

## Staying Visible On a Bicycle

Anyone who commutes via bicycle can agree that it's one of the most enjoyable and environmentally-friendly ways to get from point A to B. Unfortunately, riding alongside heavy traffic can be a drag. One of the best ways to ensure your ride goes without a hitch is to stay as visible as possible. Here are some top ways to ensure everyone on the road sees you and your bike.

### 1. Use hand signals

This is one of the easiest changes to incorporate into your next ride—if you're not already making signals when turning or switching lanes, you should be. "Traditional" signals (raising your left arm when turning right) are not always great, as non-cyclists won't really know what you're about to do. Sometimes, the best option is to simply [point exactly where you want to go](#).

### 2. Dress accordingly

While nobody should bend over backwards to cater to motorists, changing your attire can make a big difference in a motorists' ability to see you. What you wear totally depends on when you're riding!

During the day fluorescent colors will be most visible. Bright oranges, yellows, and greens are key. At night it doesn't matter if you're wearing white or black—nobody can see you. When riding in the dark, wear something *reflective*. That'll ensure you light up as soon as a car's headlight touches you.

A lightweight fluorescent vest with reflective strips will knock out two birds with one stone for [less than \\$20](#). You can also attach reflective strips to [your helmet](#), which you should always wear no matter how short the ride!

### 3. Don't hug the right-hand lane

There really should be an asterisk here, as sometimes it's definitely a good bet to stay to the right. If there are no parked cars on the road, the road is wide, and you're significantly slower than cars, by all means scoot over to the right.

When cyclists are traveling as fast as cars, it's not only legal to take up an entire lane, but it's safer. You'll be easier to spot by cars behind you as well as oncoming traffic! When motorists turn they look for other cars. Riding to the right may mean you're hidden behind a car and impossible to see from across the street.

### 4. Ignore empty parking spaces

We've all seen it: a long line of parking spaces is empty, creating a totally free lane to cycle in. Resist the temptation of riding in one. No matter what, that lane will end.

Either you'll come across a parked car or you'll simply hit sidewalk, but eventually you'll need to merge back into traffic. Motorists won't expect to see a bicycle suddenly veer back into a lane, so the best option is to stick in a designated lane for the entire ride.

#### 5. When passing idling traffic, stay to the left

While it's technically illegal in most states, it's certainly advantageous for cyclists to get ahead of motorists, so many choose to run red lights. At the very least, nearly every cyclist will get to the head of a line of traffic at a light. This usually happens by "weaving" around cars idling at red lights and going through the intersection when the coast is clear.

Whenever approaching cars parked at a red light, be sure to pass on the left, not the right, *even if* you intend to turn right at the light. Passing on the right is dangerous because nobody can see you. If you pass a car intending to turn right on the right, you could easily be hit. This situation is called the "[right hook](#)." If it's impossible to pass on the left, your safest option is to plant yourself directly in front of a car and wait the light out.

Fun fact: If the light isn't on a timer and instead turns green when a car approaches, you can run the light after one cycle while yielding to traffic. Bicycles usually aren't heavy enough to get a green light in these situations.

What are some of your tips for staying seen by motorists?

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