

Planetary Wellbeing

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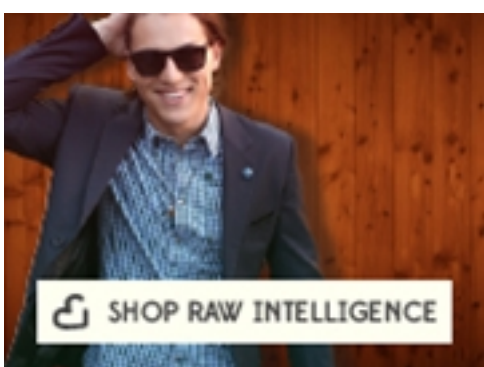
Save Energy & Climate

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Cycle Safely and Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

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When you cycle instead of drive, you save on fossil fuel usage, improve your health, and save money, but you need to protect yourself with proper technique and equipment. Our Hearts guide will give you tons of cool eco-friendly [cycling safety product](#) ideas and safety tips you can follow. Be a safer cyclist!

Quick Facts: Savings with Cycling vs. Driving

- **\$8,370 saved every year:** It costs an average of \$8,490 to operate one car each year, and only \$120 per year to maintain a bicycle. ^[i]
- **6 weeks of income to pay for a car:** That's what it costs the average family to operate a car for the year. ^[ii]
- **5.1 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year:** That's what's emitted by the average passenger vehicle emits each year based on a vehicle getting 21 mpg of gasoline and driving 12,000 miles. ^[iii] That's about 423 grams of carbon dioxide per mile, compared to zero in a bicycle. ^[iv]
- **39% lower rate of all-cause mortality:** This stayed true even after comparing leisure-time activities. ^[v]
- **£442 million saved annually:** That's the estimated the annual health benefit for Britain every year from cyclist alone. ^[vi]



Take Action! Stay Safe While Cycling

- Take a cycling class:** Find bike safety classes in your area through the [League of American Bicyclists](#) or the [National Bicycle Safety Network](#).
- Know how to avoid being hit:**
 - **At an intersection,** wave your arm when approaching a car stopped at a perpendicular road, slow down, and ride further left.
 - **From the door of a parked car,** ride to the left.
 - **Within a crosswalk while crossing,** avoid riding on the sidewalk, use a headlight and slow down.
 - **By a car turning right at a stoplight when the light turns green,** don't stop in a vehicle's blind spot.
- Wear a helmet:** Find stylish, eco-friendly helmets like this [Ecosalon](#) wooden helmet or these by [ecouterre](#) to reduce your chance of injury.
- Use reflective gear:** [Green Guru Gear](#) makes bike gear from recycled plastic bottles and bicycle tubes. [Nite Ize](#) makes LED products to keep you more visible at night, too.
- Get your phone to call for help:** Prepare for a collision with an [icedot sticker](#) that tells your smartphone to notify your emergency contacts in the event that it detects a collision.
- Plan your route ahead of time:** There are plenty of apps for your smartphone that allow you to plan out your route before you go to avoid traffic and hazards, including [Google Maps](#), [Bike Hub Cycle Journey Planner](#), and [Route Planner: Directions with Altitude](#).
- Avoid headphones while riding:** If you're distracted by music, or play it so loud you can't hear traffic, it reduces your chances of arriving safely at your destination.
- Take the lane:** How you ride your bike will dictate how drivers in vehicles treat you. Most cycling experts will tell you to take control of the lane rather than weaving through traffic or hugging the curb. This will prevent drivers from passing you and then forgetting you're in their blind spot. Stay in the middle of the lane to avoid being "doored," to prepare to make a left-hand turn, or in stop-and-go traffic.
- Use bells, horns, and yelling:** Bells and horns help avoid collisions with pedestrians and other cyclists. [Velo Vixen](#) sells eco-friendly, sustainable, ethical bells and horns and other bike gear. In heavy traffic, yell at the top of your lungs to get a driver's attention, if necessary.
- Wear protective eye gear:** Protective eye gear will stop bugs from flying into your eyes, protect you from little stones thrown from cars, and can help reduce glare. Remember, too, that if the sun is in your eyes, drivers in the cars behind you can't see you at all either.
- Advocate for more bike lanes:** The more bike lanes there are, the [safer cyclists](#) are on the street. Go to [Bicycle Universe](#) to see a list of advocacy groups and contact one near you to find out how you can help.



Dig Deeper: Cycling vs. Driving a Car

- Use this [calculator](#) to find out exactly how much money you'll save when, instead of buying a car, you buy and ride a bike.
- See [Commute by Bike](#) and [BicycleSafe.com](#) for more bike safety tips for cyclists new and old.

Images By [chuwasg](#) and [Paul Krueger](#).

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