Why Should I Ride a Bicycle?

- **Efficiency:** Biking is often more efficient when traveling in a busy city like Boston and many of the trips that you make every day are short enough to be accomplished on a bicycle.
  - Biking will get you to your class, meeting, or work faster than if you were to walk or wait around for a bus or train – saving precious time.
    - Front row parking spaces are guaranteed no matter where you go and traffic jams are also irrelevant.
  - Biking is a convenient form of physical activity since you can ride in street clothes and incorporate it into your daily routine, also having time and laundry.

- **Cost:** Biking is an affordable form of transportation.
  - Train rides can become expensive. By bicycling you spend less on transportation, meaning you have more money to save or spend on other things.

- **Health:** Biking is a safe, low-impact, aerobic activity and can contribute to the recommended goal of 10,000 steps per day (about 5 miles).

- **Quality of Life:** Biking can be an adventure.
  - Check out the Charles River Bike Path, a 14-mile paved loop traveling alongside both banks of the Charles River from the Museum of Science to Watertown.
    - Found at [http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/Getting_Around_by_Bike_map.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/Getting_Around_by_Bike_map.pdf)
  - Or the Fresh Pond Path in Cambridge, a paved 3-mile path around the Fresh Pond Reservoir.

- **Environmental/Energy:** Motor vehicles create a substantial amount of air pollution and biking can limit your carbon footprint.
  - Switching motor vehicle trips over to manageable bicycle trips is an easy way to reduce energy needs and pollution emissions from the transportation sector.
    - A round trip, four-mile ride keeps about 15 pounds of pollutants out of the air we breathe. (WorldWatch Institute).

How Do I Ride Safely?

- **Protect yourself and be visible!**
  - Protect your valuable MIT brain and avoid head injuries by **always wearing a helmet that fits correctly.**
    - Don’t have a helmet yet? Through a special arrangement with Blue Cross Blue Shield, MIT Health Plan members can buy helmets that meet national impact safety standards at substantial discounts – around $15. The form can be found at [http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/bicycling.html](http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/bicycling.html).
  - Wear bright and reflective clothing when bicycling at night. (White and yellow work well.)
  - Stand in front of or behind a car at traffic lights to avoid cars’ blind spots.
  - Make sure your brakes are working properly and keep both hands on the handlebars ready to brake.
  - Be predictable to others and keep alert for hazards like loose gravel, wet leaves, storm grates etc.
  - Avoid listening to music.
  - Be alert for car doors opening when passing parked cars.

What are the Rules of the Road?

- **Follow all traffic laws applicable to vehicles unless otherwise directed by a police officer.**
  - Example: If no right, left or U turn is permitted, then you have to obey the direction of that sign.

- **Ride in the direction of traffic flow.**
  - Don’t pass cars or other bikers on the right – they seldom see you.

- **At night the law requires a working white headlight in the front and a red tail light or reflectors on the rear of your bike.**
  - The white light needs to be visible from a distance of at least 500’ to the front, and at least 600’ for the red lamp or red reflector.

- **Signal when turning or stopping.**
Can I Ride My Bike On the Sidewalk?
- Cambridge discourages the riding of bicycles on sidewalks and has provided bicycle lanes on many streets.
  - However, if riding on a sidewalk (where appropriate and not banned, such as business districts of Harvard, Central and Inman Square) know that pedestrians have the right of way on all sidewalks and that you need to ride at a speed no greater than an ordinary walk.

Looking for a Bike or Bike Shop?
- MIT police collects all abandoned bikes on campus at the end of the summer term and sells them during the MIT bike auction in the fall. (Check announcements for exact date.)
- If you are looking for a used bike, check out the announcements from:
  - The Chinese Students Association (cssa.mit.edu/mail/mitcssa-ads)
  - The MIT Euroclub (euroclub.mit.edu).
  - Craigslist (boston.craigslist.org).
- Check out Cambridge Bicycle [259 Mass Ave. Tel: 617-867-6555]
  - They do repairs and have an air station.
- Broadway Bicycle School [351 Broadway. Tel: 617-868-3392]
  - A nonprofit, collectively-owned bike store that sells both reconditioned and new bikes. Their bikes are rather safe, simple and good for getting around in the city. Besides repairing bikes, they also offer bike-repair classes where people can learn how to work on their own bikes.

How Can I Protect My Bike?
- Registered bikes are less apt to be stolen and are easier to recover.
  - Members of the MIT Community can register their bicycles online with the MIT Parking and Transportation Office at web.mit.edu/cp/www/bike_registration.htm. You will need the make, model and serial number of your bike and a registration sticker will be mailed through campus mail to you.
    - Registration also qualifies for insurance coverage by some bicycle lock companies.
- Secure your bike properly.
  - Use a cable AND a heavy-duty U-lock, or even two U-locks, to secure your bicycle to one of the many bike racks available throughout campus and the city. Lock the rear tire and bike frame to the rack using the U-lock and use the cable to attach the last tire to the frame.
  - Keep your bike locked at all times, even in a dorm or garage.
    - The MIT Parking & Transportation Office administers bicycle compounds located in the rear of Building 13, in the West Garage, and under Building E53 in the Hermann Garage. Cards to access the compounds can be requested by sending an email to commuting@mit.edu. Your bicycle must be registered with the MIT Parking & Transportation Office in order to gain access to a secure bike compound.

Resources
Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. <Bicyclinginfo.org>