

# ALL ABOARD! CYCLING WHILE PREGNANT



First of all, yes! **You can cycle during your pregnancy!** Just be sure to **adjust your expectations.** Those pregnancy hormones are probably leaving you feeling exhausted 24/7. Give yourself an extra 10 minutes if you're commuting, walk up the hills if it feels easier, and stick to gentle routes with less traffic if you feel more comfortable.

## Why?

- Cycling is a **safe, low impact form of exercise.** As your joints get looser and your body gets heavier, cycling can be a great way to continue to exercise at a low or moderate intensity. Sitting on a bike seat even helps to keep your pelvis supported as your ligaments start to stretch and loosen.
- Exercise can **improve your mood, increase your energy levels, and may even help to reduce nausea.** Being fit can even help you cope with labour and lead to a quicker recovery after delivery. Of course, if you have any complications with your pregnancy, speak to your doctor or midwife to make sure that the exercise you're planning is safe for you and your baby.
- As pregnancy progresses, even a short walk can be daunting. **Travelling the same distance by bike is often quicker and easier and doesn't put any extra strain on those swollen feet.**

## How?

- **Raise your handlebars or choose a bike with a more upright position.** As you enter your second trimester, your knees might start to bump your belly if you're leaning forward! Adjusting your position can make the ride much more comfortable and reduce back pain later in your pregnancy. **Bikes with step-through frames** are also more likely to help you stay upright on the bike.



## How?

- **Pay attention to your centre of gravity** as your pregnancy progresses. If you're cycling regularly throughout your pregnancy, your growing belly shouldn't affect your balance too much. But if you start to feel top-heavy, play it safe – lower your seat so that you can put your feet flat on the ground. If you still feel wobbly, it may be time to park your bike until after delivery.
- **Bring a pannier or fill your basket with high energy snacks, water and even toilet paper!** Replace backpacks with panniers or baskets, and expect a need for frequent bathroom breaks along your rides!

## Resources to check out

- [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's \*Family Biking Guide\*](#), Chapter 1: Biking While Pregnant (provided in three languages)
- Elly Blue's *Everyday Bicycling: How to ride a bike for transportation (whatever your lifestyle)*, Chapter 5: Family Biking



## Some Great Routes in the CRD

- **Colquitz River Trail;** This trail travels mostly north-to-south through the Gorge, Carey and Royal Oak neighbourhoods, part of the Centennial Trail Network in Saanich. Calm yourself with a ride next to this meandering stream.
- **Panama Flats;** The trail in this park is generally slow and quiet. It's hard for people to go fast because it is mostly gravel, so you can enjoy a low-stress ride past marshland, meadows and orchards.
- **San Juan Greenway;** quiet, residential streets in the Gordon Head area, all in the shadow of Mt. Doug (PKOLS). You can also start or finish your ride at Township Coffee, just outside of Tyndall Park



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