

# Backyard Bike Rodeo

Riding a bicycle is more fun when you do it safely. Before plopping down on the seat and putting your feet on the pedals, make a promise to do it right – learn the rules and master all the safety skills.

Here are some great activities you can do at home to help learn to ride better and safer.

## Required

Trusted adult  
Bike (with or without training wheels)  
Helmet  
Clear riding area

## Helpful

Sidewalk chalk  
Cones or buckets  
Wet sponges  
Stopwatch

## Getting Started

Before you get going, make sure your bike is safe to ride. With an adult, check your brakes, tires, frame, chain, and pedals. Make sure you have reflectors in the front and back of your bike, too. Don't forget to inspect your helmet and make sure there are no cracks and that it fits properly – snug and covering the forehead.

## Signals

Just like a driver, cyclists must use turn signals before making a turn. Cyclists often use their hands. Practice these signals first while standing by your bike, then get on your bike and ride slowly around the clear area and pretend to be turning left, right, or coming to a stop.



## Get Moving

Use your sidewalk chalk or marks on the ground to designate a start and finish line. See how quickly you can ride from one line to the other. If you have a stopwatch, time each attempt. Ramp it up a notch, see how close to the line you can stop. Learn to control your brakes and try to stop suddenly.

Now flip the process upside down and see how slowly you can ride from one line to the other. It only counts if you keep your feet on the pedals, so go slow but keep moving forward. If you put your feet down, mark the spot and go back to the beginning. Try to make it farther the next time.

For an additional challenge, set up cones or buckets, each spaced a few feet apart, between the start and finish lines. Practice riding through the cones, then see how quickly you can ride from the start to the finish while weaving through the obstacles. Make sure not to hit any!

## Look Back

Have an adult stand a few steps away from the start line. As you ride toward the finish line, they should yell **LOOK!** While still riding forward, look over your **left shoulder**. If they are holding up their hand, yell **CAR!** If they are not, yell **NO CAR!**

## Rock Dodge

This activity requires three to five wet sponges that symbolize rocks. Put them on the ground staggered between the start and finish lines. Practice riding between the sponges. Move them closer and closer to one another and see how well you can maneuver through the sponges without running any of them over.

## Make It a Contest

Keep score as you do each activity and give five points to whichever bike rider does the best. The person with the most points wins!

## Learn More

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation offers a lot of great ways to learn more about bike safety online.

- Fun Activity Sheets – There are printable puzzles, worksheets, and science newsletters for different age groups at <https://www.penndot.gov/pages/educational-resources.aspx>
- Safety Brochure – Learn more about hand signals and helmet rules by printing off your own copy of “A Bike is Not A Toy” (<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/Pub%20636.pdf>).
- Bicycle Driver’s Manual – Adults can find more about Pennsylvania’s bike-related laws and regulations through the state’s official handbook (<https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20380.pdf>)
- Always Stay Safe – The PennDOT website has a section dedicated to a variety of safety topics, including bicycles ([www.penndot.gov/safety](http://www.penndot.gov/safety)).



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