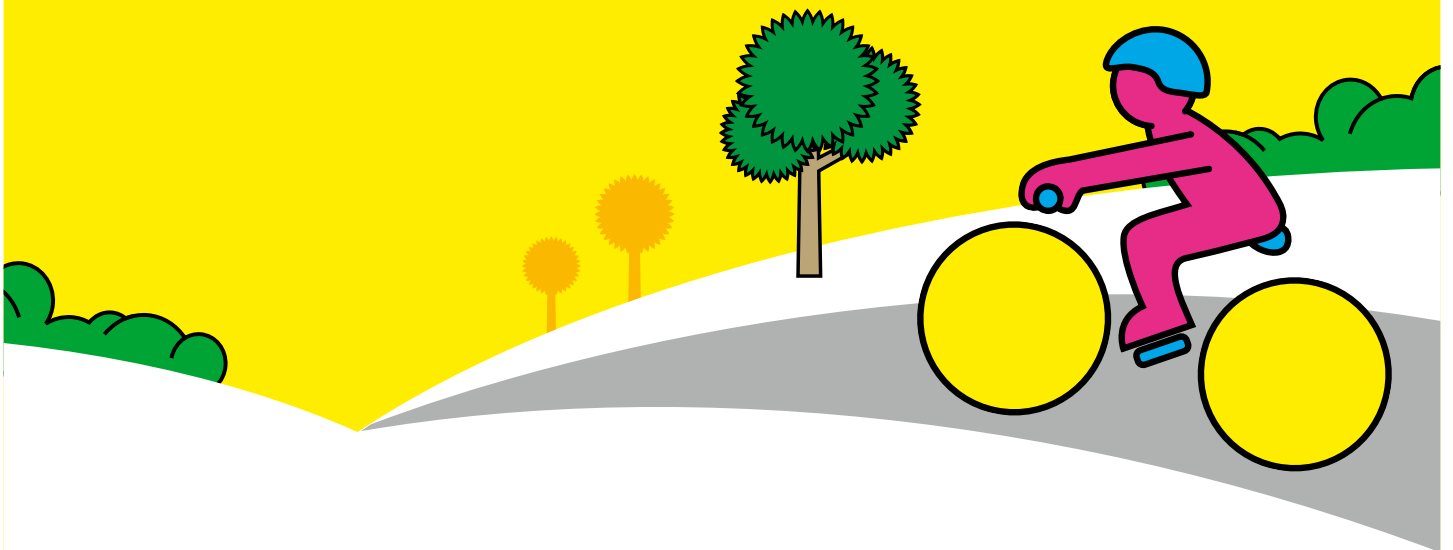
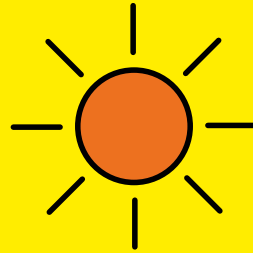


# bike 4 life

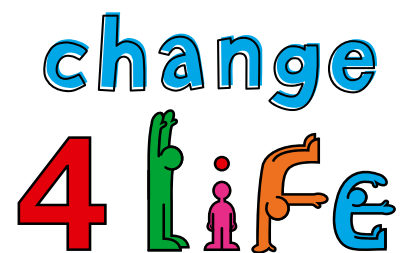
## getting and looking after your bike

Having the right bike makes every trip easier, safer and more fun, and the good news is your bike needn't cost a fortune.

This guide will help you make the right choice for you, your family and your pocket. It offers advice on buying a bike, how to prepare it for the road and how to keep it in tip-top condition.



Created in partnership with



Eat well Move more Live longer

# choosing a bike

Think about what you and your family are going to use your bikes for and where you are likely to ride most often. If you are mainly going to ride on tarmac, the bike you need will be different to if you are going to be riding on muddy tracks.

Here's a list of the most popular types of bike and the sorts of cycling they're suitable for:

## Mountain bike

These are great all-round bikes as they are good on the road and even better on rough tracks. They often have knobbly tyres for extra grip and suspension to cushion the bumps. You can also add things like mudguards and a carrier rack on many models, so they're practical too!

