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Pedal Guide



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To learn more about Strider Education visit

www.StriderBikes.com/Education

Strider Balance Bikes are a perfect compliment to preschools, daycares, or any other environment that brings kids, or individuals with special needs, together. Learn how Strider can help you launch an education program in your area.

Did you like what you read in this Learn-to-Pedal Guide?

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Handlebar bell



Knee & elbow pads



Headlight & taillight set



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Shop a wide variety of safety gear and accessories on our webstore

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Teaching Your Child to Pedal

At Strider, we love riding bikes and we love inspiring kids to ride. Strider Balance Bikes are designed with only foot propulsion to teach the fundamentals of riding. When balance and steering are mastered, transitioning to a bicycle with pedals or a motorcycle is easy.

While learning to ride, a child needs to experience the feel of leaning and how steering affects the balance of the bike. Without leaning, such as on a tricycle or bike with training wheels, your child isn't learning to ride at all. Tricycles and training wheels give a false sense of balance. When a child turns on a tricycle or bike with training wheels, the bike leans to the outside against the outside wheels. This is opposite of proper riding technique which requires leaning into the turn. And, this has to be "unlearned" in order to ride on two wheels.

Congratulations on taking the first step to teach your child to ride! We are so happy to welcome you to Team Strider; you are one of the early adopters that are changing the paradigm of how kids learn to ride and setting the new standard for how young children explore the world on two wheels. 1.6 million parents can't be wrong, and we're excited to take that journey with you. If your child is still working on their balancing skills we suggest using our "Learn to Stride Guide" before beginning to transition to a pedal bike.



Safety checklist

- Make sure the seat, handlebars, and wheels are secure.
- Check the tires to make sure they have the right amount of pressure.
- Regularly check and oil the chain.
- Check the brakes to be sure they work well.



It's important for kids to know that a bicycle is a big responsibility.

While riding around the neighborhood is a great start, it's fun to ride to a destination occasionally as well. This gives kids a sense of independence and accomplishment!

Rules of the sidewalk

So now you've got a little pro on your hands, huh? Well the learning process certainly isn't over. Safety and biking etiquette should be taught early and practiced throughout your entire lifetime. Even on the sidewalk or in the driveway.

Following the rules of the road doesn't only ensure your child's safety but the safety of others as well. Let's start with a few basics:

- **Stop at all road crossings.**
- **Ride on the right in a straight line.**
- **Signal your turns.**
- **Watch for cars backing up in driveways, and hazards.**
- **Be visible.**



Hand Signals



Left turn



Right turn



Stop



Right turn (alternative)



What makes Strider 14x the best bike for your child?

The Strider 14x is the total package bringing the entire learn-to-ride process together with one product. Because it starts as a balance bike, and transitions into a pedal bike, it allows your child to learn the balancing skills and confidence needed to safely transition to pedaling.

When your child is proficient in balance-bike mode, you can easily convert the bike they already love to a pedal bike in just a few quick steps.

Once the 14x pedal kit is attached, the narrow pedals allow your child to stride around the outside of the pedals to gain the momentum needed to begin pedaling.

With the Strider 14x, you can skip the banged up shins and frustration that comes with learning to ride on a typical pedal bike.

Strider Bikes encourage the development of spatial awareness, balance, and basic motor skills as early as possible so all children can reach their maximum riding potential. To ensure your child's bike riding success we have developed this simple guide to help you along the way.

Follow these 4 simple steps to pedaling success!



Keep an eye out for expert tips and activities along the way!



1 Balance is key

Start by sizing the bike to fit your child. There are tips on seat height as well as handlebar and helmet adjustments in this guide.

Watch closely for balance proficiency. Attaching the 14x pedal kit too soon can be very discouraging. Take your time and look for the "ready to transition" signs listed in this guide.



2 Ignore the pedals

Adding pedals can be intimidating to some children. The Strider 14x has unique narrow "stride-around" pedals that allow children to continue their balance bike skills even after the pedals are attached.

When children have the opportunity to gain momentum while striding on their pedal bike, it develops confidence. We suggest simply having children find the pedals with their feet and use them as footrests when they are riding and practice with the pedal bike the same as they would on a balance bike before even attempting to pedal.



Practice skid-marks

Sounds too easy, right? But really this is the tried and true, best and most fun way to practice braking.

Long, short, straight or squirly... Your child could probably practice skid marks for hours and it will never get old. It takes a lot of black sidewalk to wear out the tires, so don't sweat it. Let them practice and become proficient in the essential skill of braking.



