

Bicycle Buying Guide

Bicycles can be used for a number of purposes, including recreation, fitness, transportation and sports. If you are planning on purchasing a new bike, consider the terrain you will be riding on as well as your body weight. Are you finding it difficult to choose a new cycle? Go through this buying guide for exhaustive information on bicycles and make the right choice.

What types of bicycles are available?

Different types of bicycles, such as BMX, road, racing, touring, comfort, kids, womens, tandem and more, are available for sale. Here is an in-depth look at some popular models.

Road Bikes:

Road bikes are built for paved roads. They have thin tires, dropped handlebars and lightweight frames made of aluminum or carbon. The majority of these cycles have 21 speeds. Sport bikes, touring bikes, racing bikes, triathlon bikes, cruisers and choppers also fall under this category.

Mountain Bikes:

Mountain bikes are durable enough to withstand serious off-road racing. Sturdy frames, strong brakes, flat handlebars and 26-inch wheels make these bikes highly popular. Their low gears assist you in off-road racing, especially when going uphill and riding through mud. These cycles are heavy and can withstand rough handling. In a few models, the front suspension and rear suspension offer comfort, even while riding over uneven ground.

Comfort Bikes:

These bikes are good for beginners. Comfort bikes come with adjustable vertical handlebars, comfy seats, 26" wide and low pressure tires and suspension forks. They are made for short rides on well-maintained bike paths.

Hybrid/Cross Bikes:

These all-purpose bicycles combine the features of road and mountain bikes. They have a wide gear ratio, upright handlebars and narrow tires. Their frames are lightweight, making these perfect for pavement riding and minor off-road racing. Hybrid/cross bikes usually come with mudguards.

Recumbent Bikes:

If you cannot handle the physical strain associated with traditional bicycles, consider recumbent cycles. These bikes can go fast and provide comfortable seating. However, they do have some pitfalls. They are expensive compared to most standard bikes and their transportation by car may prove to be more difficult as well, especially long wheelbase models.

BMX Bikes:

BMX (Bicycle Motocross) bikes owe their invention to the popularity of motocross dirt bike racing. These bikes can be ridden through woods or around dirt-tracks. Though BMX cycles resemble mountain bikes, their wheels and frames are comparatively smaller. These bikes are suitable for kids and young riders. BMX racing bikes are built for racing on dirt tracks. BMX freestyle bikes are designed for doing tricks whereas BMX dirt jumping bikes are made for getting airborne on dirt tracks.

Chopper Bikes:

These bikes are based on chopper motorcycles. Chopper bikes feature wide rear tires, large cushioned seats and extended handlebars. These bikes are not recommended for off-road racing.

Womens Bikes:

Womens bicycles are smaller, designed to suit the build of the average woman. They have narrow handlebars, short top tubes and wide saddles.

Kids Bikes:

Is your child pining for a bicycle? Compact bikes with small frames are ideal for children. These bikes are easy to ride and durable. Many kids bicycles come with training wheels attached. Other cycles give you the option to attach separately sold training wheels. Go for kids bikes with spoke guards and coaster brakes that allow children to stop when pedaling backwards.

Tandem Bikes:

Do you want to make cycling more fun? Get a tandem bike that accommodates two or more people at one time.

What are other factors to consider when purchasing a bike and getting into the rewarding sport of [cycling](#)?

Frame Materials:

Frames are made of different materials depending on the type of bicycle.

Steel

The most commonly used frame material is steel. Chromoly (chromium-molybdenum steel) is lighter than carbon steel, but both are strong and durable.

Carbon Fiber

These strong and lightweight frames offer a good ride.

Titanium

Titanium is one of the most rugged, durable and costliest frame materials you can get.

Aluminum

Aluminum is a stiff and strong material. Aluminum frames are good for riders looking for lightweight bikes.

Suspension:

Hybrid, comfort and mountain bikes feature suspension forks. Forks assist you in riding over rough tracks more easily and comfortably.

Wheels:

Wheels play a vital role in bikes. Single-alloy hubs with rubber axle seals, few spokes and sealed bearings are recommended. Stainless steel spokes and aluminum rims are lightweight and rust free.

Gears:

Gears are crucial to ride on uneven surfaces. On flat surfaces, only 3 or 4 gears are needed. When it comes to hills and challenging terrain, a bike with a 21, 24 or 27 speed drivetrain is necessary. Go for bikes with gears that are easy to shift.

Brakes:

Most bikes are equipped with either rim brakes (V-brakes), linear brakes or hub brakes. Disc brakes, the latest brake type, provide brilliant braking and low maintenance, but are expensive.

Seats:

Look for anatomical shapes, flexible frames, gel padding and cushioning springs in your seats.

What accessories are available for bicycles?

If you are getting a new bicycle, you should check out the following accessories. Some accessories are absolutely necessary, while others are strictly for your own convenience.

Helmets:

Helmets are vital accessories to avoid head injuries. They come in kid and adult sizes as well as many colors.

Locks:

Protect your bicycle from theft with a bike lock. Locks are highly recommended if you plan on leaving your bicycle in any public area unattended.

Flat Kits:

For long rides, it is wise to carry a flat kit and a small frame-mounted pump to fill your tires with air. The kit should include a new tube, basic patch kit, tire iron, wrench, rag and small seat bag.

Pumps:

To fill your tires with air whenever you need, buy bicycle pumps.

Computers and Monitors:

A cyclocomputer is a digital speedometer that shows speed, distance and time traveled during your bicycle ride. High-end models come with GPS functions and can measure your heart rate and power output.

Mudguards:

Keep yourself and your bike clean with mudguards.

Baskets and Panniers:

Attach baskets and panniers to your bike to carry heavier loads.

Covers/Storage:

Protect your bicycles with cycle covers and storage solutions, such as lightweight aluminum storage stands.

Carriers:

For small cars, carriers (also referred to as bike racks) that attach to the roof are ideal. For big cars, like vans and SUVs, use carriers that attach to the rear of your vehicle.

About the Author

Bob Shanty has been researching and writing articles that help shoppers make more educated buying decisions on [cycling](#) for [online shopping](#) mega store BIGshop for years. For more articles by Bob please visit <http://www.bigshop.com.au>.