## Hybrid bike

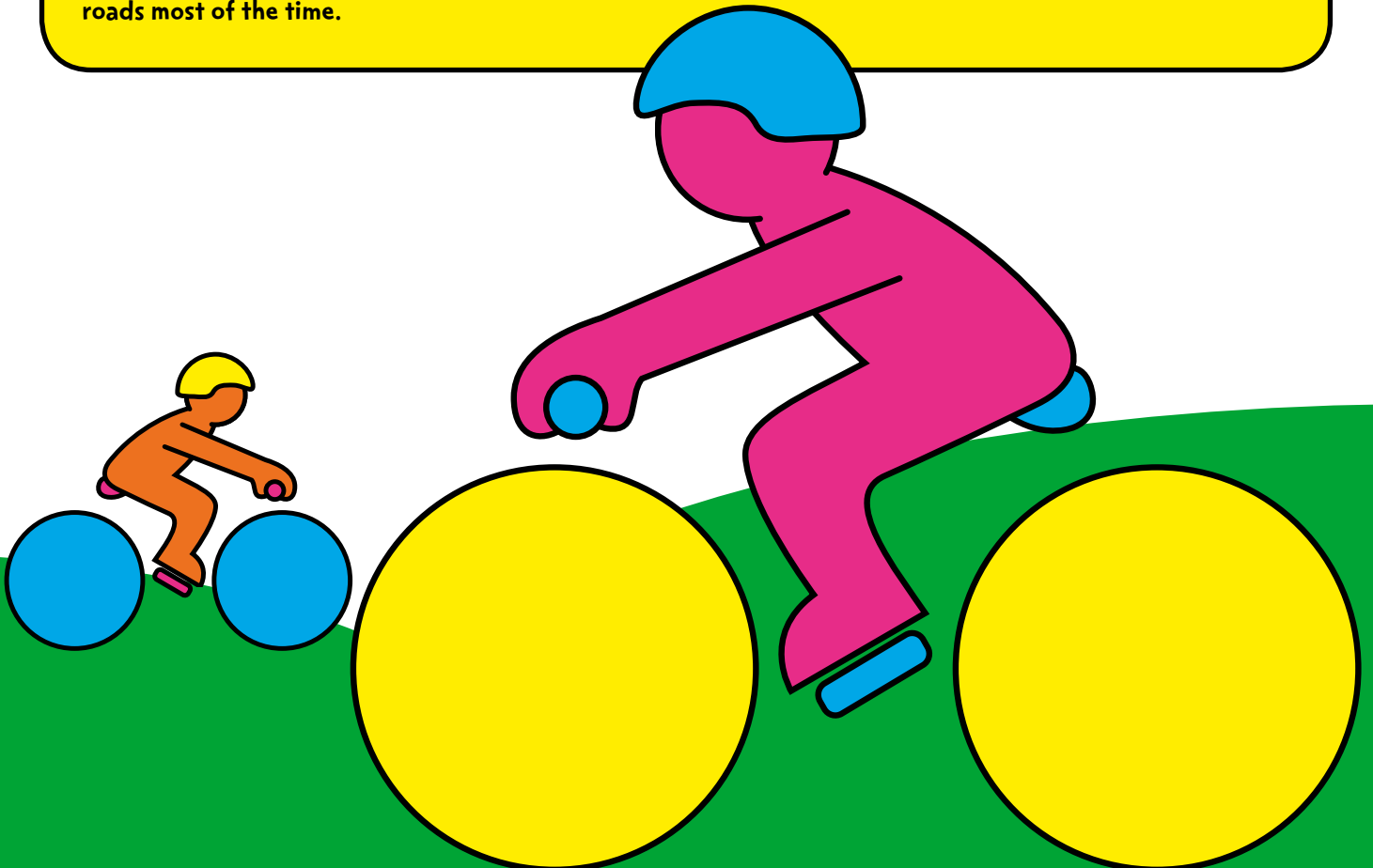
A cross between a road bike and a cross-country mountain bike, taking the most popular bits from both. It often has things like suspension in the seat and bigger wheels to make it very comfortable. A great bike for beginners and riders using tarmac roads most of the time.

## Racing Bike

A streamlined bike with very thin tyres and drop handlebars for fast riding on the road. It can be made of very light materials and have a saddle that's only really comfortable if you're wearing special cycling clothes. A bike that's best for experienced cyclists.

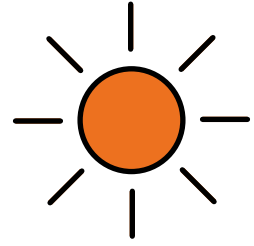
For further information on choosing a bike, see 'Get cycling: A guide to choosing and using your bike' by Sustrans ([www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)).

