

How to ride in snow

When riding too fast on hard-packed snow or ice, don't apply your front brake—you might skid out. Instead, turn into softer snow (that you might find on either side of a tire rut) to slow down.

Snow's not an excuse to stay off your bike. Within a day of a major snowfall, crews usually clear most major streets. Walk your bike to one and get going.

With piles of snow on the right, ride in the middle of the right lane. If in light traffic motorists give you the horn, shake your head firmly and keep going. In heavy traffic, pull over and let cars pass.

In freezing weather, slush can freeze your derailleurs so you can't shift gears, freeze your brakes so you can't stop, and clog clip-in pedals. After riding through freezing slush:

(1) Before you park your bike outside, bounce the bike a couple of times. Also tap the derailleurs (and clip-in pedals if you have 'em) with your foot. This shakes off slush. (2) If you park your bike indoors, don't take it outside again unless it's dried off completely. If slush gets in your lock, spray inside it with WD-40 before taking it outside.

In extreme cold, wiggle your fingers often to keep blood circulating. If your toes freeze, get off your bike and run with it.

Loose snow can hide ice on the pavement, so don't ride on it.

Mr. Bike sez: Want more tips on bicycling in bad weather? Find 'em in my book *Urban Bikers' Tricks & Tips*. Ask for it at bookstores and bike shops, call 800/888-4741, or go on-line to www.mrbike.com.