

“Cycling in Techiman”

Benefits of Cycling

- ✎ The bicycle can help to improve accessibility and prevent congestion in cities
- ✎ The bicycle increases the quality of life in cities and population centers, and this has positive effect on spending behavior and stimulates new businesses
- ✎ The bicycle helps prevent air pollution caused by traffic , and all the consequences thereof for the environment and public health
- ✎ The bicycle encourages people to take physical exercise and in this way has a positive effect on fitness and health
- ✎ The bicycle can contribute to an increase in traffic safety
- ✎ The bicycle contributes to employment
- ✎ The bicycle increases the mobility of users, limits traveling time and reduces travel costs.

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Cycling as a means of transport is not new in Ghana. It is very common in the Northern part of Ghana than the Southern.

Techiman, with a population of about 56,187 (2000 Population and Housing Census) is a market hub to many countries. Also, traders from all over the country, especially Bawku, Kumasi, Accra, Axim, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Hamile, Winneba etc. converge at Techiman on its main market days (Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays). The obvious choice of trip mode here will be by a vehicle. In view of the immense economic activities, Techiman generates both internal and external trips.

A twenty four (24) hour manual classified count was conducted by Delin Consult in Techiman in March 2007. This count was for a continuous duration of one week. The results from the count showed that, the traffic composition in the

entire municipality within the one week duration was 5% for cars, **7% for bicycles**, 6% for motorbikes, 31% for pedestrians, 10% for buses and vans, 34% for taxis and 7% for others.

When pedestrian percentage trip was excluded, the figures were as follows: 8% for cars, **10% for bicycles**, 9% for motorbikes, 14% for buses and vans, 49% for taxis and 10% for others.

It is very alarming that with these high percentage rates for cyclists in Techiman, no provision has been made for them in terms of infrastructure. These cyclists have to share the same road pavement with the other modes of transport and their presence is seen as a nuisance on the road.

An Origin-Destination Survey conducted also showed that among the cyclists, 49% of them cycle to work, 18% to school, 6% - tour and 14%-recreation. The touring and recreation are seen as leisure rides.

Some are of the view that when the facilities are provided, there wouldn't be any cyclists to use them at all, but the question is, do we have to identify the cyclists
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From the DIRECTOR'S DESK



High traffic incidence has become phenomenal with quite many growing cities such as Accra. This has become a great concern to Transport and Road Authorities as well as road users. Some cities are virtually choked and moving from one place to another nearly becoming a nightmare. As a result, it offers spurious problems ranging from lateness to work to health threatening impacts on the populace by the emissions of the motorised vehicles.

The fast growing rate of traffic congestion in developing cities demands an integrated traffic management approach to traffic systems.

For most cities, such as Accra the use of Non Motorised Transport (NMT) has not been given the desired attention although some provision has been made. In effect there is heavy dependence on private cars and the public transport. The public transport service is poorly dispensed and hence not attractive to the middle class. An improvement in the public transport service, a promotion in NMT usage would definitely have a strong impact on congestion as people begin to use these modes. One transport expert asserts that road schemes need to be

redesigned to manage the road space in a manner favourable to NMT and public transport, while subjecting private car use to strict circulating rules.

The question is, would road authorities forever have land available to expand road infrastructure in the Central Business Districts (CBD) where there is high competition for land for other building infrastructure? Efficient road space management therefore cannot be underestimated and is the way to go. One of the key issues to look at in the congestion management mix is cycling and walking especially in built up areas

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before we make provision for them? The answer is a big NO!! Rather these facilities have to be provided and made attractive then we shall get the cyclists using them. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the cycling population who cycle to work and school in Techiman say they would cycle more frequently if the infrastructure were provided and made attractive.

Cycling must be seen as an indispensable tool for social and economic integration for the benefit of all participants in the economy.

Cycling as a mode of transport in Techiman should not be overlooked looking at the level of patronage.

*By Samuel Boamah Danquah
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HOW CYCLING IMPROVES FITNESS

A study carried out for the Department of Transport (London) found that even a small amount of cycling can lead to significant gains in fitness. The study found that aerobic fitness boosted by 11 percent after just six weeks of cycling short distances four times a week. If cycling the equivalent of four miles to and from work in total a day, the aerobic benefit increased 17 percent.

According to the Department of Transport study, people who do not exercise who start cycling move from the third of the population who are least fit, to the fittest half of the population in just a few months.

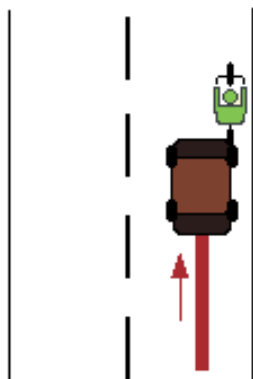
Leg strength also improved in the cyclists in the study. This is more important than it seems because leg strength improves other mobility by allowing people to get out of chairs more easily and helps older people especially avoid falls and the broken bones and other injuries associated with them.