Or to find a specialist bike retailer near you, visit [www.thecyclingexperts.co.uk](http://www.thecyclingexperts.co.uk)



# bikes for kids

It's important to involve your child in buying their bike to make sure they get the best fit. Also, there are lots of makes and colours to choose from, but keep in mind kids are often dazzled by the latest gizmos and gadgets that they might not really need.



A good bike shop will give you advice so you get the right bikes for your family at the right price. Here are some things to look out for:

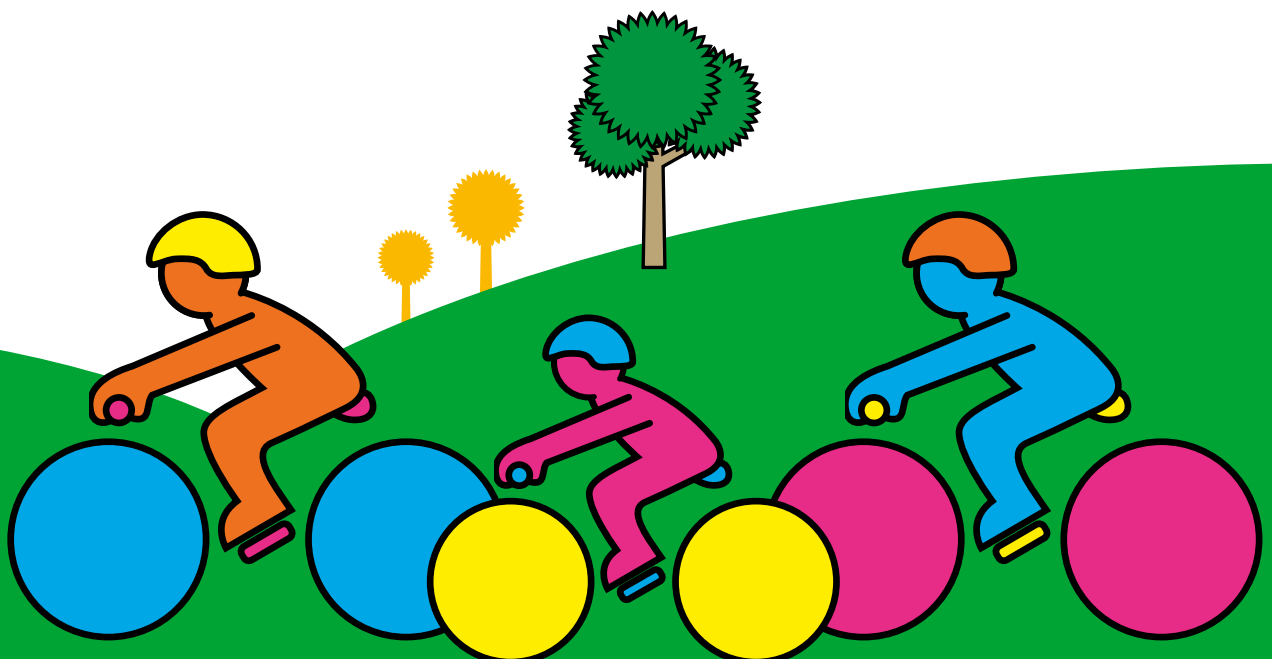
**Buying new:** If you are investing in a new bike, remember that a basic, quality bike will last until it's outgrown and can be passed on to younger brothers and sisters.

**Buying second-hand:** This can really save you money, but make sure it's in full working order and safe before you buy. Take a look at the 'Bikes on a budget' section on the next page for tips on where to buy a second-hand bike.

**Make it safe:** If you buy second-hand from a bike shop, they should service it for you as part of the cost. Most bike shops will service second-hand bikes bought elsewhere but prices do vary, so make sure you shop around.

**Make it fit:** Make sure the bike frame is the right size and then adjust the seat height and handlebars to fit. Check they can stand with one leg each side of the crossbar and have both feet flat on the ground. When seated, they should be able to put the ball of one foot on the ground.

**Simplicity:** A beginner won't need a bike with lots of gears – save this for when they are confident riders. And remember that additions such as extra suspension can make the bike more expensive – it's far better to buy a simpler bike with good quality parts that will last.



# bikes on a budget

Here are some places to check out to find a good second-hand bike.

Remember, wherever you buy a bike, check it's in full working order and safe to use before you hand over any money.

