

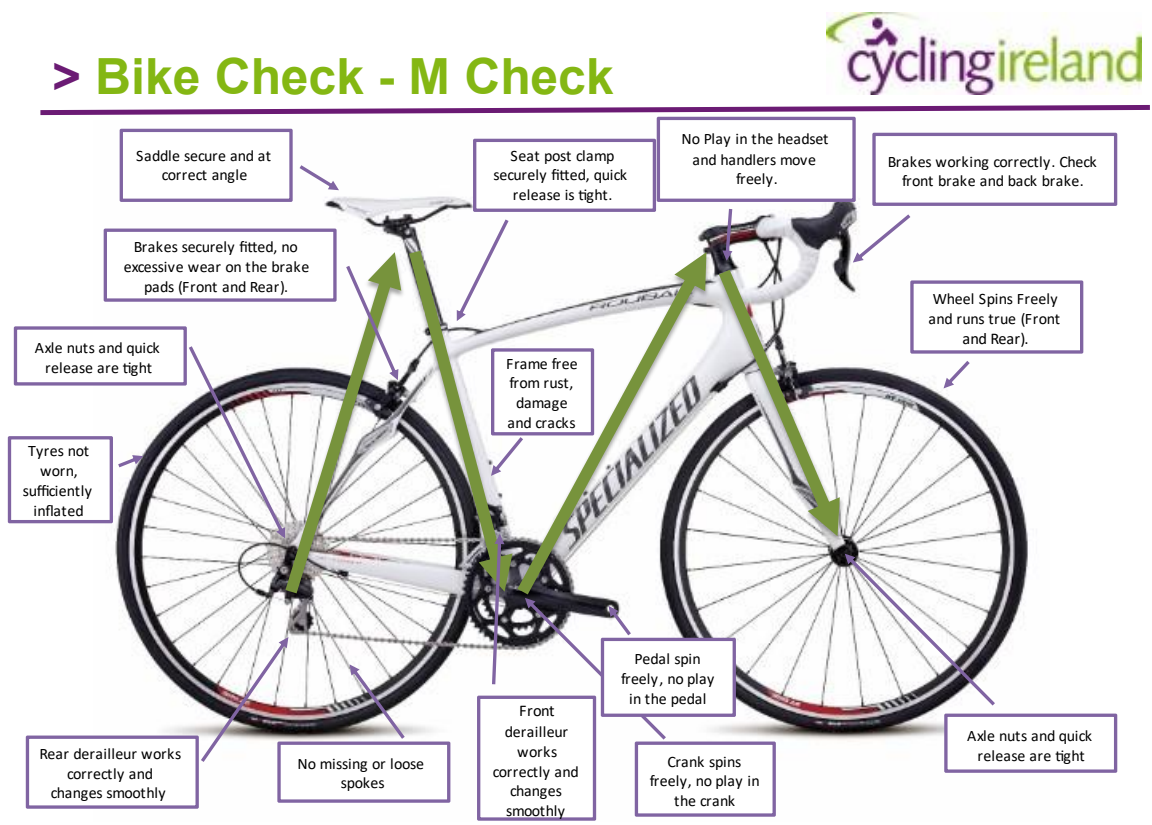
GROUP CYCLING SKILLS AND NOTES

Helmets:

- No helmet no cycle!
- Must have CE1078 Standard, once it has this standard it has passed all bicycle safety standards.
- Must be fitted properly: (See video) [Orwell Wheelers Pathways Video - AMS TRI HELMET 0 - YouTube](#)
Helmet should be replaced after min 5 years use. If damaged or hard bang in a crash or accident it must be replaced.

Bike Check:

- It is your responsibility to have your bike in good safe working condition. **It is not the club or the leaders responsibility to check your bike or fix it!**
- Please see video on how to do a basic M-Check on your bike yourself. [Orwell Wheelers Pathways Video - ams tri M Check 0 - YouTube](#)
- There is nothing as bad as having someone in the group with a poorly maintained bike poor tyres etc.



This is not what we want to happen on a spin because of a poorly maintained bike!



Hand Position on the handlebars while in the group:

- Hands always on the top of or near the brake hoods. Not in the middle of the handlebars. If there is an emergency stop in the group you need to get to the brakes very quickly. (See Video) [Orwell Wheelers Pathways Video AMS Hand Position 0 - YouTube](#)



Communication and calls in the group:

- Communicating obstacles, cars, pedestrians on the road, slowing, stopping, punctures etc is **ESENTIAL IN GROUP CYCLING!**
- Make sure the calls are passed down through the group or up through the group, not everyone can hear the calls from the back or front.
- Initially with new groups it will be very noisy as new riders will call everything! After a few weeks this should calm down, but it's encouraged to just call the main obstacles, there is no need to call absolutely everything on the road!
- Try use hand signals to point obstacles sometimes instead of calling.

