

CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide



Left: Alamy

Most of those infected by Covid-19 will regain their usual fitness, given time

Q & A

Health

Cycling after Covid-19

Q I recently had the Covid-19 virus infection. I still feel very tired when I cycle. Will I recover completely?

Shaun East

A The recent coronavirus outbreak was a new and unknown infection. Information is still being gathered about its long-term impact on the body. Most people affected had a mild illness similar to the common cold, and will have no long-term effects. Others had a more severe flu-like illness, leaving them weak, with a low mood and energy, and possibly breathless on exertion.

The extreme end of the spectrum involved severe pneumonia and multi-organ shutdown, which may have resulted in a long stay in ITU on a ventilator, causing muscle weakness and heart or lung damage as well as psychological trauma.

The good news is that, as ever, cycling is going to help everybody trying to regain fitness and good humour.

Gentle exercise for short periods, within the limits of muscle strength and breathing effort, will help with recovery. Gradual increased effort will be rewarded with improvement, and

Your Experts



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for most their normal fitness will return with time. Only a few will have permanent damage. Even they will benefit from graded exercise under the supervision of their rehabilitation physio team. Cycling is good for you!

Dr Kate Hattersley



A coaster brake, as on this Nexus Inter-8 hub, is legal as one of your two brakes

Technical

Back-pedal braking

Q I'd like to buy a bike for my sister. She has problems with her hands caused by carpal tunnel syndrome, which means she finds it difficult to pull the brakes on a bike. I thought a coaster brake might suit, but I read these are illegal in the UK. Can you recommend a suitable braking system?

Simon Ash

A The law says a bicycle used on UK roads must have an efficient braking apparatus working independently on each wheel. A coaster brake qualifies; in fact, vigorously applied, a coaster brake can easily lock the rear wheel.

Some Dutch roadsters are sold with a rear coaster brake only, and are thus illegal for use in the UK. Provided your sister has a working brake acting on the front wheel, she is free to do most or all of her braking using a coaster brake at the back, and for gentle riding on flattish roads this should be sufficient.

Coaster brake hubs with single or multiple internal gearing are available from Sturmey Archer and Shimano, perhaps the most impressive of them being the latter's 8-speed Nexus Inter-8 model.

Richard Hallett

Coronavirus

For cyclists' advice regarding the Covid-19 outbreak, visit: cyclinguk.org/coronavirus



Right: Adrian Willis

Legal

Cycle path liability

Q The otherwise excellent cycle path network in West Cumbria is too narrow in places for two bikes to pass without the risk of collision. I had a near miss with a racing cyclist approaching downhill at 20-30mph. What is the potential for liability had we crashed? Would Cycling UK insurance cover liability?

Peter Nicholson

A The primary focus of the Court would be on the reasonableness of the conduct of both cyclists in the lead up to the accident. The Court would ask itself what a reasonable person would have done in this situation, assuming average cycling ability, experience, and intelligence. This is an objective test; the personal experience of either party would not enter into the equation.

Where there is no 'speed limit' for cyclists on a cycle path, the Court will seek to determine whether the downhill cyclist's speed was excessive, negligent, and possibly reckless. Section 62 of the Highway Code states that cyclists must be prepared to slow down and even stop where necessary on cycle tracks. A cyclist riding at 30mph who failed or was unable to slow down, stop, or manoeuvre away from a collision would likely be seen by the Court as travelling too fast, negligently or recklessly, and would be found in contravention of section 62 of the Highway Code.

Determination of liability, however, is rarely clear cut. If both parties were occupying the middle of a cycle path that was intended for two-way traffic, some lesser proportion of blame might be apportioned to the rider travelling uphill if they failed to at least move over in time.

If you do have the misfortune of being involved in a cycling collision, the good news is that, as a member, you are covered under Cycling UK insurance.

Richard Gaffney

Technical

11 into 9 won't go

Q I have fitted lower gears to my 27-speed tourer, using an 11-40 9-speed cassette and a Sunrace Rear Derailleur Extender. It works but I had to add a couple of chain links for the XT rear derailleur to cope with the 48/40 ratio. The rear shifting has now lost precision. Can I substitute a longer caged 11-speed derailleur?

Steve Brown

A A modern 11-speed – or Shimano Shadow 10-speed – derailleur won't work with your 9-speed shifters and cassette. My suggestion is that you forget about using the large-large 48 front/40 rear combination, which forces the chain to run at a sharp angle with consequent losses in lifespan and efficiency. Then shorten the chain by the two links you added, which should restore some of the lost precision.

Richard Hallett



A 10-speed XT derailleur won't work with a 9-speed STI shifter – although the converse does

Technical

Broken spokes

Q Last year I toured 1,200 miles to Tuscany in Italy using a Dawes Super Galaxy, which I bought especially for the trip. The bike performed really well overall.

However, I had an issue with broken spokes, getting through seven in total during the trip. All breakages were in the rear wheel and on the drive side. The wheels are 36-spoke Alex Draw 1.7P double-wall alloy. I weigh 90kg and the bike fully loaded was about 40kg.

I am undertaking a similar ride this year via Spain. How can I minimise the spoke breakages? Should I have the wheel rebuilt using double butted spokes? Or stick with the 14g spokes that are currently in use?

Mark Duce

A Without inspection, it's impossible to say exactly why your wheel keeps breaking spokes although, as a rule when one breaks others on the same side, which are all in the same condition and have experienced the same usage cycle, will often follow. For this reason, one option would be to get the wheel professionally rebuilt. If so, double-butted spokes should prove more durable than plain gauge.

Richard Hallett



With patience and the right tools (see page 26), DIY wheel rebuilding is quite feasible

Get in touch

EMAIL your technical, health, or legal questions to cycle@jamespembroke.com or write to Cyclopeda, Cycle, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ. We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished queries. But don't forget that Cycling UK operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, **TEL: 0844 736 8452**.