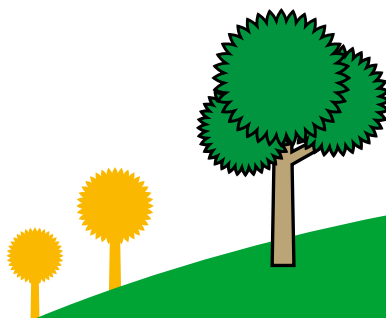
- Online auction sites (but make sure you can see and try the bike before you pay for it)
- Newsagent and supermarket noticeboards
- Bike shops selling second-hand bikes
- Local papers
- Recycling schemes. These have a real mix of bikes in various conditions. You could find a real bargain, or even get one free! To find out more about schemes in your area, visit [www.bikerecycling.net](http://www.bikerecycling.net)

The Government-supported Cyclescheme offers discounts for employees buying a bike to use to cycle to work through a salary sacrifice system. You can save up to 40% on the retail price of a bike – see [www.cyclescheme.co.uk](http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk) for further information.

## Bikes for the disabled

There are lots of bikes available to both children and adults with disabilities. The two main providers of specialist bikes are Wheels for All and CTC. For more details visit [www.cycling.org.uk/wheels\\_for\\_all](http://www.cycling.org.uk/wheels_for_all) and [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)

CTC is the UK's National Cyclists' Organisation. Click [here](#) to visit their website for more information on finding help and advice near you, buying bikes, setting them up and looking after them.

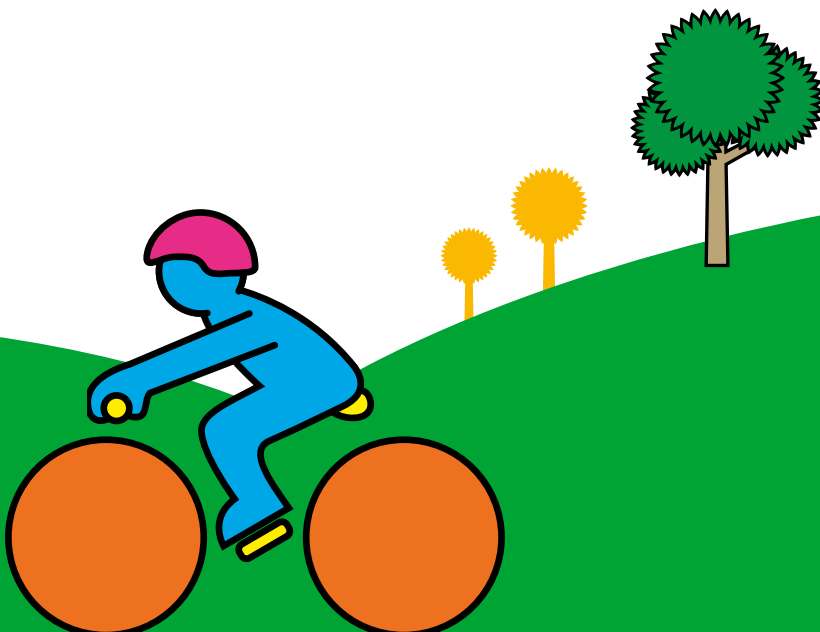
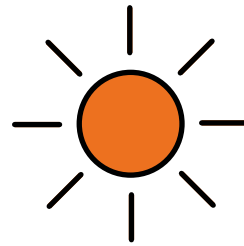


# getting set!

Bikes that are set up correctly will help you and your family ride safely and comfortably – and you'll enjoy cycling more and go out more often!

Try these tips for adjusting your bikes, or ask a bike shop to help you.

- For full-sized bikes, adjust the saddle so that when cycling, your leg is just slightly bent when the pedal is at its lowest point.
- For smaller bikes, remember young kids need to be able to get both feet flat on the floor when standing astride the bike, and the ball of one foot on the ground when they are seated.
- Raise or lower the handlebars (they're usually at their lowest setting in the shop) so that they are about the same height as the saddle. For younger riders, set them a bit higher. When raising them make sure at least 5cm of post is still in the frame.
- If you have very young riders in your family, check if you can angle the handlebars towards them so they don't have to reach so far. As they grow you can start angling them back again.
- **Make sure all adjustments are securely tightened.**



# looking after your bike

Simple things like keeping the tyres properly inflated, checking the brakes and oiling the chain are easy to do and will help keep your bike in good working order.

