

How to Keep Your Bike Safe



The number of people who have taken up cycling has been steadily increasing over the last decade. According to Cycling UK (a UK based organisation which has been promoting cycling for the past 140 years), 3% of the UK's adult population (equating to 1.7 million people) cycle each day.

The increased popularity in cycling is due to several factors; Olympic athletes like Sir Bradley Wiggins and Chris Hoy have brought cycling as a sport to the forefront of people's minds. Also, increasing fuel costs has made the cost of commuting more expensive and people are now more aware of the damage vehicle emissions has on the environment.

Bikes come in different styles and vary in costs, depending on their intended use. Figures published by Mintel a market research company show that a standard bike costs on average around £233. Whereas if you want to purchase a racing bike, you'll be looking at paying a £1000+. So, whether you're

buying your first bike or are upgrading to a new model, one of your top priorities should be reading a [bike safety guide](#). Following that you should implement some of the things set out in this article so that your bike is kept safe from thieves:

Register your bike

Bikes are prime targets for thieves as they're readily accessible and easy to take away. Even though the number of bike thefts is falling, according to The Office for National Statistics around 290,000 bikes are stolen each year in the UK. But as some people don't report bike thefts to the police this number could be higher.

If your bike is stolen and the police are able to retrieve it, they'll need to know who to return it to. To make it easy for them to do this you should register your bike with 'BikeRegister'.

BikeRegister is the police approved National Bike Database and it holds data, such as name, address and the telephone number of bike owners who have registered their bikes with the scheme.

Joining the scheme is incredibly quick and easy, it causes no damage to the bike and best of all it's free, but you may have to purchase a marketing kit to mark your bike. But, keep an eye out for announcements from your local police station as they regularly hold events where they'll mark your bike for free of charge, meaning you don't have to purchase a kit.

To register your bike, enter your bike's frame number onto the site (not all bike frame numbers are unique so you may have to create a unique reference number), mark your bike and apply the warning sticker which tells thieves that the bike is registered.

Change where you park

Bike thieves are cunning and if they know that you leave your bike in the same place every day, they'll get to know your routine, particularly what time you arrive and leave. They may use this window of opportunity to steal your bike and at the end of the day when you go to get on your bike, it'll be long gone. So, to avoid this happening try to park your bike in a different place each day, or if this is not possible park it in a secure bike stand or near somewhere which has CCTV. If your office is located near a transport hub like a train, bus and tram station, they tend to have designated purpose built places to leave bikes. Though, these do fill up quickly so you may have to leave earlier on your commute in order to secure a place.

It may even be worth asking your employer if they'll support a cycle to work scheme (employers get tax exemption on cycles and cycling safety equipment) and invest in secure bike racks.

Invest in quality locks

A heavy-duty bike lock is an essential item for any keen cyclist. A good quality lock will cost you, but it should be seen as an investment as it can make the difference between your bike getting stolen or not.

Before we get into what types of locks to buy, let's look at what not to use. It's advisable to avoid using combination locks as any experienced bike thief will be able to pick their way through it in a matter of minutes (or seconds!). Likewise, cable locks offer little or protection as they can easily be cut through.

In recent years D and U-shaped locks have proven to be difficult for bike thieves to break into as they offer some resistance to cutting tools. However, they can be heavy and awkward to transport. An alternative is heavy-duty chain

locks. Again, they're resistant to cutting tools and their flexible structure means they are easier to transport than D or U-shaped locks. But they are heavy and require a sturdy padlock to secure it.

Protection at home is also important

Protecting your bike from thieves while it's stored at home is just as important as it is when you're out and about. The ideal way to store your bike at home is using a purpose-built bike rack. However, if you don't have the space for this, storing it in a garage or shed and securing it using a wall-mounted bike rack or tying it up using a bike ceiling hoist is a good alternative. This will create another obstacle for thieves to get over, which will hopefully deter them from trying to steal your bike.

If you live in a flat, avoid keeping your bike in the stairwell as it's an easy target for thieves and instead secure it in your flat using a wall mounted rack.

Whether you cycle for leisure, to get you from A to B or as a professional sport, keeping your bike safe and protecting it from thieves is something you need to consider and plan for every time you go out on your bike. Hopefully, the things covered in this article will help to keep your bike in your possession so you can enjoy the freedom that cycling gives you for as long as possible.