

WINTERIZING YOUR BICYCLE



VISIBILITY



Create as many reflective surfaces as possible—both on your bike and on you. Reflective clothing is one good option, but reflective decals also work and don't require a wardrobe overhaul!



Do your lights need an upgrade? Not everything on a bike needs to be fancy or expensive, but a really good set of lights is worth investing in.



Protect your lights' batteries. Batteries don't work as well outside of their ideal temperature range. You can extend your lights' battery life by bringing your lights inside with you when not riding.



Worried about not remembering to bring your lights inside and back out again? You can consider installing them on your helmet, backpack, or other personal gear instead of on your bicycle. Just make sure that the lights are still easily visible for passing cars.



Take the lane whenever possible. In conditions of lower light or adverse weather, you want to be directly in drivers' line of sight. Plus, as the winter drags on, bike lanes often become blocked by piles of accumulated snow.

UNLOCK THE GRID

View the video
vimeo.com/unlockthegrid/winterizing
Questions? 128bc@128bc.org

CARE & CLEANING



Clean your bike off immediately post-ride, especially your braking surfaces, including your rims. Grime, salt & sludge not only shorten the life of your bike components, but also make your bike less safe.



Keep a couple of rags on hand for this purpose. If you put the rags in a bag mounted on your bicycle, you can't forget them!



Clean & lubricate your chain, derailleurs, and braking mechanisms weekly.

Chains: Use a bike chain-specific wet lubricant. Wet lubricants are for wet conditions—which is most of the time in New England!

Derailleurs: Clean off the gunk & grease using a bike-specific degreaser. The jockey wheel is especially likely to be caked in sludge. (You can also use a bike-specific degreaser on your chain when particularly dirty.) As long as you clean your derailleurs regularly, you shouldn't need to disassemble them; just spray thoroughly and use a small brush to do some scrubbing. Finally, lubricate the pivot points using a bike-specific lubricant.

Braking Mechanisms: Be especially careful cleaning & lubricating your brakes, since your safety depends upon them! **Cover your brakes while cleaning & lubricating the other parts of your bike and clean off any chemicals or lubricant that land on your rims.** To clean rim brakes or v-brakes, use a gentle cleaner to clear any encrusted surfaces and then lubricate the pivot points, making sure not to get the lubricant on your pads or rims.

If you have disk brakes, you need to use a specialized cleaning fluid—not a general-purpose degreaser & lubricant—to ensure their performance and your safety.



You don't need to buy bike-specific cleaning brushes unless you want to. Grout-cleaning brushes are great for narrow spaces, as are old toothbrushes!



Reduce your tire pressure to the bottom of your tires' rating. You can find the recommended range printed along the side of your tires. The worse the conditions and the more uneven the terrain, the lower you want to go within this range. For example, if the recommended range is 50-80 psi, 70-80 psi might be appropriate for summer riding, but you'll want to go down to 50-60 during the winter months.

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WHAT'S WORTH THE \$\$\$?



\$-\$\$ Definitely invest in...

- 1 A good set of lights, *if you don't have a set already*
- 2 As many reflective decals as your personal style will allow
- 3 A bike-specific degreaser
- 4 A high-quality wet chain lubricant
- 5 A bike-specific general lubricant, if different from #4
- 6 *If you have disk brakes*, a cleaning fluid designed specifically for disk brakes

*Some chain lubricants can also be used on other components. Some cannot. Check the label.

\$\$-\$\$\$ Consider investing in...

- 1 **Rain and snow-ready brake pads:** The next time you swap out your brakes, ask for brake pads that are designed for wet weather.
- 2 **Clip-on fenders:** Full-coverage fenders can be a nuisance in bad weather. Try clip-on ones instead in snowy weather.
- 3 **Tougher tires:** Your local bike shop can walk you through the options, which range from relatively smooth tires designed to be extra tough (You do *not* want to fix a flat in cold weather!) to studded tires designed to improve your traction.
- 4 **Multiple layers of protection for your hands and feet:** Warm socks and weather-proof gloves are a good start. On particularly nasty days, you might also consider hand & foot warmers or even handlebar mittens.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF



Set reasonable expectations. Winter riding is harder. If you expect yourself to ride as frequently or as far as you would in nice weather, you're setting yourself up for failure. Plan for moderation so that your rides don't end up being cancelled altogether!

For example: Consider riding public transit part of the way. (Remember that 128 Business Council/The Grid shuttles are equipped with bike racks!) Plan for alternating riding days, e.g. start out with 2 days/week with 1-2 break days in between.

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LONG-TERM STORAGE



Clean and lubricate the whole bike before storing it, especially focusing on the brakes and drivetrain, as described on the preceding pages. Mud, grime & salt cause even worse corrosion when a bike sits dirty for months at a time.



Air up your tires. Your tires can develop deformities from sitting around too under-inflated—especially if you're storing your bike in a standing position.



Consider getting a full tune-up. Bike shops are often extremely busy in the spring, and you'll be glad to be able to immediately get your bike out and ride when the weather turns nice.



Remove anything electronic and anything that needs to be cleaned, like water bottles and bags. As for any electronic accessories, your batteries will last much longer when stored inside.



If you must store your bike outdoors, cover it. But if you can store your bike in a garage, basement or even a spare room, do that instead. It'll be safer against both theft and the elements.



Avoid storing your bike on bare concrete floors. Concrete leaches the moisture out of tires. If you do need to store the bike in a space with bare concrete floors, you can either hang the bike up by one or both wheels, or place mats under the tires.



Pick one location and stick with it. Cold temperatures in and of themselves won't harm your bike, but frequent freezing and then thawing can cause your frame to rust and your components to loosen.



This also means that if you plan to ride your bike during the winter, you are better off parking it in a cold garage between rides, rather than bringing it indoors and then back out again!