

Avoidable Crashes

If you have been riding a bike for several years, you probably have fallen or crashed, hopefully you did not suffer any serious injuries. If you are just beginning to ride a bicycle with a bike club or on your own, there are some common mistakes you can avoid preventing you from crashing:

- While riding in a tight group, do not let your front wheel overlap the rear wheel on the bike ahead of you. If the rider ahead of you moves slightly to the right or left, their fixed rear wheel will cause your front wheel to turn suddenly and knock you off your bike.
- On some bikes, if your feet on your pedals can touch the rear part of the front wheel, you can crash while making a sharp turn. You can avoid this when coasting (or freewheeling) with one of your pedals completely in the down position, the other foot at its highest point.
- Riding too close to a curb on a street, can cause you to crash. Sometimes the asphalt is either higher or lower than the edge of a curb (newer curbs have a small section that is suppose to be level with the street); this slight difference will cause your front wheel to turn sharply knocking you off your bike.
- While crossing railroad tracks or cattle crossings, be sure to cross them at a perpendicular angle. Many of them are shiny and smooth, and your front wheel can slipped into the slots along side of them, and completely stop your forward motion causing you to crash. Crossing at a right angle (perpendicular) will allow your wheels to cross easily and safely, without having to stop and walk across.
- While passing another cyclist on the left (never pass on the right), make sure they know you are there by calling out “on your left.” If they move slight to the left while you are attempting to pass, you will crash.
- If you are considering putting clipless pedals (those that snap onto the bottom of your bike shoes) on your bike, they are safe once you get used to them. After installing them on your bike, practice clipping and unclipping from a stationary position. Most riders will forget to unclip on their first or second time using them; however, since there is no forward motion, the fall is usually minor without any serious injury.
- Traffic accidents with cars are very serious and most times can be avoidable by being alert and staying out of their way.
 - When cars approach from the rear, move over to the right in a single file if riding with others.
 - At four-way stop signs, stop and yield right-a-way to the vehicles at the intersection that were there first.
 - While riding in busy traffic, you should always have your front and rear bicycle lights on flashing. Remember to use hand signals when turning on busy streets. Bicyclists are required by law to follow the same rules as motor vehicles.