

Do It Yourself

CycleSafe

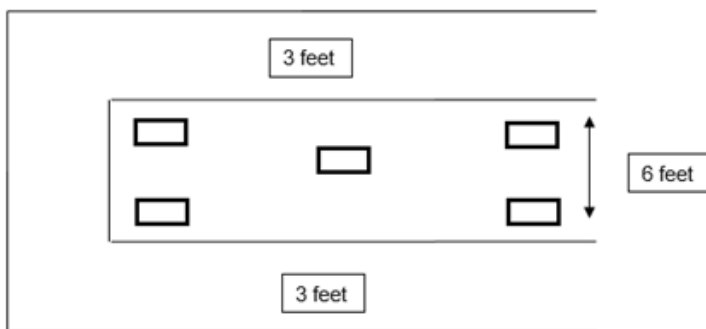
Mini-Rodeo

Suitable for
kids
in Grades 1 – 6

Cycling season has kicked off – time to brush up on some important skills that will ensure you are safe while riding! Appropriate for kids in Grade 1 – 6 that have the basics of starting, stopping, balance and riding mastered. This mini version of the Ottawa Safety Councils Cyclesafe bike rodeo will allow your kids to practice in their own driveway!

Set Up:

- Using sidewalk chalk, draw out a U-shaped lane
- Lanes should be about 3 feet wide and at least 6 feet between them.
- Make it as long as you can (the length of your driveway or if you are doing it in a larger space, make it longer)
- Place the obstacles down the center about 6 feet apart from each other to start. You can place as many as you like to fill the length of your course.



You are all set now to run the various activities!

What you need:

- Bike
- Helmet
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Smooth surface (paved driveway or quiet street/cul-de-sac) at least 10 by 20 feet.
- A cardboard sign that says “Car” (or if you want to get creative you can make a big cardboard cut out of a car and paint it)
- “Obstacles” - Bean bags/wet sponges/pylons (basically anything that will stay in place on the ground that kids will see and swerve around).



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Activity 1 Exiting Driveways Safely

Activity 1: Exiting Driveways Safely

Although it seems like an easy thing to do, one of the biggest causes of vehicle-cyclists collisions with children is due to not stopping and looking for traffic before entering the roadway from the sidewalk, a driveway or a parking lot. Usually this occurs in quiet residential neighborhoods and can be caused by visual barriers (fence, wall, tree, bushes, parked vehicle, etc.) that blocks the bicyclists' view of the motorist or the motorists' view of bicyclist.

Tip:

Ride to the right of the road in the same direction as traffic. Go with the flow—not against it.



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Activity 1 Exiting Driveways Safely

Activity 1 Continued

Practicing Exiting your Driveway:

- Have your cyclist start at the top of the driveway, closest to the house, as if they had just exited their house and hopped on their bike. Draw a chalk “stop line” where the driveway meets the road way. (If you are doing this in a space other than your driveway, you can use chalk to draw one, label the house on one end and the street on the other, with a stop line.)
- Have them ride the length of the driveway towards the road.
- The rider will ride along the “driveway” toward the roadway and then STOP at the stop line before entering the road.
- The rider should then look left, right, and left again and make sure it is clear to go (no vehicles coming from either direction) before proceeding.
- Although this seems a bit boring, having them practice it several times will create a safe habit that will become second nature.
- Explain that this also applies to leaving a parking lot or riding off of the sidewalk onto the road.

Tip:

Keep at least one hand on the handlebars. If you need to carry books or groceries, put them in a bike carrier or backpack..



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Activity 2 Shoulder Check & Scanning

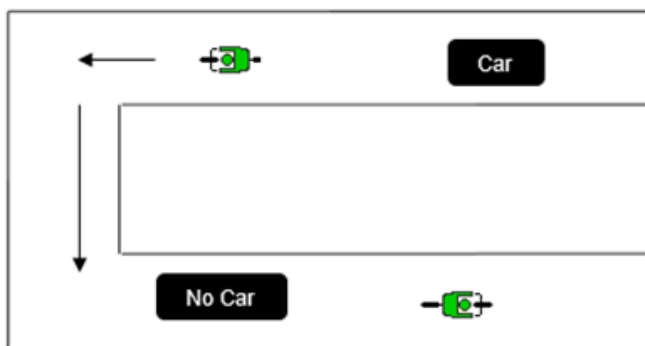
Activity 2: Shoulder Check & Scanning

Sudden swerves and left hand turns without looking are major causes of crashes. There is a natural tendency to swerve left when doing a shoulder check. It is important that learn to scan and look behind them frequently without swerving.

Practicing Shoulder Checks/Scanning:

- Start by having them practice cycling around the “U” a few times first and staying in a straight line.
- Once they have that down, have them cycle through the “U” but tell them you are going to be behind them and call out “Look!” randomly. When you call out “Look!” they are to look behind them (do a shoulder check) and tell you whether you are holding up the car sign/car cut out.
- They should yell out “Car!” if you are holding the sign up and “No Car” if you are not.

Practice this until they can do a shoulder check/look behind them while maintaining riding in a straight line and look behind them frequently without swerving.



Tip:

Be extra cautious at intersections—about half of crashes occur there. Obey traffic signals, and scan for traffic around you. Before making a turn, always look behind you for a break in traffic, then signal and position yourself in the proper lane.



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Activity 3 Swerving around Hazards & Obstacles

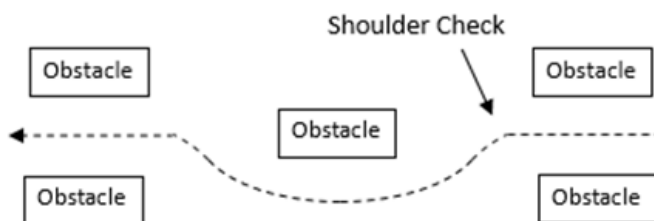
Activity 3: Swerving around Hazards/Obstacles

When cycling, looking out for and maneuvering safely around hazards is key to safety. It is important be able to ride safely and in control around them without swerving too widely. Swerving widely can cause cyclists to ride/dart into traffic.

Start with a small discussion on looking out for hazards:

- What kinds of hazards do you find while bicycle riding? (glass, rocks, drain grates, pot holes, parked cars, people etc.)
- Why do you need to be careful? (to avoid falls, flat tires, or ending up in the path of a car)

Practicing Steering around Hazards and Shoulder Checking



Tip:

When passing a pedestrian or another bike, warn them of your approach with a bell or shout (as in, "on your left!").



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Activity 3 Swerving around Hazards & Obstacles

Practicing Steering around Hazards and Shoulder Checking

- Start with riding through the course a few times to get comfortable with it:
 - Children should ride straight towards the object, then steer around it at the last moment.
 - They should steer by turning the handlebars first one way (to avoid the object), then turning back the other way to put the bike back in the intended line of travel.
 - The biggest mistake people make with this exercise is not going fast enough toward the obstacle, or making the maneuver too slowly. Hazards can come up suddenly while riding along so it is important to practice this at a normal speed.
 - As children get more comfortable with the course, move the “obstacles” closer and closer together.
 - By placing the obstacles close together it helps cyclists learn to make a tight maneuver around them, rather than a large uncontrolled swerve.
 - Look out for the front wheel avoiding the hazard and if they made a quick turning action.
- Next add in shoulder checks/looking behind before going around the obstacles. This is important to do to ensure that you will not be riding into the path of a car coming up behind you.
- If your cyclist has this down, then you can even add in the “Car/No Car” part of the shoulder check.

Tip:

Don't wear a headset when you ride—you need to hear what's going on.

