

CHOOSING A BIKE

Selecting the bike that suits you can be an exciting challenge. There are many bike options available, use this guide to help get you started finding a bike that suits your needs and feels 'just right'.

- How far are you likely to ride?
- What sort of riding will you be doing – recreation, commuting, off-road exploring, long-distance touring, racing, or everyday riding to the shops and local areas?
- Where will you be riding – suburban streets, paved cycle paths, gravel roads, off-road trails, or mountain bike trails?
- How much money are you looking to spend?
- Are you going to be carrying anything while biking i.e. do you want to fit a basket, racks, pannier bags, kick-stand or baby seat?
- Is there a particular style, look or colour that appeals to you?

Borrow a bike from a friend, hire a bike to try out and/or talk to your local bike shop. Many bike shops will let you try before you buy and can help work out any other accessories that might be suitable. This way you can get a feel for different style bikes and find a bike that suits you.

Bike styles

There are a range of bikes for different purposes and some are right for one particular purpose only, whereas others are more versatile.

Road Bikes – As the name suggests, road bikes are designed for riding on the road and are suitable for commuting to work, racing, triathlons and lightweight touring. Road bikes are generally very light, have smooth, slim tyres, dropped handlebars (downturned, curved handlebars) and a range of gears. They are designed and built to maximise aerodynamics and minimise weight. They provide good speed-handling and sprinting ability, but may not be the most comfortable choice for everyone.



Mountain bikes – Mountain bikes are specifically designed to handle rough terrain, but are versatile enough to be used on and off-road. Their design often incorporates suspension to tackle rough paths, easy gears for steep climbs, and wide tyres with knobby tread to maintain grip. These features can add comfort and ease but slow the bike down when riding on a road.

Hybrid/Commuter Bikes – Hybrid bikes combine features of both road bikes and mountain bikes. They also feature a more upright riding position than a road bike to make cycling more comfortable. They can be used on bike trails, parks and city streets. They are ideal for adding accessories such as mudguards, racks, panniers and baskets.



Comfort / Step-through Bikes – Step-through bikes do not have the cross-bar associated with most bikes, so you can 'step-through' without having to swing your leg over the seat to get on. As with hybrid bikes, step-through bikes have a more upright riding position and can be used on bike trails, parks and city streets. They can also be made more versatile by adding accessories. This style of bike is best for cruising shorter distances.



Folding bikes – Folding bikes are portable, easy to use and store. These lightweight multipurpose bikes are good for commuting, taking on holiday, going to the shops or visiting the local café. They are great for combining cycling with other transport options as they can be taken on trains, buses and ferries or put in the car boot to help you get to places easily.



Electric Bikes (e-Bikes) – E-Bikes are available in almost any style. They have a battery and small motor to provide extra help in getting places. This tends to make them heavier but can help you travel further, flatten hills and arrive still feeling fresh. They come in a variety of styles and can either assist when pedalling or use the throttle. A specialist bike shop can provide more advice about power, weight, speeds etc.



Lifestyle, Classic, Urban and Cruiser Bicycles – Urban bicycles, as used widely in Europe and gaining in popularity in New Zealand. They're perfect for commuting, leisure, or riding to the local café on the weekend. They feature an upright riding position and ideal for adding baskets, racks, mudguards and panniers.



Fixed-gear bicycles (fixie) – Fixie bikes are bikes reduced to the bare essentials. Often similar to road bikes, fixies have one gear and no free wheel, meaning that when the wheels turn, so do the pedals. Often there are no other brakes so they are not recommended for novice cyclists. If you just like the look, fixie-styled bikes with free wheel, brakes and gears are also available.



BMX and Trick Bikes – BMX or bicycle motorcross bikes are designed for off-road racing and stunt riding. Built to be robust they have one gear, smaller wheels and lower seats so not ideal for long distance riding. Pegs can be attached to the axle to allow for performing tricks too.



Cargo Bike and Other bikes – There are many other types of bikes that are gaining popularity and a bike can be found to suit almost any purpose. **Cargo** bikes allow you to carry a lot of baggage (sometimes with electrical-assistance). **Tandem** bikes allow for two people to ride together. **Cruiser** bikes are all about moving in style, allowing for a relaxed ride, at low speeds on easy terrain. The list goes on...

Choosing the Right Size and Fit

Getting the right size is one of the most important aspects in choosing a bike. Comfort, handling, aerodynamics and efficiency all rely on the right fit.

Bike frames come in different sizes while seats and handlebars can be changed or adjusted for fit. If you purchase a new bike from a bike shop they should adjust it to fit your body.

LIFE IN THE BIKE LANE