

Bikeability Top Tips – Choosing an Accessible Cycle part 2

Introduction

This blog was funded by Bikeability and is [also published on their website](#). Reproduced here with permission.

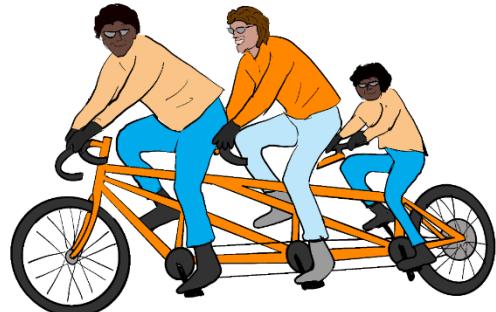
Top tips – choosing a cycle – cost, storage and more

Once you've worked out which cycle types you like to ride, to decide which cycle to buy you'll need to think about cost, storage, cargo and your local infrastructure.

Remember, as long as you enjoy riding it, the best cycle for you is the one you have!



Solo?



With others?

How do you use your cycle?



For sharing?



For cargo?



Cost:

Cost is the biggest factor affecting cycle choice for many of us.

Many Disabled people need very expensive cycles, especially if the cycle needs e-assist. For some people in work, Access to Work and Cycle to Work may help. Ask your local inclusive cycling centre about long-term loan schemes and any other grant funding which may be available.

Alternatively, cycles can be bought cheaply or even free from local community groups and organisations like [Lifecycle](#).

Sharing:

Who will be using your cycle? Folding cycles and low step-through models including many cargo/child-carrying cycles can be shared easily by people of very different sizes.



Folding cycles can be a flexible transport option for many people - and for cargo too!

Storage and parking:

Do you have a convenient secure level-access store near to your home, or will you have to manoeuvre your cycle through difficult spaces? Will it be left unsheltered from weather and at higher risk of theft for long periods?

Folding cycles can be a good option when you have limited storage. Some housing providers and local authorities may install secure cycle stores if you ask, but some are resistant to making provision for non-standard cycles.

If cycle storage is provided but is not accessible for you (or suitable for the sort of cycle you need), if you are Disabled you may be able to make a claim for discrimination under the Equality Act (2010).

Remember to think about whether you'll be able to park your cycle at places you want to visit, too.



Stepped access and narrow stand spacing make this new cycle parking inaccessible.

Local infrastructure:

There's no point having a cycle if there's nowhere you can ride it! Barriers on cycle routes are sadly all too common. If you want to buy a larger cycle or a cycle you can't lift by yourself, see if you can loan it first to check it will fit down the routes you want to use.

As with storage, discriminatory barriers are illegal under the Equality Act (2010). If you can find out who is responsible for the barriers, you can ask to have them removed. If you are Disabled, you can make a discrimination claim against the landowner under the Equality Act to have the barriers removed, but this is not an easy option.

Sustrans are working to remove the discriminatory barriers on the National Cycle Network.



Larger cycle types can be used when access barriers are removed

Maintenance & repairs:

Can you repair and maintain your cycle by yourself?

If not, ask around for businesses who can look after your cycle type, especially if you're using a less-common cycle type.

A local mobile cycle repair or breakdown service can be really helpful especially for emergencies or minor repairs like punctures.

If you can't walk far or repair your cycle if it breaks, carry phone numbers of taxi firms that will pick you up – or better still, taxi firms that will transport both you and your cycle.

Transport:

Do you need to take your cycle on a bus or train? To get a folding cycle onto a train, if you need help you can book luggage assistance via Passenger Assist. At many stations you should be able to just turn up and get assistance, too.

Will you ride from your home or does your cycle need to fit into a vehicle or onto a roofrack, hatchback or towbar-mounted cycle rack?

Think about whether you'll need to lift, fold or secure your cycle, and what transport options work with different cycles.

Security and insurance:

Will your cycle be left in a high-risk location? What sort of locking and locations does your insurer require? Locking to an immoveable object with a gold-standard Secured by Design cycle lock is generally a minimum insurance requirement for more expensive cycles being left unattended outdoors: these locks are heavy – make sure you can transport and use your

lock, or think about ways to bring your cycle indoors with you. Again, folding cycles have an advantage here.

All these tips could make choosing a cycle seem difficult. It's usually not! For many people, almost any cycle type will be a fun and useful way to get around. Hopefully, these tips will help those of us who need more specific cycle types (or fitting) to find the perfect cycle for each of us, too.

About us

Wheels for Wellbeing is a Disabled People's Organisation working to make cycling, wheeling and walking accessible for everyone.

Blog author Kate Ball is a Disabled cyclist, parent, carer and a Campaigns and Policy Officer at Wheels for Wellbeing. Her favourite cycle is a Circe Helios tandem which is really her daughter's – but which all the family love to ride.

Useful organisations:

Wheels for Wellbeing: <https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/>

Wheels for All: <https://wheelsforall.org.uk/>

Get Cycling: <https://www.getcycling.org.uk/>

Cycling UK: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/>

Sustrans: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

Lifecycle: <https://www.lifecycleuk.org.uk/>