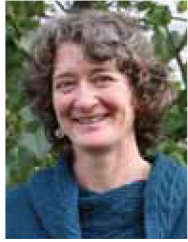


# Organizing Your Bike Ride

By Kirstin Wert



**B**iking seems like an odd topic to talk about getting organized for, but being set up to get on your bike quickly and easily will make you reach for your helmet before the car keys more often than you might think. Sixty percent of the trips we drive in the United States are less than three miles! These trips are all a quick bike ride away. Here are some tips to get you using your

bike more. You'll feel great and save money in the process.

## 1. Have your bike and gear ready to go.

Prioritize a space for your bike in the garage or shed and make sure it is easy to get to. If you have to wrestle it out of a packed shed or garage you are less likely to use it. Keep your helmet, gloves and bike lock handy. I keep mine in a basket right on the front of my bike. No scrambling for those bike lock keys!

## 2. Be sure your bike fits you and is comfortable to ride.

If you are still riding your old 10 speed or mountain bike from high school it might be time to invest in a bike more suited for commuting. A fun upright cruiser that just calls to you to get out and ride will have you loving every minute of your commute and you are sure to ride more often.

## 3. Make it easy to carry lots of things.

A rear rack and a set of panniers (saddle bags) make all the difference. You will be amazed at how many groceries you can fit in your bags and how easy it is to pedal them home.

## 4. Consider the weather.

If your ride is three miles or less you can most likely ride in your work clothes no problem, just be prepared for our weather. Put fenders on your bike to keep your clothes clean. Get some roomy rain pants to pull on over your work clothes – even a skirt.

## 5. Be visible.

Use a front white headlight and rear red blinking lights for visibility at night. Always keep them on your bike. Bike where you are visible, the right third of the street behaving predictably just like a car. Avoid riding on the sidewalk and never bike against traffic.

## 6. Choose a good route.

The routes you bike around town will be different than the arterials you drive on. Use a map to find combinations of quiet neighborhood streets and trails to get you where you need to go. You will discover new trails and neighborhoods while enjoying your rides much more than if you were on stressful high traffic streets. Whatcom Smart Trips has excellent maps showing good bike routes and trails.

## 7. Try new shops and services that are easy to bike to.

When choosing between recommended orthodontists for my middle schooler, we chose the easiest for her to ride to. In two years I went to just her first appointment and she had it from there. What a lot of hassle, missed work hours and gas that saved!

## 8. Include the whole family!

The more you ride together the easier it becomes for everyone. Teach kids how to bike safely on low traffic routes and watch their confidence, independence and responsibility soar as they get themselves where they need to be. As they get older they will be able to get themselves all around town saving you stress, time and money! *St*



[www.WhatcomSmartTrips.org](http://www.WhatcomSmartTrips.org)