure pops up year round! <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/bike-projects.shtml> has details about in-progress bike projects.



REI's How to Fix a Flat Tire:

<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/flat-tire.html>

Even if you plan on taking your bike to a bike shop to fix every flat, it never hurts to carry your own spare tubes.²⁴ You should definitely plan on having your own spare tubes with you if you ride a bike with an uncommon wheel size.²⁵

I always **carry a multitool** so I can adjust my bike fit and tighten any parts that come loose on my rides.

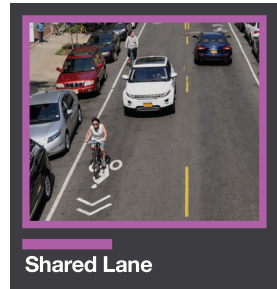
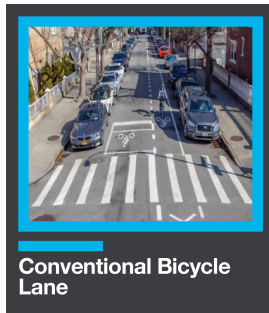
By the way, **just about every bike shop will let you fill your tires for free with a pump when they're open.** Most will have a floor pump or pressurized hose outside, and any adaptors you may need are likely on a nearby windowsill or inside.

Don't forget to let [311](#) know about potholes and bad road conditions so they get fixed before someone gets a flat from them!

²⁴ You might also save a little money on tubes this way.

²⁵ Many children's bikes and most folding bikes require tubes in sizes you can't count on most bike shops to stock.

"Conventional" or painted bike lanes, or as I like to call them "paint-only bike lanes," only give you a dedicated space next to moving cars and trucks. Be on the lookout for cars swerving into the bike lane, especially when they might turn. Watch out for cars pulling out of the parking lane and people in parked cars opening doors into the bike lane. Unfortunately, little is currently being done to prevent drivers from stopping and parking in these bike lanes.



Shared lanes, a.k.a. "sharrows," are just normal vehicle travel lanes with painted bike stamps⁹, ostensibly to tell drivers to expect bikes. Despite photos and diagrams often showing

⁹ Some say the bike stamps indicate where a bicyclist can safely ride in the sharrow, but as this example from the bike map shows, that's not always the case!

Try not to store your bike outside overnight or for a very long period of time, even if it's locked up. This also keeps it safe from the elements, reducing wear.

Don't lock your bicycle to trees, subway railings, or scaffolding. Don't block doors or sidewalk passage.

Can't find a **secure bike hoop**? DOT has a map!



NYC DOT's Bike Parking Info & Map:

<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/bicycleparking.shtml>

Office buildings often have secure, indoor bike parking you can use when you're at work. You can put in a request for your office building via DOT.



NYC DOT's Bikes in Buildings:

<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/bikesinbuildings.shtml>

You should just be able to bring folding bikes into most places, but you might have to fold your bike to do so. If someone's giving you a hard time about it, try putting your folded up bicycle in a large bag.

How to get comfortable riding in the city

Make sure you have a bike that fits you well,¹² is comfortable to ride, and is in good working order. If you're getting back into bicycling after a few years, get a tune up before you ride that bike again.

I found it helpful to get comfortable riding my bike in places without cars before riding on city streets.

Some places in Brooklyn to bike without cars:

- [Prospect Park](#)
- [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#)
- [Shirley Chisholm State Park](#)
- [Coney Island Boardwalk](#) (Hours vary based on the season, and there will be more space for bicycling on less busy beach days.)

¹² <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/bike-fit.html> is a good starting point for fitting your bikes, and many local bike shops will help you fit your bikes!

On narrow, one-way streets where you're allowed to bike on either side, it's safer to bike on the left. Being on the driver's side makes it easier for drivers to see you and know where you are relative to them.

Unfortunately, a lot of drivers don't hear or just ignore bike bells. **If someone's about to crash into you, scream as well as bell.**

While it's annoying when a driver honks at you for no reason, it's actually good - it means they see you!

Get in a crash?

Get out of further danger if you can move, and make yourself visible if you can't. If you're hurt, get medical attention or someone to call an ambulance for you.

Call 911 to report the crash - getting your crash on the record helps with claims later. Try to get contact information from any witnesses, if you can. Stay at the scene if you're responsible for the crash.²²

²² Reminder: I am not a lawyer; this zine is not legal advice.

- Bike with more experienced friends or join group rides - how I got started biking again!

In my experience, biking in the city got a lot easier over my first few months of doing it!

Brooklyn bike wisdom

- You can bring your bicycle on the subway, but not on most buses. You can bring a folding bike on local buses, but not express buses.¹⁴
- You may bring your bike on the ferry, but only 8 to 10 full-sized bikes can fit on each boat. You can always bring a folding bike.¹⁵
- Bikes are "accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis" on Metro-North¹⁶ and the LIRR.¹⁷ Folding bikes are always welcome.

¹⁴ <https://www.mta.info/guides/bikes>

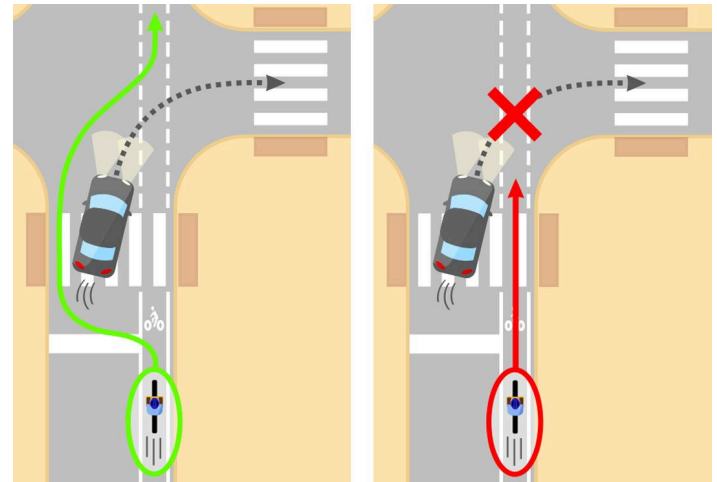
¹⁵ <https://www.ferry.nyc/experience/our-boats/boarding-process/>

¹⁶ <https://www.mta.info/guides/bikes/bike-regulations-mnr>

¹⁷ <https://www.mta.info/guides/bikes/bike-regulations-lirr>

Riding on sidewalks isn't just illegal for most people for the sake of other people's safety - it's also for your safety. People can exit buildings or open doors on parked cars and unexpectedly end up in your path at any time.

Look out for turning cars at intersections to avoid left and right "hooks." Drivers are less likely to see you when turning right as they're on the left side of their car. Remember that some drivers will fail to use turn signals before turning. It's not safe to bike through the path of their turn. It's usually safer to go behind and around them (shown below) or just wait.



Pedestrian-style turns

Vehicular-style turns, especially left turns across many lanes of traffic, can often be difficult while you're biking in traffic, and pedestrian-style turns provide a safer alternative.

Pedestrian-style turns also help to keep small groups of bicyclists together.

The following example illustrates how to make a pedestrian-style left. Right turns are analogous.

