

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get my bike to fit me correctly? A good recommendation is to go to 'Belmont Wheelworks' in Belmont, Cycle Loft in Burlington, or International in Allston and Newton they are all known for doing bike fittings. Belmont Wheelworks now has a program where one of their trained staff will come to you and do it in your home for those time crunched individuals.

What do I need to bring on my bike with me? Two tall water bottles (including an energy drink which has a balance of electrolytes), bike bag which holds tire irons, patch kit, energy bar, tissues, sunscreen and a light windbreaker or vest and extra cash for long rides. A pump for fixing flat tires should be affixed to your bike. Know how to fix your own flat tire before going on your long rides.

Should I carry a camel back? That is totally up to you. Some people swear by them, while others find it irritating and hot to carry on their back. Practice using it on training rides and then you decide.

Should I wear underwear under my bike shorts? No, ask most riders and they will say it is more of an irritant than to your benefit to be wearing them. Most likely riders wash their shorts after each training ride. The underwear is another layer, which may cause more soars on your butt. I ride without them and it is much more freeing. Today's shorts are designed well with extra layer of thickness so don't worry about anyone seeing your butt while on your bike.

What do I do when I get saddle sores? Try an ointment called 'bag balm'. Farmers use it for milking cow utters. It really helps with saddle sores. It is made in Lyndonville, VT, and is sold in square green tins of various sizes. Put on before going on your long rides. This is a great ointment to have especially on back to back riding days. If you don't have that then you can use vasoline to protect some of those vulnerable parts. I purchased mine at "Restoration Hardware". <http://www.bagbalm.com/>

What are the big chain rings on the front for? When the chain is on the big ring, this is used mostly for downhills and gives you a much harder resistance. When you drop the chain ring into the smaller chain ring then you are more likely to feel a lighter resistance and will actually be spinning. Your revolutions per minute will be at a higher rate. Somewhere between 80 –90 rpms is more likely in this chain ring. This number in rpm's represents itself as cadence on your cyclometer.

What is the gear cluster in the back for? What does a 12-26 mean? The gear cluster in the back helps to fine tune your riding. So if you are climbing a hill and need less resistance you would move the chain up the cluster to reduce resistance and keep your rpm's up. Lowering the chain ring to the smallest one in the cluster will add resistance so better for going down hills. A 12-26 is an average size cluster. 12-28 helps to get up the hills easier and 12-21 makes climbing the hills much more challenging but better for the flats.

What type of cyclo computer should I get? There are many different brands some with wires and others without. Again this is your preference. Make sure the cyclometer has speed, total distance, trip distance, cadence and fastest speed for trip, as well as time ridden for ride. Some even have heart rate monitors and a temperature reading.

What seats do people recommend for cycling? I like the Terry Butterfly Women's seat. They also have a men's version called "Buzz Off". I have friends that like to try out many seats before settling in on the one they like. Bike shops may let you try some out before you commit to purchase. Ask PMC friends what they use and like to ride on.

Can I get off my bike and walk it up hills in the Pan Mass Challenge? Of course but make sure you get off on the right side of your bike. The other riders will go around you just hug the road tightly to your right.

How high should I pump my tires? You should always pump your tires up before going on your training rides. Look on the side of the tire for amount of air you need for your tire. Having tires pumped up to the required amount helps you to ride faster and decreases the likelihood you will get a flat tire.

Other favorite tips worth sharing with PMC riders? Let me know by emailing me and I will include them in my next FAQ's.

More Questions call Karen 617-965-6585 or email Karen@wellnessworksinc.com and check out some helpful resources on www.wellnessworksinc.com