MAIN CALLS:

- **Car Back:** If a car is passing the group from behind the riders at the back of the group call it out to the rest of the group, message should be passed up through the group.
- **Car Front:** If a car is coming towards the group from the front on a narrow road the riders at the front of the group call it and pass it back through the group.
- **Slowing:** If coming to a junction, traffic lights or towards a stop make sure to call slowing or use hand signal to show you are slowing down.
- **Stopping:** When coming to a stop, call it! Pass it down through the group.
- **Potholes:** Point if possible the potholes either to the left, right or centre of the group and pass it down. Call it if its bad.
- **Surface:** If the road is bad for a long stretch call surface and pass it down through the group.
- **Gravel:** Make sure to call gravel, try not brake on gravel, let the momentum of the bike take you through it.
- **Pedestrian on the road:** If there is a walker or jogger coming towards the group, point it out or call it and move out.
- **Cars parked** at the side of the road. As above.
- **Puncture:** If you get a puncture call it, then call Slowing and move over to a safe part of the road. Get the group off the road while it is repaired.
- **Wait:** If part of a group gets through a junction or traffic lights but the rest of the group gets stuck at the junction with traffic or red lights, make sure to call out wait to the riders who got through to wait for the rest of you.
- **Clear:** When coming to a junction or roundabout the riders at the front are the eyes of the group. If there is no traffic and it's safe to go through call CLEAR to the rest of the group. It is still the responsibility of the other riders to still check it is clear for themselves though coming to the junction or roundabout.

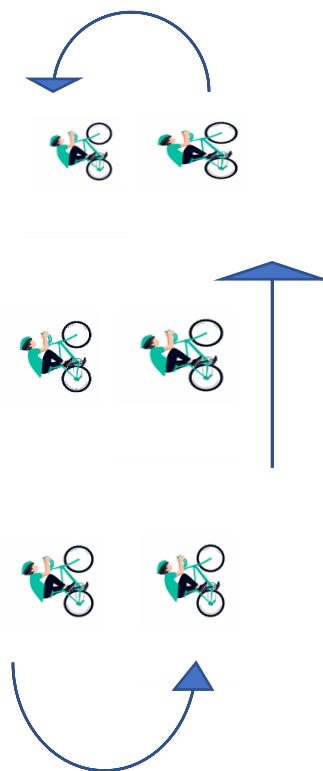
NEVER SIGNAL TO OR CALL A CAR THROUGH FROM BEHIND!! Never ever signal to a car behind a group to pass, it is the drivers responsibility to overtake the group safely **NOT YOURS!** If you signal to a car to pass and they have an accident then it will be your responsibility as you told them it was safe to pass!

GROUP CYCLING 2 ABREAST AND SINGLE FILE

Why do we ride in a group 2 abreast?:

- It's safer on the road once the group is riding tidy and correctly. It's a shorter distance for a car to overtake than one big straight line. Also, a car will tend to give a 2 abreast group more room when overtaking than one single line of riders.
- Everyone gets to do some work and also to get some shelter. The two riders at the front are doing the work and also sheltering those behind. The riders behind are getting dragged along and will use up to 35% less energy when sheltered. Everyone will get their turn at the front when the group rotates.
- Its more sociable! You get to talk to the person beside you!

Riding 2 Abreast



- Typically the group leader will call “up and over” or “roll over” or “up” and the outside line will move up and over.
- You stay in the line you are in until its your turn to move up to the front or moving back.
- Keep the lines straight, so always keep a wheel in front of you and keep straight behind it ie not to the side. Keep at least $\frac{1}{2}$ the diameter of a wheel to the wheel on front.
- Always have a rider beside you ie ride to the shoulder beside you at most an arms distance apart.

