

A bicycle built for you—and equipment, too!

**By Linda Cabrera
Of The Print**

Bicycling is no longer just the leisure sport it used to be. For many, it has become an economic necessity. It's not uncommon to see students or businessfolk riding their bikes to and from school or work. With gasoline prices as they are, do you blame them?

Whether you are a novice, professional or just a weekend

biker, you'll want to be sure the bicycle you're riding is safe and you're getting the best mileage out of your bike as possible. Also, pay attention to your bike paraphernalia. Is it safe? Is it necessary?

First of all, if you already own a bike but it hasn't been out of the garage since last summer, why not give it a quick safety check?

First, look over the entire

bike for any loose or dangling parts. Tighten bolts on tires, handlebar stem, saddle and seat post and be sure lights and/or reflectors are firmly in place.

Next, check tires for wear and embedded gravel or glass. If tires are extremely worn, get them replaced or patch up small punctures with a tire repair kit. Also, check rims for bulges or bent parts. Any major

repairs should be done at a bike repair shop. For a reasonable fee they can give your bike a complete tune-up.

If you don't own a bike and are in the market for one, there are a few things you should know before purchasing one. Harry Garrett of Alan's Bike Shop in Oregon City has this to say: "One of the major differences in bicycle prices is the weight of the bicycle. The lighter the bike, the more you're going to have to pay."

Also, be careful to buy a bike that fits you. Straddle the bike's frame and make sure your feet can touch the ground. Take the bike for a test ride and be sure you're investing in a bike that will be good for you. Garrett also suggests that the novice or leisure rider start off with an inexpensive bike. If you have any questions, and you should, ask around. Call up bike shops and find out. The salesmen should be able to answer any questions you might have.

What about "Grab-ons?" "Skid lids?" Or a number one pump? Is bicycle paraphernalia really necessary? It all depends. Some accessories are just pretty and for looks, others may even be more harmful than safe, depending on the rider.

Toe clips or straps for example, hook onto your bike pedals and help you to maintain a continual pedal pressure. Your feet push down on the pedals and pull them back up, thus saving on your pedal energy.

The increasingly popular handlebar grips, called "grab-ons," are another accessory. They aren't just pretty padding, though. The grips keep your hands from slipping by absorbing hand perspiration. They also are a lot more comfortable than steel bars and provide the cyclist with a firm gripping ground. They run about \$8 a pair.

For long trips there's the water bottle that starts at about \$1.95. Also a thing called a "number one pump" might assist you in emergency situations.

The pump costs \$12.95 and you can strap it onto your bike easily.

A tire repair kit costs \$1. A bike tool set may come in handy for minor repairs or adjustments at \$15.95, and you can also strap this right on your bike. A bike size can of WD-40 can get out the squeaks for \$1.49.

"Skid lids," or bike helmets run about \$34.95 and are a good precautionary method, especially at the speeds some bicyclists get up to.

If you're curious about how far you've pedaled, you can buy a mileage meter for about \$2.95. If you're riding your bike to school you might want to invest in a book rack. They start at about \$26.95. Bike packs start at \$4.50.

Probably your wisest investment will be a lock. A laminated steel Master brand lock will run you about \$3.50.

There are countless other accessories to put on your bike, but be choosy because the less clutter, the less likely your chances are of losing something or having them interfere with your riding. It's up to you which accessories you'll want or need, but remember, the lighter the bike, the easier it is to ride and the faster it will go. Have a great summer riding your bike in safety!

The prices quoted are from Alan's Bike Shop in Oregon City. Prices are subject to change without notice.

*Staff photos by
Sue Hanneman*

Upper right—As biking trends and traffic increases, helmets become a necessity for novice and advanced bikers.

Lower left—Bikes are available in all sizes and shapes to satisfy the needs of each individual biker.

Lower right—Various accessories and clothing can be purchased for casual biking, racing and touring.

