



Bike Commuting Tips

If you're new to bike commuting, following are some helpful tips and links.

Use bike maps to plan your route ahead of time. You rarely take the same route you would in a car, and there's often a quieter or more scenic option on paths or through neighborhoods. Scottsdale's online [interactive map of public amenities](#) includes citywide bikeways, unpaved trails and path crossings like tunnels and bridges. To view these features, zoom into an area, and select the legend symbol at the left. Another good resource is the Maricopa Association of Governments' [online MAG Bikeways Map](#). Along with types of lanes, paths and crossings, it also shows bike shops and intersections with public transportation across the Valley. Another tool is the bike icon in Google Maps, which allows you to view lane and path options.

Try a practice run. Before you must bike on a schedule, try out your planned route. You'll have a chance to fine tune any tricky parts without the pressure of having to get to work on time. It will also give you a better idea of how long the ride will take.

Check out your bike's ABCs a few days before you try the full commute:

- Air: Make sure your tires aren't losing air.
- Brakes: Make sure they're working properly.
- Chain: Make sure your chain is moving and shifting smoothly. Before you ride, make sure that nothing is hanging off you that could get caught in your bike chain (like long shoe laces).

Find out if your office provides any support for bike commuters. Many offices have showers, for example. Some also have bike storage.

Put together a biking essentials kit. At a minimum you should bring the following items:

- Water
- Helmet
- Band aids
- Wet wipes
- Bike lock

Additional items to consider:

- Bike lights--If there's any chance you will be biking in the dark, you will also need a front light and a red rear reflector or light, which are required by law. Bike shops will have the most selection, but you can also pick up the minimum lights you need for less than \$10 at hardware stores, discount department stores like Target or Walmart and sporting goods stores.
- Toiletries kit and change of clothes--Consider bringing these items in earlier in the week so you have less to carry.
- Bike tube and pump--If you know how to change a bike tire, it's a good idea to bring an extra tube and a pump.
- Snack (especially if this will be more exercise than usual)
- First-aid kit
- Benadryl (for possible insect bites)
- Sunscreen

Consider finding a bike buddy. Depending on the size of your office, you might be able to find a co-worker who bikes from the same part of town you'll be coming from. If you can't find anyone at your office, you may be able to find a biking partner through Valley Metro's [Share the Ride Program](#).

If you don't ride with a buddy, let someone else know you're biking. Make sure a friend or co-worker knows you're commuting by bike and when they should expect to either see you or hear from you.

Make sure your cellphone is charged and you have a backup plan. Just as you would with a car, make sure you have a backup plan in case of bike problems or an emergency. It's a good idea to bring a bus card or money for a cab or have a ride service you can contact. Some companies provide cab reimbursement for emergencies as part of a [trip reduction program](#) (required of Maricopa County employers with 50 or more employees at a site). Check with your employer to see if they participate and what they offer.

Get out of the all-or-nothing mentality. If you don't want to bike 20 miles or 15 miles or even 5 miles, you don't have to. You can participate in Bike to Work Day any way you want. Maybe that means driving to a [Park and Ride](#) and then biking to work from there. Combining your bike ride with public transportation is another option.

Be a good partner on paths and roads. When you come up behind pedestrians on the multiuse paths, about 50 feet out, let them know you're approaching. As you get closer, let them know which side you're passing them on. Be sure to speak loud enough to be heard over headphones, babies and barks. On the road, signal what moves you intend to make, and bike within bike lanes wherever possible. Below are links with more helpful biking etiquette information.

Additional helpful links:

[Scottsdale Paths & Trails](#): Information on biking in Scottsdale

[MAG Bikeways map](#): An online, detailed biking map for Maricopa County

[Valley Metro Bike Page](#): Information for combining biking with public transit

[Valley Metro Valley Bike Month Page](#): Contests and Valley-wide events for Valley Bike Month (April)

[Arizona Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#): Information on biking etiquette and safety