

FFBC Cinderella Training Rides - FAQs

When to See Your Doctor If you're beginning an exercise program, you'll need a check up from your doctor if:

- You've been diagnosed with heart problems, high blood pressure or other medical conditions
- You've been sedentary for over a year
- If you're over 55 and do not currently exercise
- You're pregnant
- You have diabetes
- You have chest pain, or experience dizziness or fainting spells
- You're recovering from an injury or illness

Obviously, if you have a diagnosed condition or illness, you always want to talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

Do we ride if it rains? Yes, we prefer to ride, and decisions are made based on overall safety and road conditions of the planned route, and current skill level of the riders – we may alter the route to shorten it or avoid places that are treacherous when wet. When it **is** pouring, we usually make a group decision as to whether to ride or not. If we decide not to ride, we usually have some sort of seminar: tire changing, brake adjustments, bike fit, etc.

Do I need to buy a new bike to participate in the Cinderella training rides? Here's the rule: a bike is a bike – you **can** ride anything that's safe and maintainable on the road. So what does "safe" mean? "Safe" means that you took it to a reputable bike shop before you came to the Cinderella rides and had their staff inspect it and repair any deficiencies. **And what does "maintainable" mean?** "Maintainable" means that most things that go wrong with the bike can be repaired with a set of allen wrenches. This eliminates department store bikes that don't have quick release wheels (if you need a pair of pliers to remove your wheels, then they **are not** quick release). The issue here is that you're riding with a group. If your bike breaks, the group has to figure out how to repair it and/or how to get you home safely. After 10 years of running these rides, we've finally decided it's unfair to the rest of the group to allow one rider to bring the group to a halt. **And WE DON'T CARE IF YOU CAN CALL SOMEONE TO COME AND GET YOU.** And we **WON'T JUST LEAVE YOU.** Neither of those options are things that the Cinderella ethic allows. And the ethic also asks each rider to think of what's best for the group – so ride a bike that won't slow the group down.

Do I have to have a road bike? Can I ride my mountain bike? No, you don't have to have a road bike and of course you can ride your mountain bike – I ride one for the first several rides when it's likely to be wet. That said, I put slick, high-pressure tires on my wheels for this. I do this because the slick tires weigh about 25% less than knobby mountain bike tires. Think about it: when you're riding on the flats, the bike frame is supporting your body weight – the only things you're moving are your own legs and the wheels and tires, so even a small weight decrease in the wheels and tires helps a lot. Also,

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the knobbies don't roll as smoothly, so they have higher rolling resistance and they aren't as comfortable to ride. **A final reason:** the easier it is to ride, the further you can ride and the faster you can go. Some women say "Well, I do it for the exercise anyhow, so the harder it is, the better it is for me." We promise, there are plenty of ways to make your rides more challenging! Unlike knobby tires, most of them are things you can choose to add any time, during any ride. If you start to feel like you want more of a challenge, ask your ride leaders or other experienced cyclists for suggestions.

On the topic of mountain vs road bikes: If you really want to go as fast as you can, get a road bike. At about 13 mph, wind resistance becomes by far most significant factor in limiting speed and road bikes themselves are more aerodynamic than mountain bikes and they offer the rider more aerodynamic positions to ride in. If you ride a lot on the road, road bikes are far more efficient than mountain bikes.

How do I choose a new bike? Go to a bike shop with a lot of women customers – they tend to stock things (clothing as well as bikes) in women's sizes and with gear ranges that are set up for endurance riding, not racing. The Bicycle Garage in Fremont is such a shop and they usually offer Cinderella participants a discount on new bikes.

What should I carry on my bike? First, get a seat pack for your bike – that's one of the little packs that goes under the seat, attached to the seat tube. That way you don't have to remember all your bike stuff, it's always there. The following is a list of what I carry on my bike. If an item is asterisked, you can buy it at the bike shop, the other stuff you have bring from home:

1. *A spare tube
2. *Tire levers – these are little plastic levers used to remove the tire from a wheel in order to change the tube.
3. *Patch kit – I carry patches as well as a tube so that I can survive two flats on one ride. Also, in a situation like the Cinderella rides where we are riding in groups, if someone flats, while one person is putting in the new tube, someone else can be patching the bad tube, so you're ready to go if you flat again.
4. Pencil
5. Business cards – a piece of paper is frequently nice to have. You and a friend are planning a ride at the coffee stop; you want to write down the details. You run into an old friend and want to give him/her contact info. Etc. Business cards are nice for this because they are a bit more rugged than a plain sheet of paper and stand up better in your seat pack.
6. Duct tape – useful for minor repairs. Wrap a couple of feet of duct tape around the pencil.
7. \$20 bill – it's always good to have emergency money. Also, if glass or something slashes your tire, it can be used as a tire boot.

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8. *Multi-tool – a tool with allen wrenches, flat and Phillips screwdrivers and other bike-oriented tools.
9. Ibuprofen and some band aids – put them in a baggy and they'll survive
10. Zip ties

I've just gotten out of the hospital from quadruple bypass surgery – is it okay to ride? This question is, unfortunately, not a joke. Several women have ridden with us while in the middle of fairly severe health crises. Before you do this, please consider the effect on the group you are riding with. Suppose you get sick while on a ride – who's qualified to help you? I'm a good ride leader, but I can't do anything about a serious medical problem. What about the other women you're riding with? Should they have the responsibility of taking care of you? I think that the Cinderella participants are as supportive a group as you are going to find – but they should be concentrating on their own riding, not the state of your health. **If you have chronic health problems or have not yet recovered from a serious episode, DON'T PARTICIPATE.**

May I a friend or partner along? / May I bring my child along? Only registered students and ride leaders 18 years and older will be allowed on the training rides. Other current FFBC members may serve as volunteer assistants on an occasional ride if approved by the "Queen" ride leader. Please leave the rest of the family at home.