

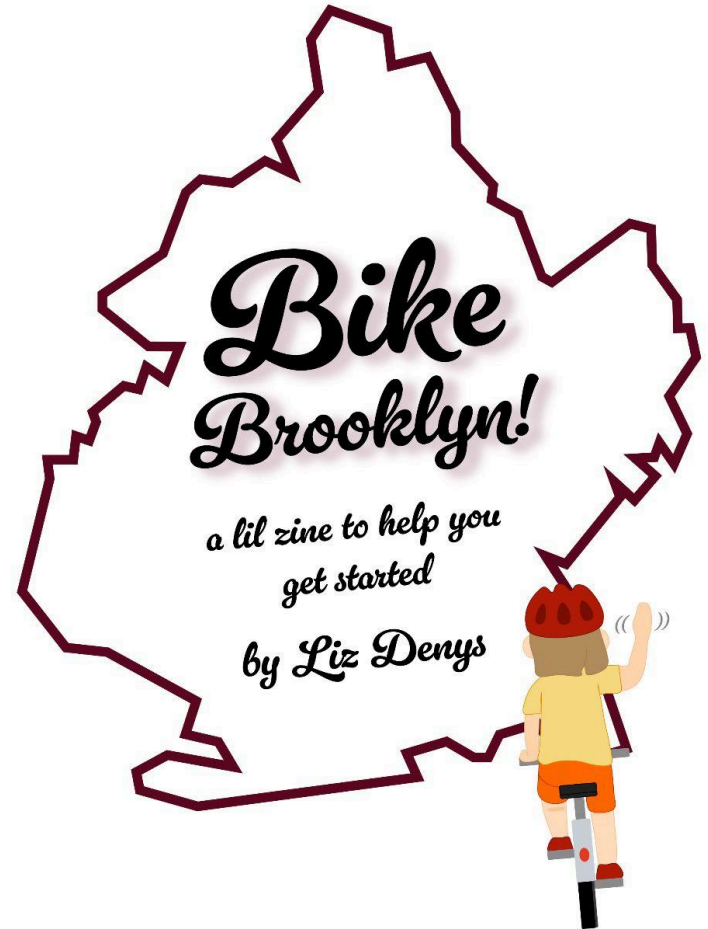


<https://lizdenys.com/bikebk>

This zine was released on April 22, 2025. While I hope to keep this zine up-to-date over time, it's important to note that this release reflects a specific snapshot in time of bicycling in Brooklyn.

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# Useful links in one place

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NYC DOT's Bicycle Maps:

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



NYC DOT's Bike Parking Info & Map:

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



REI's How to Fix a Flat Tire:

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



NYC DOT's summary of bike rules:

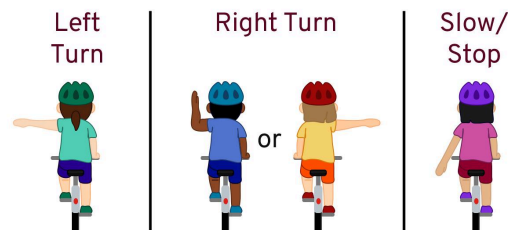
<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bicyclerules-english.pdf>



Get involved in bike advocacy in Brooklyn:

<https://transalt.org/brooklyn>

- You may ride on either side of a narrow, single-lane one-way street.
- Walk your bike when you're on the sidewalk (unless you're under 13).
- Signal when you're turning, slowing down, and stopping. Here's how (view from behind):



- You must have a white front light and red back light on your bike when it's dark out.
- You're required to have a bell on your bicycle.



NYC DOT's summary of bike rules:

<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bicyclerules-english.pdf>

Rules vary outside of NYC. **IANAL**.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I am not a lawyer. This zine is not legal advice.

# Before you go riding

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- Do a quick "ABC check" on your bike:
  - Air: check tire pressure, spin the wheels, and check tires for wear.
  - Brakes: check that your brakes are working smoothly and effectively.<sup>26</sup>
  - Chain: check that your chain moves freely and looks clear.
- Wear a helmet! It's a good idea generally and required if you're under 14.
- Grab gloves if it's going to be chilly! You will probably want gloves while biking at higher temperatures than you would while walking.
- Grab *charged* bike lights if you'll be out biking after dark.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Many bike share bikes have worn out brakes. Check their brakes before you ride. "Wrench" bikes that need repair.

<sup>27</sup> If you're bad at charging things like I am, consider getting a dynamo lighting system on your bike so your lights are always on the bike and ready.