Cycling, the researchers behind the study concluded, is one of the few physical activities which can be undertaken by the majority of the population as part of a routine.

www.bupa.co.uk/health-information

10 Ways to Avoid Getting Hit by a Car

8. THE REAR END, PT 2.



A car runs into you from behind. This is what many cyclists fear the most, but it's not the most common kind of accident (except maybe at night, or on long-distance rides outside the city). However, it's one of the hardest collisions to avoid, since you're not usually looking behind you. The best way to avoid this one is to ride on very wide roads or in bike lanes, or on roads where the traffic moves slowly.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Get a rear light.

If you're riding at night, you absolutely should use a flashing red rear light. If you ride at night, get a rear light!

2. Wear a reflective vest or a safety triangle.

High quality reflective gear makes you a lot

more visible even in the day time, not just at night.

Also, when you hear a motorist approaching, straightening up into a vertical position will make your reflective gear more noticeable.

3. Choose wide streets.

Ride on streets whose outside lane is so wide that it can easily fit a car and a bike side by side. That way a car may zoom by you and avoid hitting you, *even if they didn't see you!*

4. Choose slow streets.

The slower a car is going, the more time the driver has to see you. Try navigate the city by going through neighborhoods.

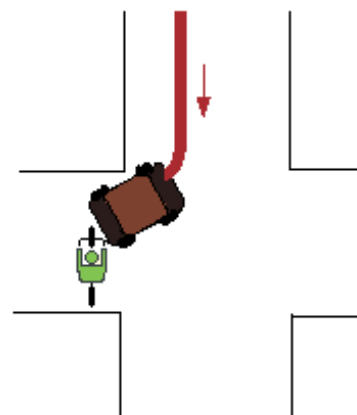
5. Use back streets on weekends.

The risk of riding on Friday or Saturday night is much greater than riding on other nights because all the drunks are out driving around. If you do ride on a weekend night, make sure to take neighborhood streets rather than arterials.

6. Don't hug the curb.

This is counter-intuitive, but give yourself a little space between yourself

and the curb. That gives you some room to move into in case you see a large vehicle in your mirror approaching without moving over far enough to avoid you. Also, when you hug the curb tightly you're more likely to suffer a *right cross* from motorists who can't see you.



to be cont. In the next issue

www.bicyclesafety.com

Cycling Titbits

Cycling is the most effective way of staying healthy. The number of people with health problems caused by an incorrect diet or too little exercise is achieving epidemic proportions. Within the foreseeable future, obesity will be the most common cause of death. Cycling for 30 minutes a day reduces the chance of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes by 50%.

Cycling comes top in the fitness chart, on the road, at home or at a fitness centre.

BICYCLE EVENTS

STARCORD RIDING CLUB DONATES TO THE POLICE

Starcord Riding Club, a health and fitness club based in Community 20, Lashibi with another branch at Adenta recently donated two bicycles and helmets to the Community 18 Police at Lashibi. According to the coordinator of the Club, Mr. Michael Baddoo, the donation was the club's contribution towards making the police more efficient in carrying out their duties. He said the use of the bicycles rather than cars, as an alternative means of transport for short errands would also assist the police to save money and further make the limited cars available for other competing errands. The Police will equally reap the health benefits of cycling, which in his

opinion, is one ideal form of activity that can greatly improve the physical well-being of people and as a result improve health. One of the most powerful arguments for encouraging cycling is that regular cycling improves fitness significantly; reducing obesity, the risk of strokes, coronary heart disease (CHD), certain types of cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. Cycling also brings about other benefits such as reduced depression and stress, improved self-esteem and confidence in performing physical tasks. He encouraged Ghanaians especially those within the upper working class to make time to exercise in order to reap the health benefits.



Mr. Michael Baddoo handing over the Bicycles to ASP. Stephen Azalekor of the Community 18 Police Station.

STARCORD RIDING CLUB CLEARS COMM 18 ROUNDAABOUT



Starcord Riding Club, a health and fitness club based in Community 20, Lashibi with another branch at Adenta, recently organised a Clean Up Exercise by clearing weeds within the Community 18 roundabout. A team of cyclists from California, USA and Cape Town, South Africa joined the club during the exercise.

Within the last two years, the club has been committed to weeding the roundabout regularly with the view to giving the roundabout a more pleasant look. According to the coordinator – Michael Baddoo, members of the club, which is open to all cyclists, ride regularly on Saturday mornings within the Lashibi and Sakumono area in three groups namely – Beginners, Leisure and Action. Members living within Adenta ride on the Dodowa road. The club organizes longer riding trips during public holidays. Interested cyclists or beginners are encouraged to call the clubhouse on **0246 812812** for more information.