

Winter Bicycle Clothing

If you are on a budget and can only buy one or two items: the first thing to purchase is a good pair of bicycle shorts. Those are the thigh length shorts with a pad in the crotch area. Purchase either women's shorts or unisex. The seams are in different places in men and women's bike shorts and the men's shorts rub in a very sensitive area on a women's anatomy. Try them on! All bike shorts do not fit the same, they will all feel a bit uncomfortable because of the pad, purchase the pair that feels the best. The second thing to purchase is a good pair of bicycling gloves. The idea is to pad the places your body comes in contact with the bicycle, and your hands and bum are the two main points of contact.

That said the secret of winter cycling is layering. Wear layers and you can put them on or take them off as the weather changes.

Head, always wear a helmet. If you ride your bike a lot sooner or later you are going to fall and a helmet protects your head! There are headbands and Balaclavas made to go under your helmet that cover the ears and keep you more comfortable on cold days.

Upper torso - Cotton T-shirts are a bad idea, when you get hot and perspire they get wet and hold the moisture. This makes you cold, not very comfortable on a cold day. The best is a cycling jersey, most of them are made out of the new synthetic materials or wool, which wick the moisture away from your body. A cycling jersey has pockets in the back, which are great for stuffing clothes in, as it gets warmer. Arm warmers are detachable sleeves that go as high as short sleeves and have elastic grippers on the top to keep them in place. They can be removed when the weather warms up during a ride. A wool sweater would also work. Next, a windbreaker or jacket goes over the jersey, which can be put on or removed as the weather changes. During winter in the bay area a jacket or windbreaker that is water resistance/proof is a bonus.

Hands – the gloves mentioned above. For colder days you can purchase a pair of glove liners, thin gloves that go under your cycling gloves and can be removed when it gets warmer. Heavy cycling gloves are also available, but you have to wear them the entire ride.

Lower torso & legs – Bicycling shorts! For colder days leg warmers are a good option. These cover your legs up to the shorts and have elastic grips to keep them in place. When it gets warm off they come! Tights that you wear to the gym also work, just put them on over your cycling shorts. The down side of tights is there are two layers of fabric in the crotch area and if you are heat sensitive this may be too hot when the weather or you warm up. The last option is padded bicycle tights, they are pricey and the legs don't come off, but they only have one layer of fabric in the crotch area. But, they are great when you know it's going to be cold the entire ride. If you really get into cycling you may have both leg warmers and padded tights wear the one appropriate for the weather forecast.