

- **Group riding is safe;** there are very few reported incidents of rider on rider accidents, especially if simple rules are followed. When it does happen, the most common cause is sudden stopping. If you need to stop for any reason, shout 'stopping' before you slow down. This also alerts the group if you have stopped due to a mechanical problem.
- **Learn the calls and signals for your group.** Everyone in the groups lets the others know of hazards, changes in riding pattern, and cars coming by.
- **Established groups develop their own calls and hand signals.** Pass messages through the group so that everyone follows suit, especially warnings from the rear. Only the front riders get a clear view of road defects, parked cars, trail hazards, etc. It is therefore vital that clear indications are given in plenty of time to those behind.
- **Always assist other group members if possible.** One of the purposes of group cycling is to learn more about the pastime. It is also the way a less experienced rider can be sure of some support if they have problems. Sharing your experiences means that cycling is

welcoming to all and knowledge about an area is passed on.

- **The group always reforms if it splits, for example on hills or at road junctions.** Groups easily get separated. For example everyone climbs hills at a different pace, and the whole of a group may not be able to cross a junction at once. It is usual to find a place to stop where the group can congregate away from traffic. On a hill it is usual to wait at the top.

(This is normal policy for group rides, but do check. Some sports cycling groups don't wait as they are training rides and some events are designated self led for which you should be given a route guide to find your way back).

"We expect leaders and riders to conduct themselves ethically and with integrity. Our relationships and activities are based on trust and respect, cooperation and companionship. We work together in a way that is supportive, constructive and participative. We expect all to strive for continuing growth, learning and development of individuals, groups and communities".

Member subscriptions and donations enable the CTC and the CTC Charitable Trust to carry out their work.



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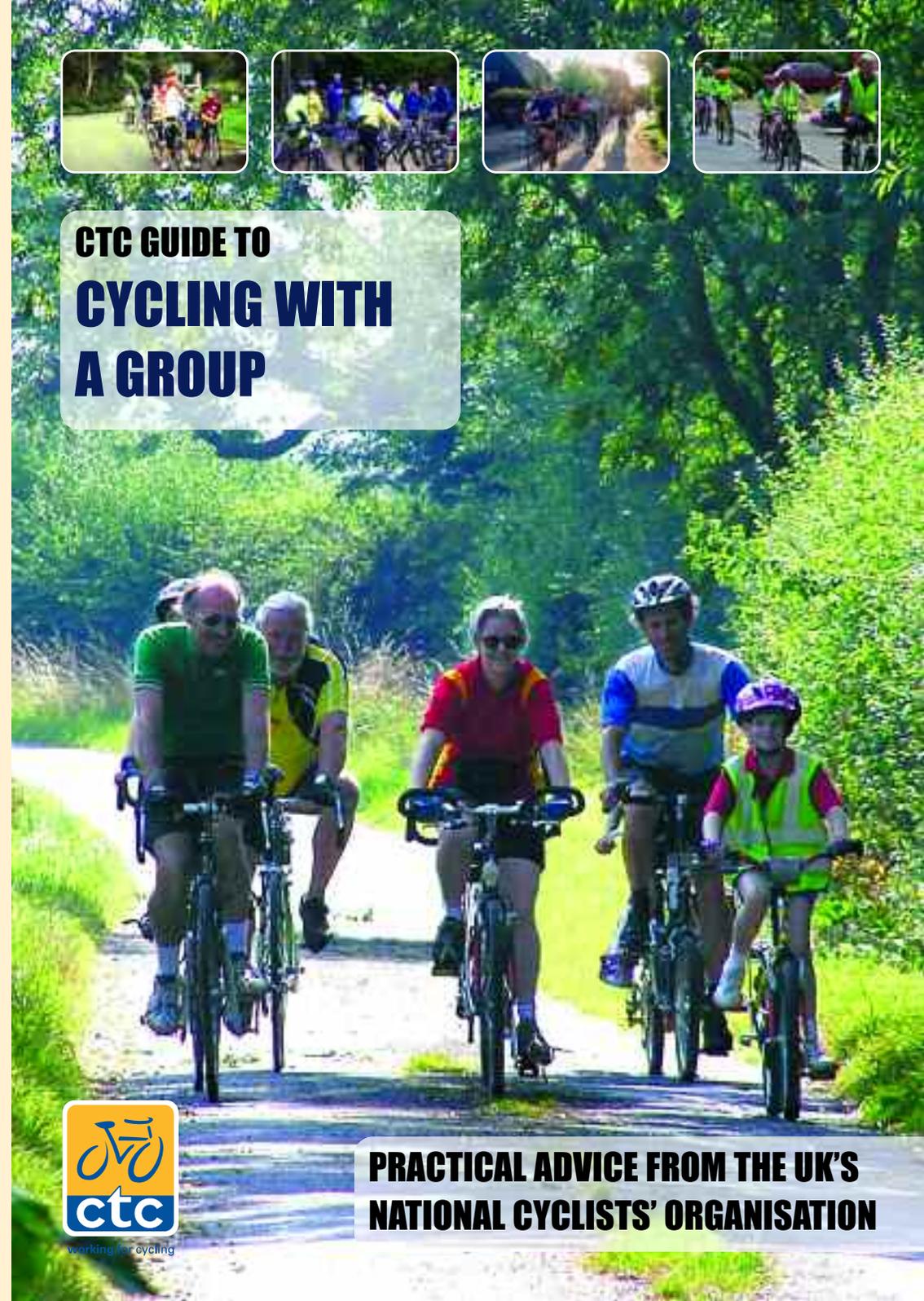


