

Welcome!

Introduction to Long Distance Bike Riding

Long Distance Bike Riding

- **Bike fitting**
- Riding technique
- Preventing pain & fatigue
- Dealing with traffic
- Two minute bike check
- Hands-on bike adjustment

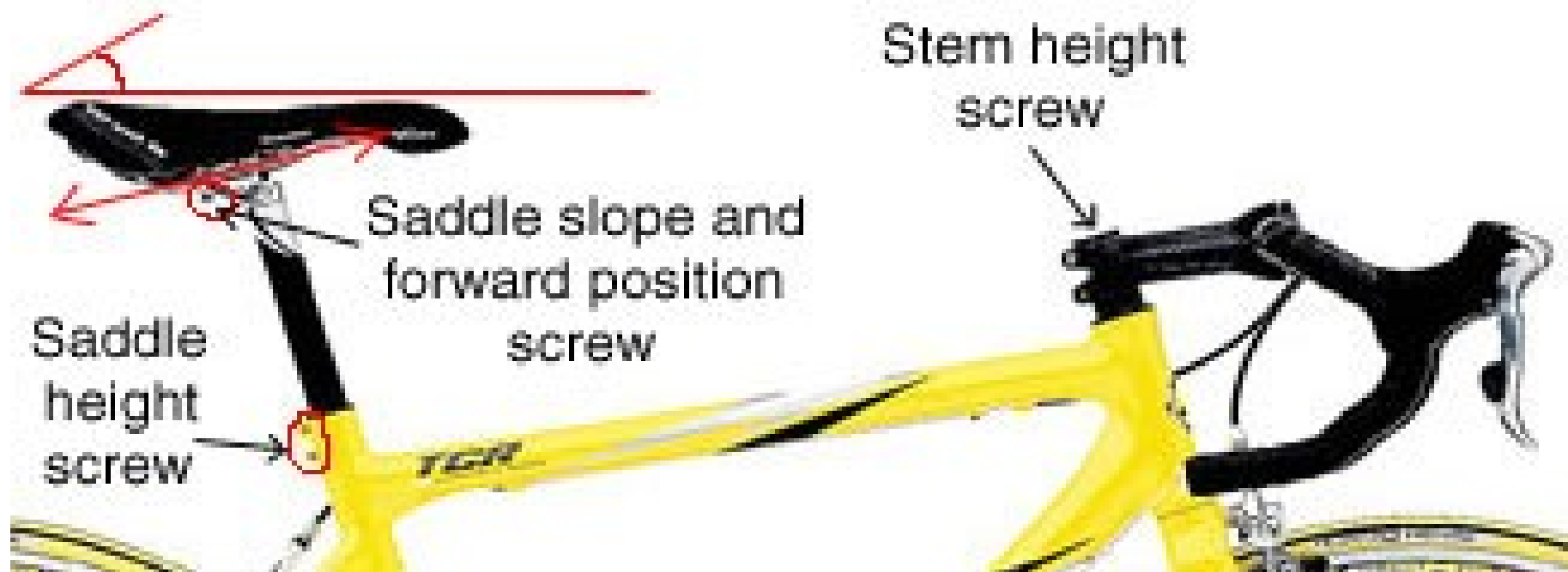
Bike Fitting

Your bike can be adjusted to fit you better:

- Seat height
- Seat angle
- Seat fore/aft position
- Handlebar height
- Handlebar angle
- Handlebar stem angle (on some bikes)

