

## Starting/Stopping

Riding confidently and competently in traffic sends the message that you belong in the roadway. One of the best ways to do this is to start quickly and confidently. You do this by starting with one pedal in an up position, then putting all your weight on the pedal to launch you and your bike across the intersection. As you are pushing on the pedal, ease back onto the saddle.

To stop smoothly and evenly, use both brakes with more pressure on the front one. Just as you come to a complete stop, turn the handlebars a little bit away from the side you want to step down on. The bike will lean to that side so you can step down.

## Steering a Straight Line

If started in motion carefully, a bicycle without a rider can coast all the way across a parking lot before it eventually falls down. Your job is to use small motions to steer the front wheel as little as possible so as to keep the bike directly under your center of gravity. So look up and let the bicycle work for you.

If the bike leans to the right, the front wheel will tend to steer itself to the right, and if the bike leans to the left, the wheel will steer to the left, assuming no force is applied to the handlebar.

On a bike that is moving and upright, the caster effect keeps the wheel lined up in the direction of motion.

## Scanning

When riding in traffic, you need to be predictable and communicate with drivers when you are going to change your speed or roadway position. You can do this by looking around, or scanning, and when it is safe, signaling your intentions.

Scanning is the act of looking over your shoulder. You do it to check for overtaking traffic or to see that you are clear before merging or changing lanes. This is a skill that you'll need to be proficient at so you can keep the bicycle moving in a straight line while you are looking back. Practice looking over each shoulder until it becomes

second nature and you are able to maintain a straight line of travel while looking back.

## Signaling

A large part of being predictable in your actions on the road is letting others know what you plan to do before you do it — hand signals are a vital communication tool. Scanning behind you while riding in traffic may act as a secondary signal to motorists that you plan to change your position on the roadway.

The right-turn signal has historically been the left arm outstretched and bent upward at the elbow. When used by a cyclist, this signal may be difficult for motorists to see. Some states now allow the outstretched right arm to indicate a right turn. Always use hand signals when turning, changing lanes and even when changing position in a given lane. Motorists will appreciate the courtesy and respond in kind.

Be sure to stop signaling well before entering the intersection. At this point, it is more important for you to have both hands on the handlebar for maximum control and maneuverability.



**HAND SIGNALS** are a vital communication tool. Let other motorists know what you plan to do before you do it.