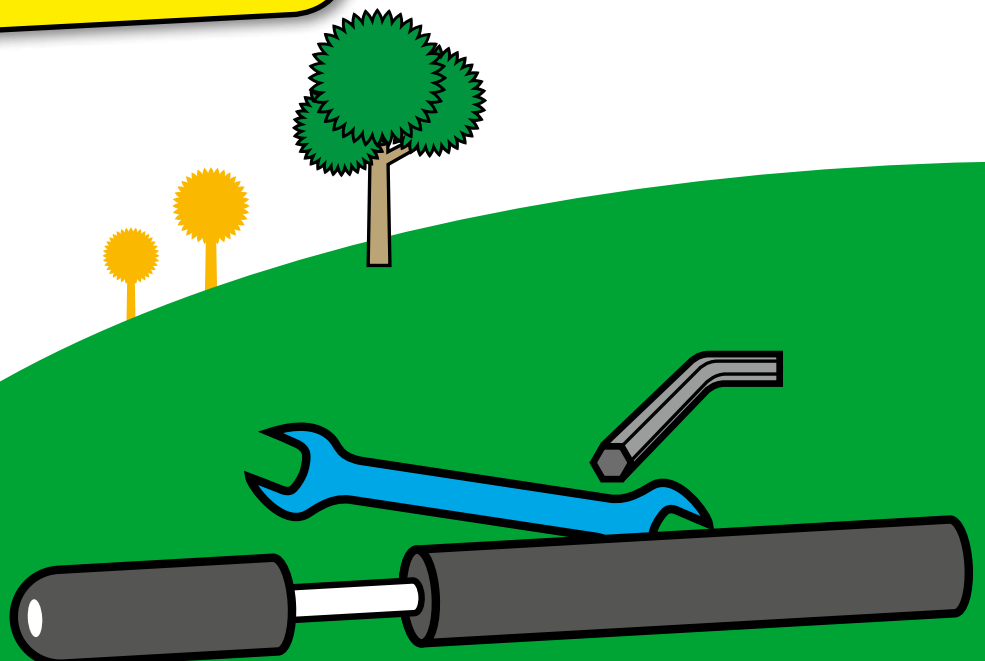
Here are our top tips to keep you safe and help your bike last longer:

- Keep your tyres pumped up, especially before longer journeys. Buy a foot pump if you are cycling as a family regularly, but remember to take a hand pump with you on all journeys.
- Make sure all the wheel nuts are tight and that the brakes are working. The brake lever should not be able to touch the handlebars. If in doubt, don't ride the bike and take it to your local repair shop.
- Make sure that the handlebars can't turn when you stand with the front wheel locked between your legs.
- If the bike has gears, check each one to make sure they work.
- Keep a small emergency toolkit, including spanners, tyre levers, Allen keys and a puncture repair kit so you can do basic repairs to your bike.
- When you wash your bike, don't use a high-pressure jet on parts like the pedals or where the handlebars join the bike as water can get in and cause damage.
- Dry the chain carefully after you've washed your bike or after it has been out in the rain to stop it from rusting. An old cloth or some kitchen towel is good for this.

Get into the habit of doing these simple things regularly. Listen to your bikes too – as you and your family ride more and more, you'll get used to how they feel and will know when something doesn't feel or sound right.

**Tyre levers** are small tools that attach to the spokes of your wheel and help ease the tyre away from your wheel rim. They are really helpful if you have a puncture.

**Allen keys** are tools used to turn screws and bolts that have a hexagonal hole in them. They are very handy for maintaining bicycles.



# how to mend a puncture

1. Remove the wheel from the bike. If your bike does not have a quick-release system you may need to use an Allen key or spanner.
2. Starting opposite the valve (the little nozzle with a cap), push the side of the tyre away from the wheel rim and insert the flat end of a tyre lever.
3. Push down on the lever until the tyre pops off the rim. Continue around the wheel until that side of the tyre is completely off the wheel.
4. Take out the inner tube, taking care not to damage the valve.
5. Find the puncture by pumping air into the inner tube and listening for escaping air. If you are at home, put it into a bucket of water and watch for bubbles.
6. Follow the instructions in your puncture repair kit to mend the puncture by using a patch and glue.
7. Check inside the tyre for any sharp objects that may have caused the puncture and remove them if needed.
8. Put a small amount of air into the repaired inner tube and, starting where the hole in the wheel is for the valve, feed the tube back inside the tyre.
9. Once the inner tube is in all the way around, push the valve back through the hole and then lever the tyre back onto the wheel, being careful not to pinch the tube between the tyre and the wheel.
10. Inflate the tube, checking that the valve stays at right angles to the wheel.

For more in-depth help with looking after your bike and fixing minor problems, visit the CTC website [here](#).

Cut out and keep