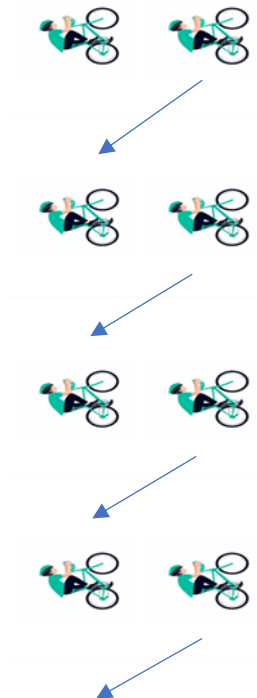
SINGLING OUT

There are times when the group needs to single out. Typically, the group will single out when there are a lot of cars building up behind the group, or when they group is in a busy town or on a very busy narrow road and it feels safer to single out.

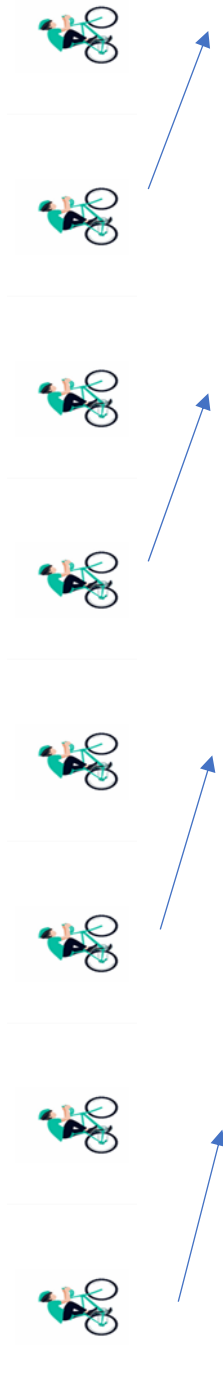
Sometimes though it is safer to stay 2 abreast on a narrow road and not encourage a car to overtake.

As mentioned never ever call a car through or signal to them that it's safe to pass, it's the car drivers responsibility to overtake you safely.

SINGLING OUT



DOUBLE UP AGAIN



- When the call is made to single out, the riders on the outside line drop back one rider in behind the rider they are beside.
- It's important the riders on the inside line leave room to allow the outside rider move in. Even help guide the outside rider in safely.
- When the outside rider moves into the inside line its important, they look to their left so they don't clip the wheel of the rider on the inside when moving in.
- When it's safe the leader will call "Double up" or "2 lines" the riders move back out to exactly where they were before ie move out and up to beside the rider they were beside initially.

PROPER USE OF GEARS

One of the first things to learn when cycling is good pedalling, and this comes with good cadence. Cadence is how many times per minute you pedal a full revolution of your pedals. An ideal cadence for those new to cycling is 80-90 revolutions per minute (RPM).

On climbs or steep hills your cadence will naturally be lower probably about 70-80rpm.

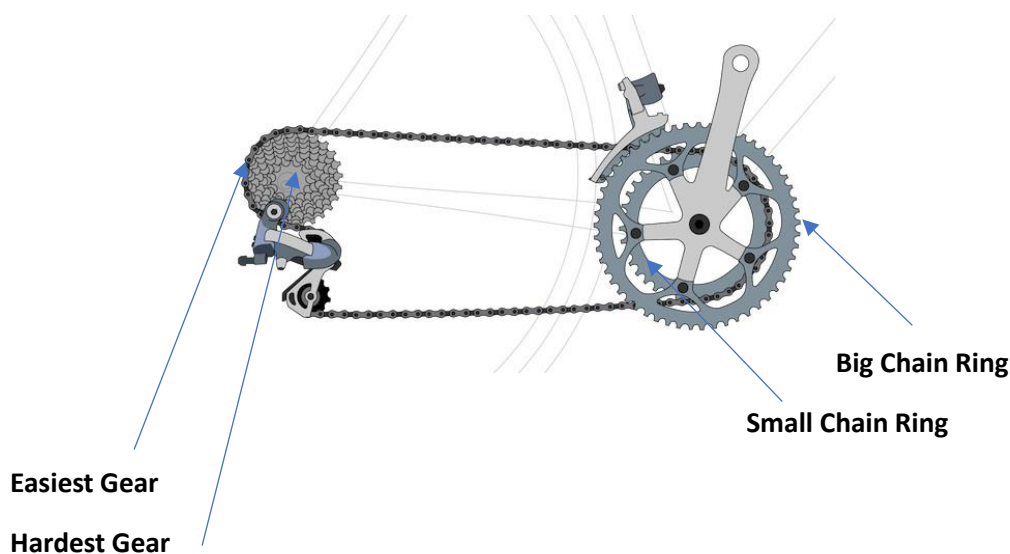
It's important that you learn to use your gears, so don't be afraid to change into an easier gear if your cadence drops or the opposite put it into a harder gear if your cadence gets too high.

