

Cycling Worksheet # 2

Bike fit

There are several adjustments to be made in order to get the bike to fit you personally. They include saddle height, saddle position and tilt, handlebar position and height.

Saddle height:

Your saddle should be adjusted so that your leg is almost straight, but not quite, when the pedal is at the bottom of the stroke. In order to make this adjustment, it is important that your foot be placed properly on the pedal. The ball of your foot (where it bends right behind your toes) should be centered directly above the spindle (center) of the pedal. If you do not have toe clips, I'll mention here that they are one of the least expensive accessories that will make the biggest difference in your riding stamina (and safety).

While sitting on your bike, leaning against the wall or with someone holding it, place your foot correctly on the pedal and backpedal. Your legs should stretch out when the pedal is near the bottom, but your knee should not straighten out completely. Adjust the seat to the correct height making sure that you leave plenty of seat post in the seat tube.

Saddle position:

Your saddle probably has the potential to move forward and backward as well as tilt forward or backward. The saddle should be positioned so that when the cranks are parallel to the ground (in the 3 o'clock/9 o'clock position) your forward knee should be directly over the pedal spindle.

The saddle tilt should be what you are comfortable with. Too far forward and you will feel like you are falling off the front of your bike. Too far back will be uncomfortable. Make small adjustments and ride for ½ hour or so before making changes.

Handlebar position and height

Without buying a new stem, there is not much you can do about the handlebar distance from the seat. An old rule of thumb was, if you sit on your bike and place your elbow at the front of your seat, your fingertips should reach the handlebars. For normal riding the height of the handlebars should be about the same as the height of the seat.

When the saddle and handlebar positions have been adjusted, make sure that all the tightening bolts are secure and that you can easily reach and operate the brakes and shifters. If you come to class a few minutes early, I will try to be available to help with minor adjustments.