

Parent Tip Sheet

Freedom From Training Wheels



Welcome to Freedom From Training Wheels, a program of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. This workshop will help you teach your child to ride a bike and our volunteer instructors are on hand to help your family succeed! For a complete schedule of workshops and more information see sfbike.org/freedom.

Step One: Bike Adjustments

A few basic adjustments to your child's bike will help them get started. How your child's bike fits her is a key component to success. Here's how to make your child feel as confident and comfortable while learning to balance.

1. **Remove Training Wheels:** Without training wheels, your child can find their center of balance.
2. **Remove Pedals:** By removing the pedals, your child will be free to roll the bike without any pedal interference.
3. **Lower Seat Height:** Your child should be able to sit on the bike seat with feet flat on the ground.



Now you're ready to teach your child how to ride using the "Balance First" method. "Balance First" allows your child to find her natural sense of balance on a bike without training wheels or pedals. Once the child is confident gliding and balancing, the pedals are reattached and pedaling begins.

We've broken down learning to ride a bike into three simple steps, on the back of this page!

1. **Finding Balance**
2. **Pedaling**
3. **Starting from a Stop**

Let's Get Started!

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Step Two: Balance First

Explain the concept of “Balance First” this way:

1. Focus on a point ahead, aim for it.
2. Use your feet to walk or roll the bike while looking straight ahead.
3. Go faster when it feels comfortable. When you have speed, lift up your feet and ‘glide.’
4. Always keep your head looking up!

Once your child has mastered rolling and gliding, reattach the pedals for the next step. *Avoid reattaching the pedals before your child is ready!*

Step Three: Pedaling

Expanding beyond “Balance First,” explain pedaling this way:

1. Use your feet to walk or glide the bike just like you did without the pedals attached.
2. When you lift to glide, use your feet to find the pedals without looking down.
3. Once your feet find the pedals, keep gliding, then, push down on the pedals!

Step Four: Starting From a Stop

Use these simple steps:

1. Place one foot on the pedal – let the child determine which foot she prefers. Have the child keep the other foot on the ground for balance.
2. Just like the past few steps, have the child practice pushing off – but keeping one foot on the pedal this time.
3. When ready, place the pedal to the at a 2 o’clock position to start and introduce the concept of pedaling while pushing off.

Find information on Safe Routes to School, Bike to School Day and tons of tips on Family Biking at sfbike.org/kids.

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition is a 12,000-member organization promoting the bicycle for everyday transportation. Learn more and find out how to join: sfbike.org.