Too low cadence: Riding too heavy a gear ie low cadence is hard on your Skeletal and muscular system, so hard on the knees, lower back, quads etc. In the long term can cause a chronic injury.

Too high cadence: A cadence that is way too high for a rider ie way too easy a gearing is hard on the Cardiovascular system, so your Heart rate will shoot up and you will get out of breath too quickly.

If you have a Garmin or Wahoo Computer, you can buy a cadence sensor that will show you your cadence as you cycle and give you your average cadence at the end of a spin.

Alternatively, you can purchase a cheap bicycle computer like a Cateye Computer that has a cadence sensor for approx. 50-80 euro.



For the majority of your cycling, you should be in the small chain ring on the front and probably the middle to lower sprockets on the back. The Easiest gear on the back is the largest sprocket and the hardest on the back is the smallest.

You should be able to pedal at 80-90rpm up to about 30 KPH in the small chainring on the front and just using the gears at the back.

When your cadence gets too high ie 100plus you will then change into the big chainring on the front. Typically use the big chainring when going 30kph plus or downhill or when doing specific training sessions.

EATING AND DRINKING WHILE CYCLING

It is so important to make sure you are eating and drinking when out on the bike especially on longer spins.

You should be taking on board 500ml of fluids per hour, so 1 standard cycling bottle. Even if you are just doing a 1 hour spin you should be taking a full bottle during the spin. It makes a huge difference to your performance on your spin especially the later part of your spin but also your recovery then after.

So, if you were doing a long 4-5 hour spin take at least 2 bottles on the bike and you will then need to stop at a shop and refill them about halfway into your long spin.

On longer spins after the 1st hour of the spin you need to start taking on board carbohydrates. At least 35g per hour. (This depends on how hard you are riding and what weight you are). Example a Cliff Bar would have 37g of Carbs.

Eat whatever you like! But try ensuring it's a high carb food. Just nibble away every 10-15 mins and take a sip of your bottle then.

Keep the food in the pocket that you are comfortable reaching back into. Maybe have the wrappers open so it's easy then to eat on the bike.

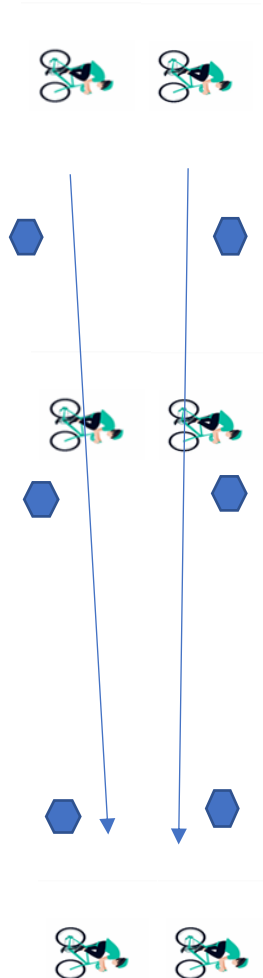
If your new to cycling, you need to practice reaching down for your drinks bottle and removing it and drinking. Keep the momentum going when you do on the bike. If your nervous take a drink at the back of the group.

REMEMBER THE GROUP WON'T STOP FOR YOU TO HAVE A DRINK!

[Practicing Drinking your bottle while cycling - YouTube](#) (video on learning to drinking while cycling)

RIDING CLOSE TO EACH OTHER

When group riding you will be near other riders beside you, on front and behind you. It's important that you get used to being close to other riders and occasionally bump off them.



Try the session above. In pairs ride side by side through toe lines of cones that get narrower and forces you to get close to the rider beside you. As you get more confident make the cones narrower and repeat. Do it at a good pace ie don't go very slow as the bike will be unstable. Once you get more and more confident practice bumping off each other with your shoulders or elbows (keep your hands on the handlebars though!!).

CORNERING AND GOING DOWNHILL

- **Tyres:** Tyres are in good condition check them after every rider for cuts or bits of glass or gravel stuck in the casing. Check pressure regularly for the majority of us 95-100PSI is plenty. Run at least 700 x 25mm wide tyres. If your bike can take 28mm tyres then all the better.

Worth spending at least 50E each on tyre.

Get tyres with a good compound especially for the wet.

Good examples of tyres are:

Continental 5000

Continental 4 Season Tyres. This is a great all year round tyre and great for the winter.

