



Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

E-bikes: A good fitness tool

Electric-assisted bicycles are new to the American market after being popularized in Europe in the last five to 10 years. When someone hears electric-assisted bicycle it may conjure up a lot of misconceptions. Many “biomechanic” cyclists disdain the idea of someone “cheating” with an electric motor. Perhaps the John Muirs of the world dislike nature and tranquility being disturbed by buzzing electric motors.

However, from a health and fitness perspective, an e-bike may be appropriate as a tool.

The biggest myth of e-bikes is that a person with no fitness or ability can hop on an electric motor and go about with ease. This is not true. An e-bike only assists the pedaling that is already happening. These bikes have limited battery supply, and on eco mode only make cycling marginally easier.

Another myth is that e-bike riders are lazily skipping all the years of base fitness real cyclists all would like to think they possess. This also isn't true. According to Transportation Research, most e-bike owners are also “analog” bike riders as well. Even so, it takes pedaling and skill to ride an e-bike, just as it does a regular bicycle.

Now here are the statistics that may surprise: The Transportation Research

Group reports that e-bike riders ride longer, and get more exercise than regular cyclists. How can this be? They examined the metabolic cost of riding a bike and extrapolated it to the amount of riding being done. While e-bikes had a lower intensity of exercise, the minutes of riding exceeded standard enough so that the total MET's (metabolic equivalent measure) were higher for the e-bikes. (4,463 met/week vs. 4,085/week).

The average trip distance was around eight kilometers (five miles) vs. five km (three miles) in favor of e-bikes as well. This likely points to the commuter or grocery store runs that would be so much easier on an e-bike. Consider Sisters Country: Who wants to cross town in a car in summer? Wouldn't an e-bike be a joy?

While just catching on, e-bikes provide a fitness opportunity for those who might not be able to access it otherwise. It opens doors to put less cars on the roads. These machines are not rocket ships; they're heavy and slow. They aren't any noisier than a conventional bike. While it is embarrassing as an avid cyclist to be passed by one, it's not the end of the world. An e-biker is likely a fellow biomechanical rider who respects mileage under the legs and muscles rather than motor.

Give a look to an e-bike if commuting, errands, or getting back into fitness is something interesting. All major manufacturers have good options and the bike shops in town are keen on the technology and how to get the right bike for anyone.

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SPRD to hit trails with local youth

Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD) is expanding its mountain-biking program. By working with a local mountain biking professional, the district has been able to provide a high-quality experience for riders and expand program offerings to include third- and fourth-graders. SPRD's new mountain biking program, designed specifically for third- and fourth-graders, starts September 19.

Zach Hooley, Sisters Park & Recreation District mountain-biking professional, has been biking since the age of 4. He started cross-country mountain-bike racing when he was 15 years old and has won dozens of local race medals, was named the Idaho State Champion in both cross-country and downhill, and was a silver medalist at the 2005 USA Cycle Championships.

“I love seeing the next generation smiling, laughing, and bonding while riding bikes in the great outdoors right here in our backyard,”

he said. “A big thank-you to Blazin Saddles, who both generously supported our cause by tuning up the kids' bikes and helping with some damaged ones. I'm thrilled to see five of our current 10 riders choose to invest their hard-earned chore money in new mountain-bikes this summer. With so many options, that shows their priority for good old-fashioned outdoor adventure, which only increases my passion to keep going!”

The mountain-biking program has visited many local trails over the past few months including the Peterson Ridge Trail system, Phil's Famous Trail Network in Bend and the Green Ridge Trail near the Metolius River.

Kelley Moen, a parent of a mountain-biking program participant, said, “The SPRD mountain-biking program this summer has been such a great experience for our middle-schooler. Charlie had a ton of fun on the trails and was inspired by the talented and ultra-enthusiastic

leadership of Zach Hooley. Zach's energy and positivity are boundless! Charlie learned about bike maintenance, trail-riding techniques and new adventurous routes around our home. In fact, the kids have been teaching us parents some new riding skills! Thanks to the mountain-biking program, Charlie's found his newest favorite mountain sport.”

Charlie Moen said, “My favorite trail was the McKenzie River trail. It's a little hard in some places. I liked the challenge!”

The expansion of the mountain-biking program is thanks in part to the local option levy that voters passed in May 2018. Thanks to the additional funds made available, the District has been able to increase recreational opportunities for local youth.

For more information about the mountain-biking or other programs offered by Sisters Park & Recreation District, visit www.sistersrecreation.com.

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