

## 10 Smart Rules to Bike Safety

By Doug Jardine



In the last **Healthy You** column, the health benefits of bicycling were touted. All those benefits can be quickly negated however, by a bicycle accident that could injure or even result in the death of the rider. The following tips are from the city of Madison, Wisconsin's bikeMadison website with some embellishment.

1. **Protect Your Head.** Wear a good fitting helmet at all times.
2. **Stay Visible.** If drivers can see you, they are less likely to hit you. Use both head and tail lights when biking at night or in low-light conditions. Bright colored or reflective clothing can make you more visible as well.
3. **Look, Signal & Look Again.** Use hand signals to let drivers and other bicyclists know where you're going. Always make eye contact with a vehicle's driver. Never assume drivers will stop.
4. **Stay Alert.** Keep a lookout for obstacles in your path. Loose sand, gravel, mud, potholes, and large cracks in the concrete roads can all be serious hazards. Always cross railroad tracks at a 90-degree angle.
5. **Go with the Flow.** Bike in the direction of traffic. While pedestrians are encouraged to walk against traffic, the same is not true for bicyclists.
6. **Act like a Car.** Don't weave in and out of traffic. The more predictably you ride, the safer you are. Check for traffic and be aware of traffic around you. A mirror on your bike is always a good idea. When cars ahead of you are stopped for a light, don't pass them on the right.
7. **Don't Get Distracted.** Don't listen to music or talk on the phone while riding. It is important to be able to hear cars approaching from behind you.
8. **Obey all Traffic Laws & Lights.** Bicyclists can be ticketed for running stops signs, failing to yield and making illegal turns the same as a car driver can.
9. **Assure Bicycle Readiness.** Is your bicycle the right size for you and is it properly adjusted?
10. **Do a Quick Bicycle Test.** Check your brakes and your wheels. Make sure that "quick release" wheels are properly secured. Are your tires at the proper pressure?