

Choosing a bike

YOUR BIKE COULD BE NEW,
SECOND HAND OR DUSTED OFF
FROM THE BACK OF YOUR SHED.



Types of bikes

You need to consider:

- how often you will ride
- the terrain (on-road, off-road, hilly or flat)
- how far you will be riding
- the type of trips e.g. commuting, shopping, recreational
- additional needs e.g. carrying bags, lights for night riding.

A bike shop can be very helpful in finding the right solution for your needs and budget. Not only can they sell you a new bike, they can help make sure an old or second-hand bike is fully roadworthy.

Try before you buy

If you're unsure which bike is right for you, why not borrow one for a trial run? Ask a friend or family member, or hire a free bike from City Bikes, at a number of Adelaide city locations. For details visit www.bikesa.asn.au/AdelaideCityBikes

The following descriptions cover most bikes that are available and will help you to decide what is best for you.

Road bikes

Road bikes are generally light and provide good handling. Their narrow tyres are suited for road use and are great if you're looking for a fast ride. The dropped handlebars allow multiple hand positions and the large range of gears is useful for commuting to work, racing or touring.



Flat bar road bikes

These bikes are predominantly for commuting. They comprise road bike frame and thin wheels and mixing mountain bike gearing and flat handle bars for versatility and a comfortable riding position.



City, comfort or Copenhagen style bikes

This broad style of bike often comes fitted with accessories, such as pannier racks, great for trips to the local shops. They have durable components such as internal hubs and may have fewer gears than other styles.



Mountain bikes

Mountain bikes are generally versatile enough to be used both on – and off – road. They have a large range of gears and flat handle bars, making them a comfortable, easy ride. Their design incorporates front and sometimes rear suspension to tackle rough paths, and wide tyres with knobby tread to maintain grip. This means more exertion is needed to achieve speed on-road, although fitting 'slicks' (smoother tyres) can help.



Hybrid bikes

Hybrid bikes combine components of road and mountain bikes to make them suitable for both urban street riding and moderate off-road riding. They feature limited suspension and an upright riding position with flat handlebars, to make riding comfortable and allow the rider to easily see, and be seen, in traffic. For commuting or shopping trips consider adding accessories such as racks, panniers and mudguards. The smooth tyres allow for more speed than a mountain bike but are not as thin as on a road bike.



Fold up bikes

Lightweight folding bikes are portable and easy to use and store. For short trips and combined journeys, these multi-purpose bikes can be put in the car boot or taken on some public transport. The fold-and-carry nature is also great if you have little space at home for storage or you're unsure if your destination has secure bike parking. These bikes feature a small number of gears to assist with city riding and have a low, step-through frame for easy dismounting.



Power assisted pedal bikes

More people are choosing modern power assisted bikes as a commuting option. A small attached motor can be used when necessary, meaning you could ride uphill to work without breaking into a sweat. Most feature a quiet electric motor powered by a rechargeable battery, which makes them heavier than a standard bike. South Australian law requires the motor to generate a power output 200 watts or less. Specialist bike shops can help you with more information.



Downhill, BMX, trick bikes and cruiser bikes

These are not ideal for commuting, cruiser and trick bikes having limited gearing and low seat position. BMXs have particularly small wheels, making long trips uncomfortable. Designed for extreme off-road conditions, downhill mountain bikes are often heavy, have a limited number of gears and very knobbly tyres.

Single speed bikes

These bikes have become an increasingly popular choice in Adelaide. They are simple to use and maintain and are suited to our relatively flat terrain. Low-tech clean lines and often retro styling make the single speed bike a statement in style.



Finding the right fit

The comfort, handling and efficiency of your bike all rely on the right fit. Bike frames come in different sizes, while seats and handlebars can be changed or adjusted to suit your body.

If you are buying a bike for a child, the appropriate size is important for safety and enjoyment. Oversized bikes are difficult to handle and dangerous, so don't buy a bike for a child to 'grow into'.

Bike stores offer expert advice on the right size and setup for you. Bikes are sized either in a number scale (inches or centimetres or in categories e.g. small, medium or large). If you find riding causes physical discomfort, seek assistance in adjusting your bike.

To test the fit yourself start by straddling the bike with your feet flat on the ground. If you can't easily reach the ground, it's too big. You should also consider the length of the frame. This affects how far you have to reach for the handlebars.



Seat height

Adjust the seat so that your leg is just less than fully extended at the bottom of the pedal stroke. This prevents you tilting your hips to reach the pedals.



Handlebar height

This depends on the type of riding and personal preference. Lower handlebars put you in a more crouched position for high speed riding. Higher handlebars put you in a more straight backed position, providing greater comfort and helping you easily see, and be seen, in traffic. Handlebars are often adjustable and should be set so arms are slightly bent and your body leans forward.

Dusting off your old bike

Do you have an old bike gathering dust somewhere?

It could be suitable for your needs. Here's what you should consider.

Is it suitable for the type of riding you wish to do?

Refer to the previous subsection, **Types of bikes**.

Is it roadworthy?

Check tyres and inner tubes for punctures and deterioration. Check brakes, gears and chain for corrosion, ease of movement and correct tension.

Your bike will likely require cleaning and lubrication as a minimum. The **Maintaining your bike** section has more information, plus a quick safety check and basic repair instructions, such as replacing a tube or tyre.

If you're not confident that the bike is suitable and roadworthy, take it to a bike store for advice. Most will provide a free appraisal and quote for any necessary repairs. This will help you decide whether to use your old bike or look for another.





Buying a new bike

Bikes have advanced considerably in recent years. As a form of reliable transport they represent excellent value for money. Many affordable new bikes include improvements such as lighter weight components, smooth gears, suspension and disc brakes.

A bike store can supply accessories as well as provide maintenance and servicing. There are local bike stores throughout South Australia and most offer a complimentary first service several months after the bike purchase. Buying a bike online is another option and might save you money. However, consider that you may have to assemble all or part of it yourself, and you won't have the chance to test it first for comfort and fit.

Buying second hand

Used bikes are available from a range of sources including online bike retailers, classifieds and online auction sites, as well as some bike stores. You might find a bargain, but remember it's only a good deal if it meets some important criteria.

Is the bike suitable for your needs? Is it the right size? (See ***Finding the right fit***). Is it roadworthy? Check for a bent, dented or cracked frame or forks, with particular focus on the joins or welds. Although many of the components can be replaced, look for rust, wear or distortion.

It can be more expensive to fix an old bike than to buy a new one. A bike shop may be able to give you an indication of cost on repairs and replacement parts.