- Expect to go slower when you're on shared paths, i.e. spaces shared by pedestrians and bicyclists, like the 20th St bike boulevard along Green-Wood Cemetery. Make sure to always give pedestrians plenty of space.
- Not everyone knows you can legally bike on Leading Pedestrian Intervals, i.e. when the walk sign says "walk" before the light turns green. Be patient and let them know!
- People walking in touristy places will often be in the wrong spot. This is especially common at the entrances to the Brooklyn Bridge and throughout Brooklyn Bridge Park. Plan to go slowly, use your bell and voice kindly, and remember that not everyone can hear so you always need to be ready to stop.
- If there's nowhere safe to stop other than in a crosswalk, make room for people crossing, including ones with wheelchairs and strollers.
- Point out potholes and other obstacles when anyone's biking behind you! Also, file potholes and unsafe road conditions via [311](#).

# Flat tires =(

One of the really convenient things about biking in a city is that when you get a flat, you can often walk your bike to a bike shop to get it fixed!

That said, if you get a flat in the middle of the Jamaica Bay Greenway, you might have to walk your bike a long way to get to the subway, and if you get a flat at night, bike shops probably won't be open. **If you bike a lot at night or far from the denser parts of the city, you'll probably want to start fixing your own flats.** You'll need:

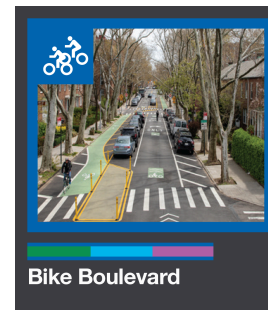
- patch kits or spare tubes<sup>23</sup>
- tire levers (having two makes it much easier)
- a multitool with all the right tools to remove your wheels
- A hand pump or CO<sub>2</sub> canisters

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<sup>23</sup> If you're like me, you'll probably want to just swap for a spare tube while you're out and wait to patch the punctured one from the comfort of your own home.

# NYC bike infrastructure

**Protected bike lanes** are physically separated from moving cars and trucks, often by a lane of parked cars, a curb, or Jersey barriers. Some intersections lack safe entry points, like Prospect Park West at 10th St, so take note of access points.<sup>8</sup>



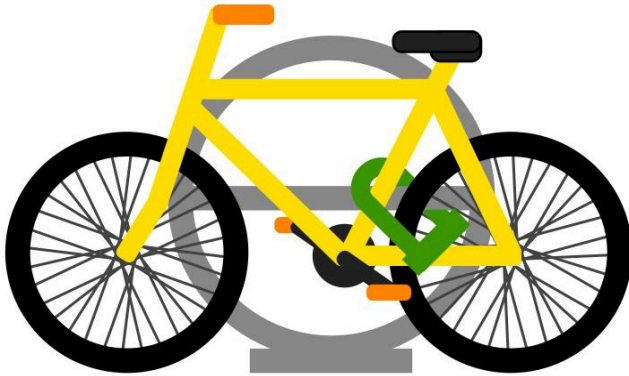
**Bike boulevards** are streets designed for low car and truck traffic and feature a range of safety treatments to make bicycling safer and more comfortable. These designs are still evolving, so some are more comfortable to ride on.

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<sup>8</sup> Ideally, every intersection would have safe, clear access into protected bike lanes on those streets.

# Lock your bike securely!

Use a U-lock or heavy chain to lock up your bike. Combo locks are easy to break; multiple locks make it harder to steal your bike. I use one strong U-lock through my bike's frame and rear wheel when I lock up for a few hours, as shown below.

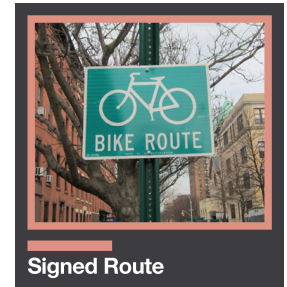


**Always make sure your lock goes through your bicycle's frame, not just a wheel.** Make sure you're locking to something that someone can't just lift your bike up off what you've locked to.

Lock up "quick-release" wheels, saddles, and parts. Consider switching to more secure attachments.

bicyclists riding next to cars, there is rarely enough space to do this safely in sharrows, and you should always position yourself with safety in mind. Usually, this involves "taking the lane" - it's safer to be in the center of the lane in front of a car so drivers are less tempted to pass you where there isn't enough space. Streets with sharrows aren't necessarily safer than quieter small streets nearby.<sup>10</sup>

**Signed routes** just mean you'll be on a regular shmegular street designed for cars and trucks, but signs have been slapped up in a few places to tell drivers to expect bikes.



The bike map also notes **cobblestone streets**<sup>11</sup> - I recommend avoiding these as they're very bumpy! They're common in Dumbo and Red Hook.