Seat Position

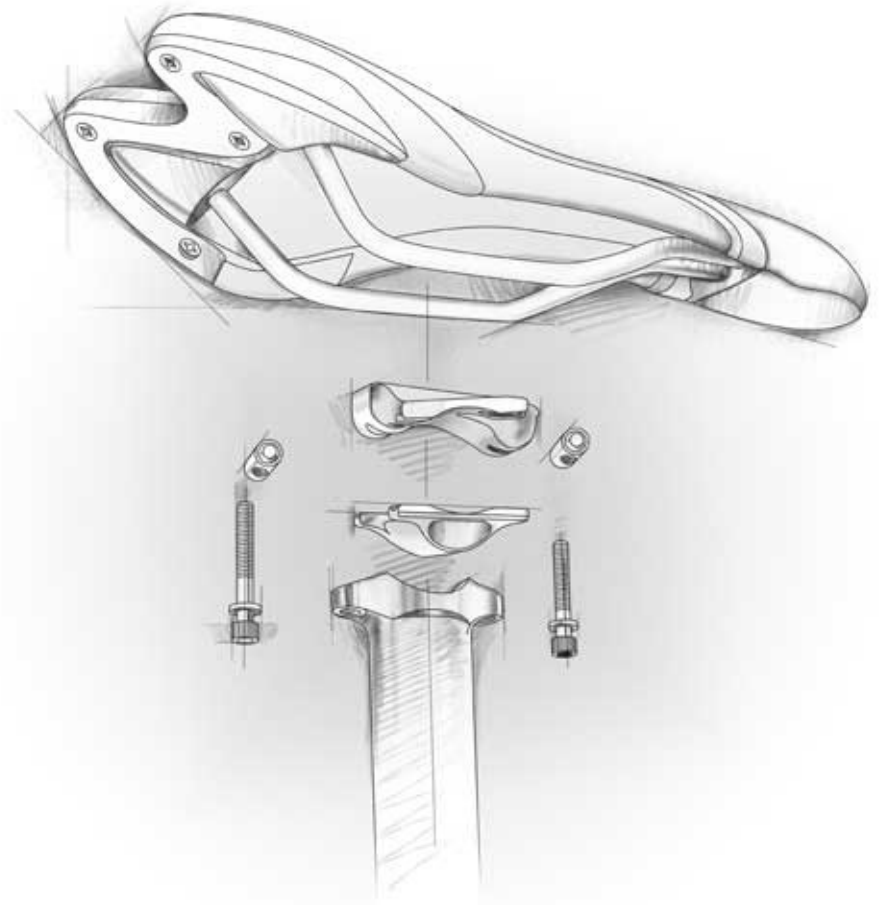
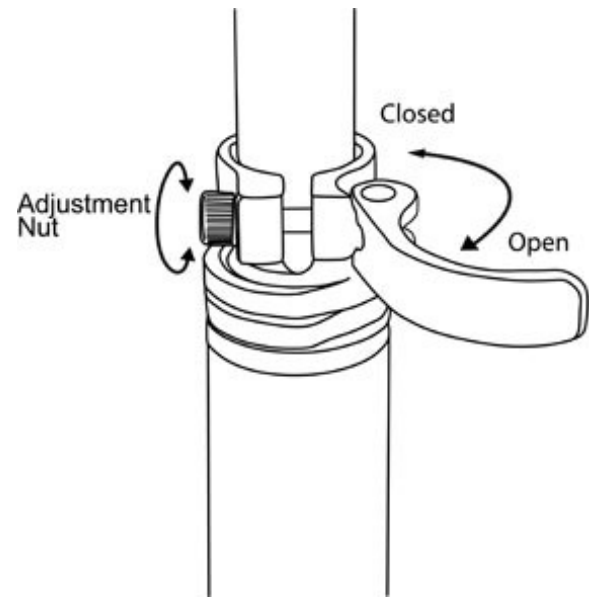
- Quick test – with pedal all the way down, put heel on center of pedal – leg should be straight. Actual pedaling position is with ball of foot centered on pedal – leg should be slightly bent
- Seat height clamp at base of seat post – use hex key tool, quick release, or wrench (on older or low-end bikes)
- Seat clamp at top of seat post – use hex key tool or wrench. Seat should be level or slightly angled for most people.
- Don't exceed max extension of seat post or rails