working for cycling

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## CTC GUIDE TO CYCLING WITH A GROUP



For more information on any of the above simply call

**0870 873 0060** Helpline

**0870 873 0061** Membership

email [cycling@ctc.org.uk](mailto:cycling@ctc.org.uk)

or visit [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)

Contact your local CTC group:

**PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM THE UK'S  
NATIONAL CYCLISTS' ORGANISATION**



working for cycling



## Introduction

Cycling in a group is a highly sociable pastime. It enables people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to come together, and it doesn't need to be competitive. Most of all, it's an excuse to meet like-minded people and share information about routes and experiences. Stops for refreshments or to enjoy a viewpoint make conversation easy. It's possible for all abilities to ride together and it's usually easy to join a group in your area.

This leaflet is for cyclists who would like to try cycling with a group for the first time. To the rider with some knowledge and experience, the information may seem straightforward, but remember that trying this type of cycling for the first time can be a little daunting.

## CTC is here to help

Our organisation was founded to bring cyclists together and, with more than 125 years experience, there is very little we don't know about cycling. Today we still offer a warm welcome to cyclists of all abilities. Visit [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk) or call our help lines for a more detailed guide to group cycling, and information on how to find or start your own local group.

## Finding a group

Look around for a group which suits your fitness level and style of riding.

Cycling with a group is one of the most enjoyable ways of exploring your area while getting healthy exercise. It can be done with family and friends or an organised group. But remember, all groups are different. Look around for one that suits your pace and diary. Give them a call before you go so you can discuss your interests, if there is not a match they may well know another suitable group.

Take a look at the CTC website, [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk) and follow links to local groups- we have hundreds! Or you can call our Help Desk if you prefer. You can also try your local library, ask at a local bike shop or search the web.

If you can't find a suitable group in your area, think about starting one, we can help.

## Getting ready to ride

1. You don't have to have a "good" bike when you start riding but make sure yours is roadworthy; as your breakdown could spoil the day for others. You will get advice and tips about equipment from others when you join a group. If you have no experience go to a reputable

bike shop for advice, and consider taking out recovery insurance from CTC to get you home if you have a problem. Carry at least a spare inner tube, pump and tyre levers.

2. Most groups continue regardless of weather, so dress appropriately and carry a waterproof. This is also a useful windproof layer if you stop for long. If you are mountain biking in high country, seek advice from your leader well before going on a ride.
3. Bring a drink, and check whether you need to bring or buy food. Many groups stop at cafes or pubs; however you are advised to carry water and food.
4. When cycling, even with a group, always carry some form of identification and a phone number in case of an accident.

## On the ride

**Obey the rules of the Highway / Country Code** when riding. You are still responsible for yourself in a group. Your group leader is usually a volunteer who has offered to share their local knowledge or cycling experience; please follow their advice and instructions for everyone's enjoyment and safety.

Always look out for hazards and other road and trail users and don't just rely on the person in front.

Riding in close proximity to other cyclists takes practice. Relax and enjoy the company but remain aware of others around you.

Riding as a close group enables easy conversation and takes advantage of the shelter from riders in front. It can take a while to get used to, but the best way to learn is to follow the example of those around you, especially experienced riders. In particular try to pick up a smooth pedalling rhythm.

A group usually works well with cyclists riding two abreast. The Highway Code specifically allows this. It is sociable and keeps everyone together. Single file is courteous and safer on some roads and trails.

It is usually the leader's decision when to move to single file because of traffic or when passing horses or walkers (you must give way on a bridleway). Most groups have a standard method of moving from double to single file, which everyone uses to make the manoeuvre smooth and safe. Ask how it is done in your group.

**Avoid sudden movements and horse play.** Let others know before you change speed or direction. Change positions carefully. Slower traffic generally stays left so try to pass others on their right. If you must pass the rider in front on their left ensure that you give clear warning.

for more information on any of the above simply call **0870 873 0060** or email **[cycling@ctc.org.uk](mailto:cycling@ctc.org.uk)**