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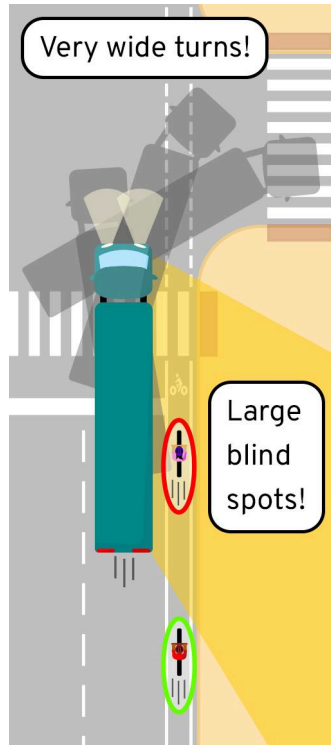
<sup>10</sup> Sharrows may be more dangerous than streets without bike infrastructure. <https://momentummag.com/sharrows-used-to-make-sense-in-theory-but-are-now-useless-in-practice/>

<sup>11</sup> Cobblestone streets with granite bike strips to ride on, like York St, aren't marked as cobblestone on the map.

**Trucks, buses, and other large vehicles make very wide turns.** Stay behind large vehicles when they're turning. Going around them is also dangerous since they swing out to make turns.

**Trucks, buses, and other large vehicles also have large blind spots.** Stay out of them and don't squeeze beside them and risk getting sideswiped - especially when you're close to intersections since they may turn.

**Be cautious when passing double parked cars, construction, or other obstacles, even if you're in a bike lane and they're only blocking car travel lanes.** Drivers often assume they can swerve around obstacles without checking for people biking first.



- [The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway](#), especially the southern section from Bay Road to Bay 53 St and the Jamaica Bay Greenway
- [Governors Island](#)<sup>13</sup>

Some tips to ease into bicycling in an urban environment:

- Give yourself more time than you think you need.
- Start with short trips close to home on roads you are already familiar with.
- Take bike share to somewhere that's easy to get home from on public transit so you don't have to bike back (or have to carry your bike up and down subway stairs).
- Pace yourself on hills; it's normal to be slow. Getting used to hills without cars, like in Prospect Park, can help you gain confidence for hills in traffic and narrow bridge paths.

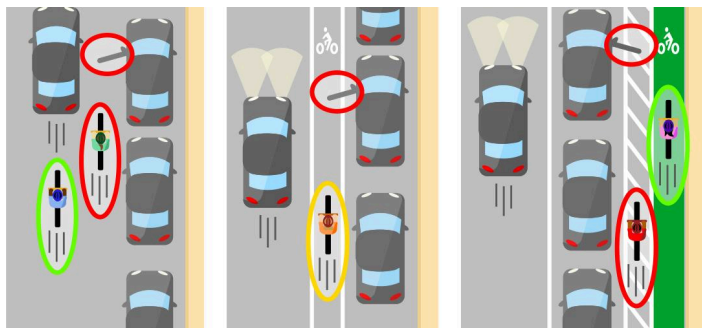
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<sup>13</sup> I do know Governors Island is in Manhattan. You can take bikes on the ferry. There's bike share on the island, too!

# Avoiding collisions

**Be predictable.** Bike in a straight line whenever you can. Ride in the center of the lane when you take the lane. Use hand signals when turning, switching lanes, slowing, and stopping. Look, signal, and look again.

**Stay out of the "door zone."** Ride at least 3 feet away from parked and stopped cars so you don't get hit if someone opens their door suddenly. Be mindful that paint-only bike lanes put you in the door zone.<sup>21</sup> This danger exists in parking-protected lanes, too - especially in painted buffers.



<sup>21</sup> One of my close friends calls paint-only bike lanes "door lanes" for this reason.

- On NJTransit, check for bike icons in the rail timetables. Folding bikes can go on any train.<sup>18</sup>
- In the Prospect Park drive loop, faster bike traffic and city vehicles on official business are supposed to stay to the right.<sup>19</sup> Faster bicyclists also generally pass on the right here.
- Expect to walk your bike through the Grand Army Plaza entrance to Prospect Park on Saturdays during the farmer's market.<sup>20</sup>
- Not every vehicle that manufacturers call an "e-bike" is legally an e-bike in NYC...



NYC DOT on e-bikes, mopeds, and more:  
<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/ebikes.shtml>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.njtransit.com/first-run/two-wheeled-adventures-welcomed>

<sup>19</sup> Sadly, this lane is also occupied by whichever other cars choose to illegally enter Prospect Park since the current design doesn't stop them and there is little enforcement.

<sup>20</sup> We need a redesign of Grand Army Plaza that shifts more space from cars to people!