



Proper bike fit



It's important to make sure that your bike is set up and fits you properly for two reasons. The first is to ensure that you are comfortable on the bike, especially when riding long distances. The second is to help reduce the chance of injury.

If you prefer to do it yourself then here's a quick basic starting guide to setting up your bike to fit you.

Foot position – If you are running a cleat system then make sure that your cleat is positioned so that the first metatarsal joint (ball of your foot) is set over the top of the pedal axle with a level foot and crank arm at 3 o'clock. This is the same if you are using toe clips.

Seat configuration – Set your seat so that it is pointing straight and the top of the seat is level with the ground i.e. not pointing down or back.

Seat height – You'll want to have your seat set so that your leg is not stretched when you get to the bottom of the stroke. This is important to develop good hill climbing power. But, you don't want the seat too low that you are unable to produce good power. There is a tendency to think that raising the seat really high develops more power. I prefer a neutral height to ensure good hip stability. How I do this is to set the angle of the bent leg to be between 145 and 155 degrees when the foot is at the bottom of the stroke (at the 6 o'clock position) with the foot level. The dead giveaways for incorrect seat height are as follows: If your knees are sore at the front just below the knee cap then your seat is too low. If your leg is sore in the rear of the joint behind your knee then your seat is too high.

Seat Setback – I like to set up the seat so that the tibial tuberosity (bump below the knee) is over the pedal axle centre with the crank arm at 3 o'clock. The easiest way to do this is to take a plumb bob then drop it from the bump just below your knee and have it drop through the pedal axle centre when the crank arm is at the 3 o'clock position. Adjust your seat position forward and backwards to get it in the right position.

Handle Bar Position – Ensure that the reach and height of the handlebars enables the cyclists to be in a comfortable and relaxed position. To do this I focus on two things: The first is to ensure that the cyclist has relaxed slightly bent arms. The second is that they don't have stress through the top of their shoulders when reaching for the handlebars.

If you are experiencing discomfort on the bike, then I strongly urge you get a professional bike fit. An incorrectly fitted bike is the primary reason for aches and pains on the bike and in severe cases can lead to permanent physical damage to your bodies' cartilage, tendons, and muscles.

Ideally, the best way of going about this is to see your local bike shop or a bike setup professional that specializes in setting up people on bikes. They will ensure that you are optimized.