

TOUCHER & RICH

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TOOK DOWN WEE!

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WHEN GEEKS ATTACK

THE BATTLE OVER WHO *REALLY*
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BLOWN

NO MATTER YOUR SKILL OR EXPERIENCE LEVEL, THERE'S A RIDE IN BOSTON FOR YOU. JUST MOUNT UP, PEDAL SAFELY, AND LET OUR EXPERTS GUIDE YOU.

The HarborWalk offers fine views for cyclists.



[MY FAVORITE RIDE]

Three of the city's most dedicated bicyclists dish on the trails, routes, and paths that keep them coming back for more.

SOUTH BOSTON HARBORWALK

NICOLE FREEDMAN,
FORMER BOSTON BIKE CZAR



→ The slice of the HarborWalk from the federal courthouse in Southie to UMass Boston in Dorchester offers mostly off-street cycling and what Freedman calls "one of the best views in Boston." Head south from the courthouse on this flat path (9 miles each way), passing the L and M Street beaches and Carson Beach, and take a rest-room and hydration break at the Edward J. McCormack Bathhouse. Continue on to the JFK Library (there's a very short dirt section just before it), then follow the coast past weekend fishermen to Morrissey Boulevard. Keep in mind that the paths can be busy with strollers, runners, and beachgoers in the summertime.

BOSTONHARBORWALK.COM.

NEEDHAM/SHERBORN ROUTE 16 SOUTH

BILLY STARR, PAN-MASS CHALLENGE
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



→ If you like your pavement as smooth as your Lycra, head out toward Needham and work your way south-southwest for as long as you want to go. This area allows you to exchange the crowds on the Minuteman Bikeway for tree-lined streets that weave through the countryside. But Starr won't recommend a particular route. "Why not get lost? That's the whole point," he says. "I won't define a route for you. I dare you to take a leap and think outside the box." Of course, you probably will still want a guide of some sort. Starr recommends the Rubel Maps, available at good bike shops and at bikemaps.com.

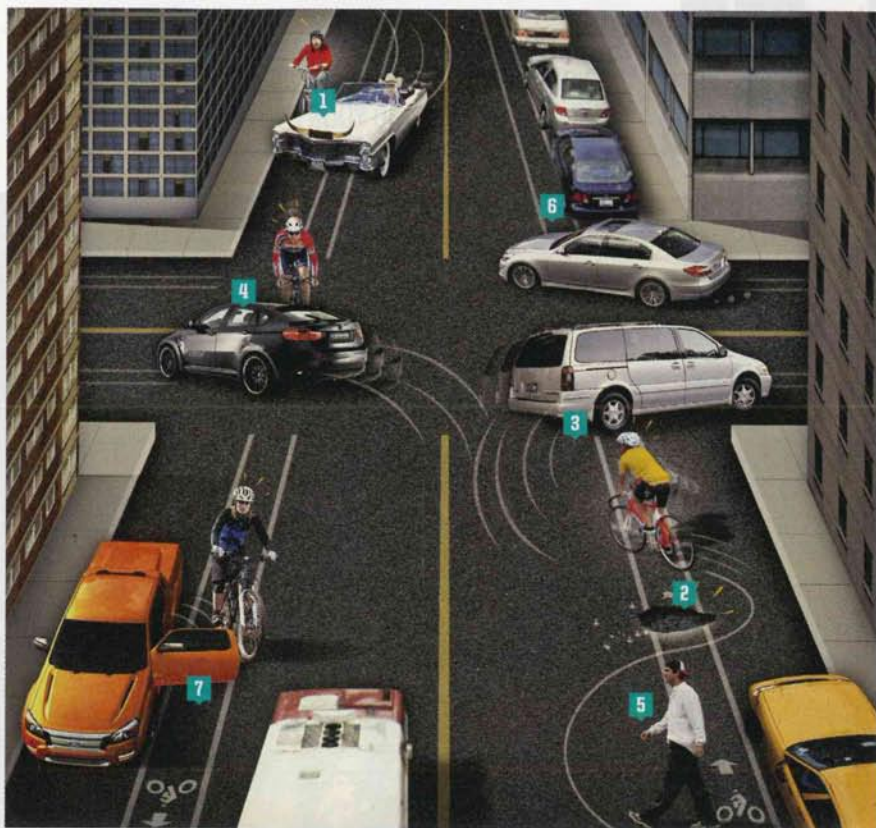
MIDDLESEX FELLS MOUNTAIN BIKE LOOP

DAVID WATSON,
MASSBIKE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



→ Just 8 miles north of the city (and accessible by commuter rail and the Red Line), Middlesex Fells offers enough fire roads, forest roads, and single track to keep bikers busy for hours. For the best outing, Watson recommends circling the North, Middle, and South reservoirs on the 6.3-mile Mountain Bike Loop. (Note to beginners: "Fells" translates from Saxon as "rocky, hilly, place." Be prepared to dismount and walk in a few steep sections.) The reward is worth it. "You're on a narrow trail up on a hillside overlooking the Winchester reservoirs through the trees, and you can see the light sparkle off the water," Watson says. "For me, that's kind of my Zen place."

