

Choosing a bike

There are lots of bikes on offer, so selecting one to suit you can be a daunting task. Start by answering the questions below. Your answers will help guide the type of bike you will need –

- How often 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, country roads, mountain bike trails, gravel roads, paved cycle paths, dirt paths, and grass?
- How much money are you looking to spend?
- What Features would you like to consider – suspension forks, disc brakes or rim brakes?
- What accessories will you need – 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?

Once you've answered these questions, seek advice from other cyclists and visit local bike shops for professional advice about the different types of bikes and what might suit your needs. You could also borrow a bike from a friend or rent a bike so you can get a feel for some different styles.

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 suitable for situations such as commuting to work, racing, triathlons and lightweight touring. Road bikes are generally very light, have thin tyres, dropped handlebars (downturned, curved handlebars) and a range of gears. They are designed and built to maximise aerodynamics and minimise weight. They provide better handling, cornering and sprinting ability.



Mountain bikes - Mountain bikes are specifically designed to handle rough and difficult terrains, but are versatile enough to be used on and off-road. Their design often incorporates suspension to tackle rough paths, and wide tyres with knobbly tread to maintain grip.

Hybrid/Commuter Bikes - Hybrid bikes combine features of both road bikes and mountain bikes. They can look more like a mountain bike but have thinner tyres. They also feature a more upright riding position 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.

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 (or power assisted pedal bikes) - Electric bikes have a small motor which can help the rider when pedalling uphill or on a flat surface for a short distance. They tend to be much heavier than a standard bike. A specialist bike shop can provide more advice.

Lifestyle, Classic, Urban and Cruiser Bicycles - Urban bicycles, as used widely in Europe, are 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) – These bikes are often similar to road bikes but they have no freewheel so the pedals are always turning when the bike is in motion. They usually only have one gear. Fixies are becoming more popular but they have limited braking ability and are therefore not recommended for entry level cyclists.

BMX and Trick Bikes - These bikes are great for tricks or ramps. They are designed to use on a wide range of tracks and trails. They often have a low seat position. Some have limited braking ability and only one gear so not ideal for longer distances.



Choosing the Right Size and Fit

One size does not fit all. 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.