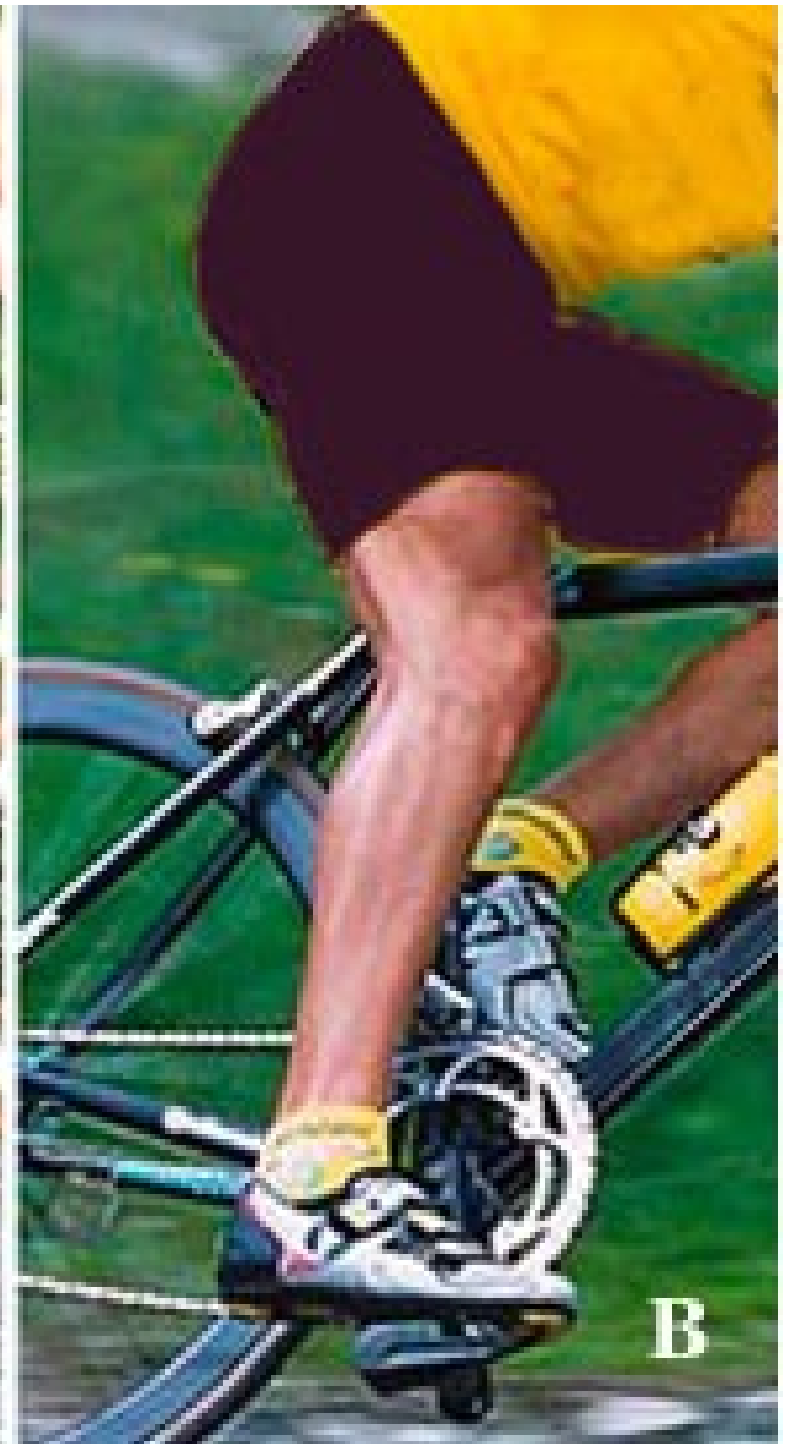


Stem height
screw

Saddle slope and
forward position
screw

Saddle
height
screw







Handlebar Adjustment

- Modern road stems – limited adjustment in height – move stem washers up or down
- Older stems use “wedge bolt” to adjust height
- Hinged stem (“comfort stem”) adjusts with hex key wrench
- Handlebar angle – loosen stem clamp around bars, rotate bars. May need to adjust brake/shift levers afterwards.

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Riding Position

- Weight Distribution
- How is your back bent?
- Tension in the hands, wrists, elbows, neck, shoulders?
- Poor posture causes pain, fatigue, even injury
- “If it hurts, you're probably doing something wrong”



Drinking While Driving

- A bite-pull water bottle or “Camelbak”-style hydration pack is a must for long rides
- If it's not convenient to drink while riding, you won't drink enough. Learn the one-handed bottle yank or buy a hydration pack.
- Drink **before** you get thirsty.

Eating

- Eat a carb-heavy dinner the night before
- Don't skip breakfast the morning of the ride
- Eat lightly and continuously
- Eat **before** you get hungry
- Pace your meals - eat half your sandwich at lunch, eat the other half an hour or so later
- Keep snack food handy while riding – back jersey pocket, handlebar bag, “bento box”, etc.

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Taking care of your body

- Stop and stretch every hour or so, at least at every rest stop
- Toe touch, leg stretches, spinal rest position, hands clasped behind back w/elbows high & low
- Self-massage – thumbs into tops of shoulders, massage leg muscles, back, neck. Or ride with a friend!
- Change positions – there are several different ways to hold the handlebars



Pain and Fatigue

- Cramps – usually caused by not drinking enough water. Recover from a cramp – stretch leg against cramp (this is counter-intuitive), drink water, massage, eat bananas or other high-potassium food.
- Numbness – caused by poor position and/or poor fit. Adjust seat angle and/or weight distribution. For wrist problems, examine how you clasp bars and angle of wrist – use “natural” wrist position as when typing.

Other Pain

- If you feel unusual pain or discomfort, stop and investigate!
- Some pains are just muscles learning this new activity
- But stop riding if pain keeps getting worse
- Examine your position and fit for clues to problem
- Ask other riders or marshals for advice

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Dealing with Traffic

- Be cautious at all times, even when there are only other bikes on the road.
- Be predictable. Ride in a straight line. Use hand signals.
- Take your lane. NY, NJ, and NYC law allow a cyclist to ride in the middle of a lane when necessary. Hazards (car doors, gravel, trash) live on the far right.
- Laugh off any honking. It means they see you, which is good.

More Traffic Tips

- Share the road. Cyclists riding 2 abreast or more can block passing motorists.
- NY state law requires riders to revert to single file when there is oncoming or overtaking traffic. NJ is similar. Some town laws in Rockland County require single file, don't ignore the signs.
- Careful when socializing. Hazards don't disappear just because your friends are riding nearby.

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Two Minute Bike Check

- Handlebars/stem/seat/cranks tight?
- Both wheels: should spin freely, no rubbing, check quick-release lever
- Brakes – should be able to lock wheel, pads should touch only rim, not tire
- Tires should be inflated to correct PSI
- Check rear rack, accessories for looseness
- Bags properly secured to bike? Any dangling straps?

Other Resources

- Some bike shops have free repair classes
- Times Up – times-up.org - repair classes, rides, activism
- Recycle-a-Bicycle – recycleabicycle.org
- Bike New York – bikenewyork.org – classes, large rides
- Five Borough Bicycle Club – 5bbc.org – social rides, some classes
- New York Cycle Club – nycc.org – faster rides, “SIG” training