Vittoria Corsa G Tyres

Shwalble PRO One

-**Brakes:** Make sure your brakes are in good working order, cables are free and easy to pull, or if using hydraulic that they pull ok and not too loose. Check pads regularly especially during the winter weather when they wear a lot more than normal.

Use of Brakes: Remember which is your back brake and which is your front brake! This is very important!! When using the brakes pull them gently and feather the brakes ie pull and let go, pull and let go, don't keep on the brakes fully unless its an emergency stop. Pull the back brake a little harder than the front and pull the back brake a little earlier than the front. If you keep the brakes pulled all the time on a descent the brakes will be no use to you when they heat up and also it forces you in directions you don't want to go.

Brake before you come to a corner and have your speed correct before the corner, try not to brake in a corner as it will put you off course!

-**Body position:** When descending it is best to descend with your hands in the drops of the bars. Make sure your handlebars and brake levers are set up correctly so you can reach them when in the drops and that you can sit comfortably in the drops.

Push your back side back a few cms back on the saddle and relax your elbows. On the straight part of descents have your pedals on the 9 O'Clock and 3 O'Clock positions so one foot straight forward and one at the back and keep your knees in towards the cross bar of the bike. This all keeps the bike nice and stable at speed.

When coming to bends on the descent move your pedal position e.g if the road bends to the left then lift the left pedal up to the 12 O'Clock position and the right pedal to the 6 O'Clock position and push down a little on the right pedal too. The opposite then if turning to the right.



Illustration 1: HAND POSITION IN DROPS AND LOOKING AHEAD

- **Head Position:** ALWAYS!!! be looking straight ahead, eyes up NEVER EVER HEAD DOWN! Always look through a corner to where the exit is and where you want to go to. If the road for example is turning to the right make sure you turn your head and eyes to right and look through the bend. The bike will follow your line of sight.



- **Bike Position:** Use as much as the road as legally possible when descending. If the road is turning to the left move out to the right of the road to the white line max, this will help you see through the bend and also take a better line through the bend. The opposite then if the road is turning to the right then move to the left side of the road.



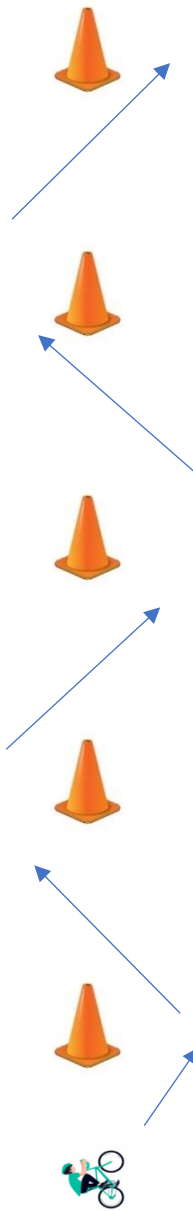
Illustration 3: Going wide on the bends

REMEMBER: THINK STICKY VELCRO! YOUR TYRES ARE THE FLUFFY PART AND THE ROAD IS THE GRIPPY PART.

