

How to Choose a Bike Saddle

By Allen Smith, eHow User



After you've spent hundreds of dollars on your custom-made road machine, don't forget one of the least expensive but most important accessories: the bicycle seat. Bicycle seats come in a variety of models, designs and materials. So how do you know which one is right for you?

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Bicycle shop Bicycle mechanic or repairman

- 1 Choose the type of bicycle seat (or saddle) that works best for your riding. Bike saddles are made for high-performance road riding, off-road mountain biking, cruising on the beach and just about every other type of riding.
- 2 Buy a lightweight, streamlined saddle for your road bike if you enjoy flying down long stretches of highway. Road saddles are typically narrower than other saddle models and provide the least amount of cushioning. Their sleek design prevents unwanted contact of the inside of the thighs against the saddle and ensures that your shorts don't get hung up on the nose of the seat when you're getting out of the saddle.
- 3 Buy a mountain bike saddle if you routinely ride off road on dirt trails or on single tracks. Usually a little wider than road bike saddles, mountain bike seats provide more cushioning against the jarring vibration of dirt trails. Make sure the outer material is some type of plastic or washable lycra that's easy to clean.
- 4 If your derriere is on the sensitive side, consider buying a gel saddle. Gel saddles come in a variety of models and are packed with a semi-liquid gel that cushions sensitive body parts while absorbing the shock of the road or trail.
- 5 For those willing to plunk down more money, consider buying a suspension bicycle seat. Suspension seats feature lightweight rails with rubber elastomers built in to absorb vibration and shock. Suspension seats are ideal for riders who want added cushioning but still need a low-profile seat design.
- 6 If you suffer from prostate or other physical problems, consider buying a cutaway bicycle seat. Cutaway seats have a portion of the seat removed to accommodate parts of the anatomy that are affected by extended seat contact on long rides.

Tips & Warnings

- Keep in mind the type of riding you'll be doing. Give yourself time to "break in" a seat. Always ride with padded bicycle shorts.

- Never buy a cheap, off-brand seat. Keep your seat clean and dry at all times.