

# Cycling Tips: Changing Gears



## Explaining the Gears:

- Our bikes are referred to as being 27 speeds or having 27 gears. You may also have seen the terminology 3x9, which refers to having 3 gears on the front and 9 gears on the rear.
- The front gears on a bicycle are controlled by the shifter on the left hand side.
- The back gears on a bicycle are controlled by the shifter on the right hand side.
- The right hand shifter provides small or incremental gear changes; this is the shifter that you will use most often.
- The left hand shifter provides large changes; generally the bike can be left in 2, with 1 for hills or tricky bits of ground and 3 for down hills or smooth roads, where you can get your speed up.
- Number 1 on the shifters always refers to the easiest gear, so if you are in 1 on the left shifter and 1 on the right shifter this is the lowest gear the bike can be in.
- Be aware that the shifter on the left operates the reverse to the shifter on the right.

## Tip 1 - Anticipate shifts:

- It is very difficult to change gears (and bad for your bike) when pushing the pedals very hard. So get in the habit of downshifting into an easier gear as you come to a stop or begin the approach to a big hill.
- If you do have to change on a hill a good thing to try and do is apply a good hard push to the pedals first, to gain a bit of momentum, and then change the gears while pedalling with the pressure off.

## Tip 2 - Don't try to shift when you are stopped:

- Bikes with traditional gearing are designed to be shifted when the pedals are moving, so don't try to shift when you are stopped.
- It's bad for the bike to shift when the pedals are not turning or under a lot of pressure, therefore try to anticipate your stops, generally shifting to an easier gear before you actually stop, so that you won't have to change while you're starting off again.

## Tip 3 - Avoid cross-chaining (Extreme chain angle):

- They are called 27 Speed bikes, but there are really only about 21 gears that they're happy to be in.
- When the left shifter is in position 2, the right hand shifter can be in any gear, but when the left shifter is on 1, the bike doesn't really like to be on 7, 8 or 9 on the right shifter, this is because the chain is on an awkward angle.
- Vice Versa when the left shifter is on 3, the bike doesn't really like to be on 1, 2 or 3 on the right shifter for the same reasons.
- It's hard on your chain and your sprockets to be at extreme angles and it may cause the gears to jump around and make a lot of noise.

