

## 10 STEPS TO RIDING YOUR BIKE TO WORK

You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to bike to work – even if you live a long distance away. When you commute by bicycle, you'll save money, get a good workout, and do your share to cut auto emissions that are behind 60% of our area's smog. Here, the bicycling experts at the California Bike Coalition offer a 10-step plan for bypassing traffic jams by bicycling to work.

- 1. Gear Up.** Using a bike that's been in the garage for a year or more? Have it checked out by your local bike shop pro. Most shops will perform a tune-up to make sure the bike is in working order for about \$40-50.
- 2. Select a Route.** Design a route by looking at a city map or Thomas Brother's guidebook. Better yet, go online to download the 2010 OCTA Bikeways map that shows bike paths and lanes. You can also try to plan a trip using Google's new Bike Trip Planner. Look for extra wide travel lanes and low traffic volumes.
- 3. Look for Route Options.** Many bus lines and rail transit allow bicyclists to bring their bikes on board. OCTA buses have a bike rack that holds two bicycles and Metrolink allows riders to bring their bikes as well. So for commutes farther than 10 miles, you may be able to bike to a nearby Park & Ride lot to catch a ride the rest of the way.
- 4. Consider a Bike Buddy.** Is there anyone at work who lives nearby that might want to ride to work with you? Knowing that someone is counting on you to ride can strengthen your resolve to bicycle. It can also be safer to ride as a pair, too, since you're a more formidable force on the road and have someone to help you in case of an emergency.
- 5. Do a Test Run.** On a day you would regularly take your car, drive the route and look for things like wide lanes and traffic flow. Check out the street conditions: Is the pavement event? Are there lots of parked cars? You may even try a test ride on your bicycle on a weekend prior to riding the route on a busy weekday.
- 6. Start Thinking Like a Cyclist.** In many cases, this isn't much different from thinking like a driver. The law in California gives bicycle riders the same rights and responsibilities as auto drivers. You must ride in a straight line if riding with other cyclists, blend with traffic, indicate turns, stop at signs/lights and ride on the right side of the road.
- 7. Put Safety First.** Buy a Snell/ANSI-approved helmet – then wear it. Check your bike for reflectors (reflectors and lights are required in California for riding in the darkness) and other safety features. Your local bike shop can help you find the right equipment. Wear brightly colored clothing, especially if you bicycle at dawn or dusk.
- 8. Check Your Fitness Level.** You may want to consult your physician to make sure you are fit enough to ride.
- 9. Talk to Your Employer.** Your company may offer benefits for bicyclists, such as lockers to store your bike, shower and changing facilities, bonuses for bike riders and more. Ask your Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or human resources manager. They can also help you discover options such as where you can store an extra change of clothes or if you can park your bike in your office.
- 10. Bike to Work!** A great day to give it a try is Bike to Work Day, a day when people throughout the state will leave their cars at home and instead bicycle to work.