FELLS.ORG.



WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, STUPID!

Biking our streets isn't so scary once you know where the dangers lie. Train yourself to be on the lookout for trouble before it finds you. Here are the hazards you need to know about, and their danger levels, ranging from deadly [!!!!] to annoying [!]. By Casey Lyons

THE BUZZ

1 It seems like the more time a motorist spends on the road, the angrier he gets at cyclists (we're looking at you, bus drivers). To avoid being "buzzed" by a car, ride closer to the middle of the street until there's room to let a raging driver pass. DANGER LEVEL !!!

STREET OBSTACLES

2 Road shoulders often accumulate glass, metal shards, and other tire-popping debris. Also watch for potholes in travel lanes (cars may swerve to avoid them) and ride heads-up to avoid these

problems without putting yourself at risk. DANGER LEVEL !

RIGHT HOOK

3 Motorists who can't bear to brake for a bicyclist will zoom past, then abruptly turn right. Give yourself ample braking distance (at least a car's length) if a driver looks squirrely, lost, or like he's searching for parking. DANGER LEVEL!!!!

LEFT HOOK

4 Less common than its right-handed twin, the left hook is a cross-traffic maneuver motorists use to squeeze a turn between oncoming cars. To avoid

getting sideswiped, speed up when passing through intersections. DANGER LEVEL!!!!

JAYWALKERS

5 Admit it: When you're not on a bike, you cross against the light, too. We all do, and why not? The maximum penalty is \$1. So while riding, look for heads popping up between cars, especially when traffic is stopped. DANGER LEVEL !!!

BOSTON CHEAT

6 When drivers nose forward to see around a row of parked cars (a trademarked move here), they often block the bike lane.

Next thing you know, you're over the hood. Try this (in order of ascending urgency): Make eye contact with the motorist, point with a fully extended arm, or wave frantically. DANGER LEVEL !!

DOORING

7 Going from 15 to 0 miles per hour in the space of 6 glass-and-metal-filled inches is brutal, but that's what happens to a cyclist when someone who's parked his car flings open the door without looking. We know bikers who've lost teeth. Stay safe by riding no less than 3 feet from parked cars. DANGER LEVEL!!!!



RUT BUSTER

JOIN A GROUP RIDE

→ NEWBIES

THE CHARLES RIVER WHEELMEN
Get schooled in cycling basics during the Intro to Group Riding, which departs Cambridge on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. The 50-rider pack pedals along a quiet 20-mile loop out to Concord and Carlisle. CRW.ORG.

→ WOMEN

NORTHEAST BICYCLE CLUB
Every Tuesday at 6 p.m. is ladies only on this ride, which begins in Lexington. Expect the field of 60 or so cyclists to split into groups based on speed. The 12-to-17-miles-per-hour group usually rides 20 miles; the 17-plus-miles-per-hour crew typically goes 26. NEBC.US.

→ ELITE

BOSTON ROAD CLUB
Satisfy your need for speed at the weekly Wells Ave. Race in Newton, organized by the Boston Road Club. You'll train with local pros and meet area teams en route to Saturday's main event: 32 miles at speeds of 25 to 27 miles per hour. BOSTONROADCLUB.COM.



GEAR UP

A FULL-SIZE BIKE FOR A CLOSET-SIZE APARTMENT

Got space issues? Montague's eight-speed Boston 8 (pictured above) has the cure. Its full-size wheels mean that unlike other foldables, it rides like a regular bike, but in 20 seconds it folds up and tucks neatly into a closet, the corner of a cubicle, or even a small space on the T—so you'll never have to lock and leave it. \$1,099, MONTAGUE.COM.

FIVE-POINT SAFETY CHECK

1 Tire pressure is correct. 2 Quick-release levers are tight. 3 Lights and reflectors are on. 4 Clothing is clear of chain and gears. 5 Helmet is fastened.

1,030

Average distance, in miles, you'll ride in Boston between bike wrecks.

SOURCE: BOSTON BIKES ACCIDENT SURVEY, 2009

BIG



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