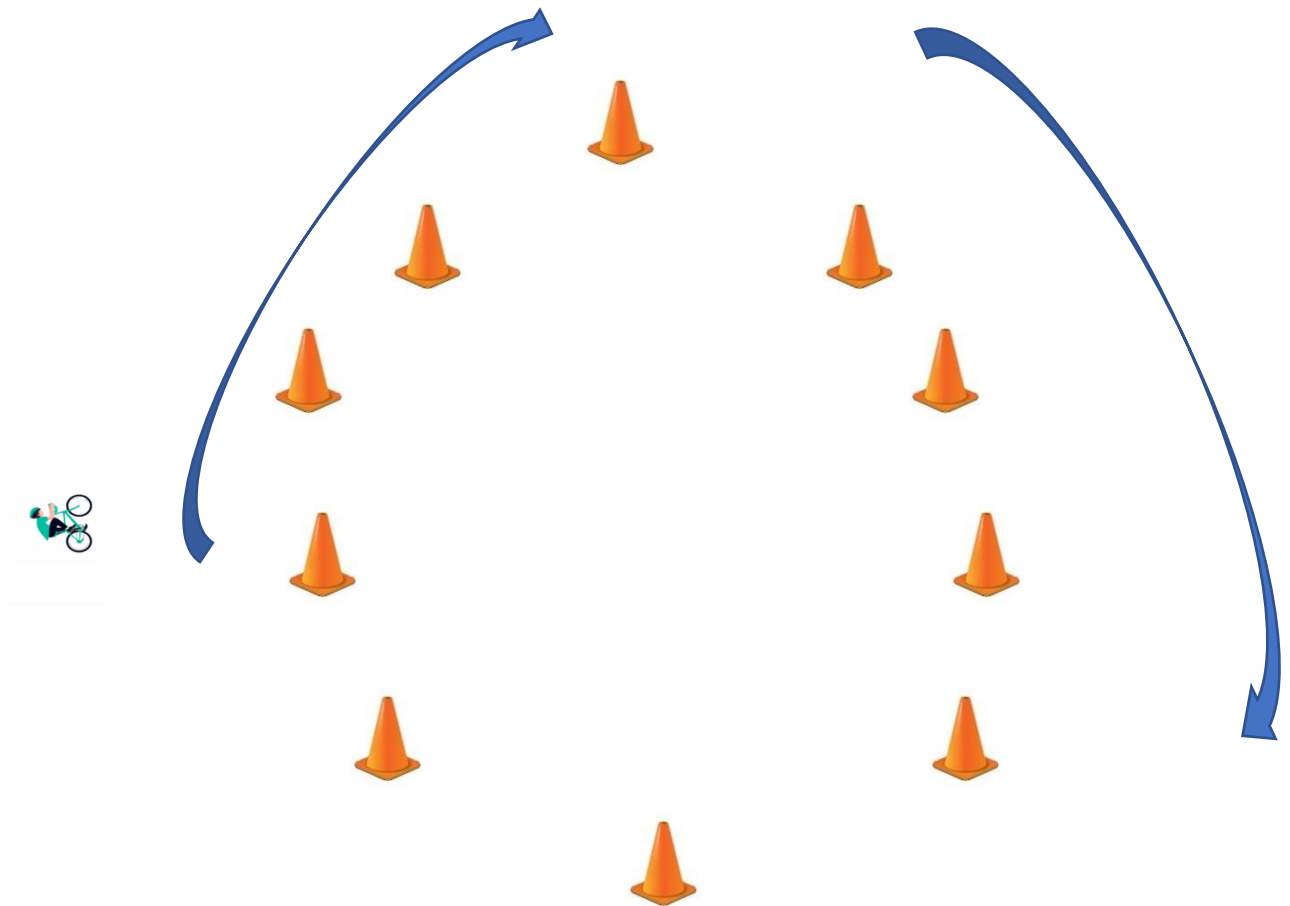
Once you have good tyres on with good pressure and your bike and brakes are in good order then this is half of the battle! Breathe deeply and relax as best you can on descents. If its raining then take your time a little more and avoid the painted white lines and shores on the road.

You dont have to be **Evil Kenevil!** Just do the correct things and do it at your own pace.

PRACTICE YOUR CORNERING SKILLS



SLALOM: This will force you to lift your left pedal when leaning left and lift your right pedal when leaning right.

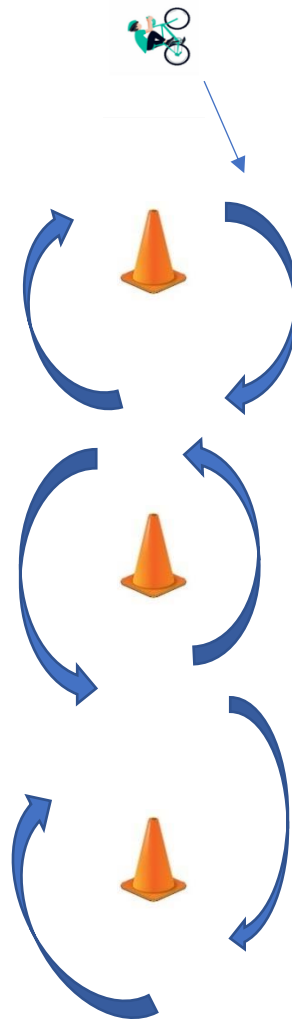


CIRCLES: Set up a large circle and ride around it looking around the circle with your eyes and head and leaning your knee out.

If going around to the left keep the left knee up and out and look to the left. Do the opposite when going right.

This gives you the confidence to lean your bike and use your body position and head position to corner left and right.

FIGURE OF 8:



Practicing with 3 cones and doing figure of eights around the cones will force you to use your pedal position, leaning and head position. Practice both ways up and down to get you used to leaning both ways.