A reminder for parents

Don't rush pedaling. Striding and practicing balance is fun! Even if children appear to be striding like a pro, moving to a pedal bike too soon can derail progress. Let them continue to practice and perfect their balance and bike-handling skills. Be confident that the time spent on their Strider Bike in balance bike mode will help them easily transition to pedaling when the time comes and with the improved skills they gained it will be a safer and more enjoyable ride.

Is pedaling the most important thing? Does pedaling define riding? Downhill mountain bikers don't pedal, road bike riders descending a highway don't pedal, BMX riders in a half-pipe don't pedal, and motorcyclists don't pedal. They are all riding. So what do they all have in common? The ability to balance on two wheels and lean through turns, regardless of what put them in motion. For children, walking and running are the natural means of propulsion. The simplicity of Strider Bikes allows children to concentrate on the fundamental skills of balancing, leaning, and steering while propelling the bike in a natural way.

We talked about seat height in step one, but it's still a crucial part of riding success. When your child is first learning to pedal, keep the seat height low, this ensures increased control and helps build confidence. Once your child is proficiently pedaling and braking, you can move the seat up to a higher, more comfortable position.



Balance and gross motor skills go hand in hand. Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform everyday functions, such as walking, running, climbing and playing as well as sporting skills like throwing and catching a ball. These skills help everyday self care skills like dressing, brushing your teeth, eating with utensils and much more! Gross motor skills also help develop endurance, which can help your child concentrate and participate through a full day of school much easier.

4 Learn to stop safely

Your child will instinctively stop by using his or her feet while they are first learning to ride because that is what they are accustomed to with their balance bike. Stopping with their feet on the 14x is OK at first. The seat is still low enough that they can easily put both feet on the ground at any time. Riders can gain momentum quickly while pedaling and it won't take long to realize stopping is just as important as going!



When encouraging your child to stop, using the verbal cue “pedal backwards” is typically counter productive. Even though technically, yes, you do need to pedal backwards to stop—children in the 3-5 age range have trouble understanding this. Some even stop the bike with their feet and then try to walk in reverse.

Instead try the cues “push back with your heel” (you may need to show them where their heel is), or even show them using your hand to pedal like you did previously.

3 Encourage pedaling

It's important throughout this entire process to let the child go at their own pace with as little physical interaction as possible. Practice and positive reinforcement go a long way!

There may be some hiccups during the learning process. That's OK! Most children will get this step fairly quickly.

It may help to pull out your bike and show them how you pedal!



4 Learn to stop safely

So they've got this pedaling thing down, but braking is just as important, if not more important than cruising fast.

In the last step we will make sure your child can stop safely, explain what safety precautions they should take as a “big kid” on a pedal bike, and give you, the parent, some tips for success.



Proper fit is essential

Riding a bike that doesn't fit well is no fun and makes learning more challenging. For your child's success and safety please take some time and go over the sizing steps on the next few pages to ensure you have the proper seat height, handlebar reach, and helmet fit before starting this learn-to-pedal process.

Seat height

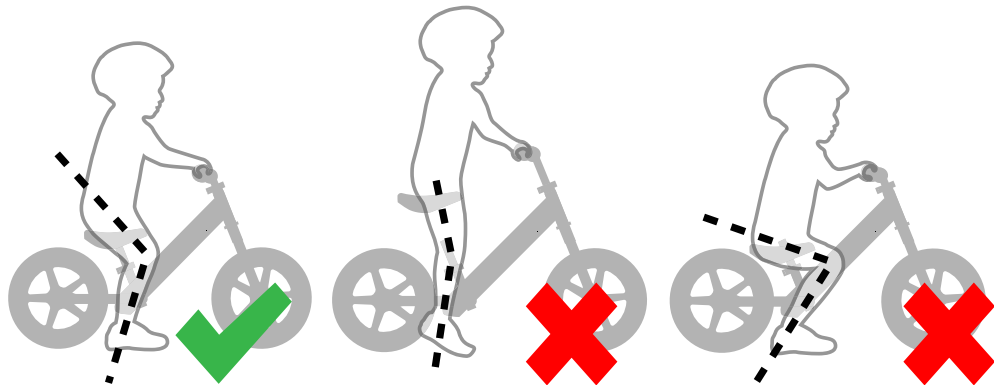


Start by having your child stand next to the bike and adjust the seat so that it sits slightly lower than the top of their inseam. This measurement should be the same in balance-bike mode and pedal-bike mode at first.



To open the quick release clamp on the seatpost, open the lever with one hand, and slide the seat to the appropriate position with the other.

Typically when your child is comfortably seated on the bike with shoes on there should be a slight bend in the knees (see images below). This seems to be the most efficient and enjoyable position for children to get the best striding movement as well as maintain control while riding. This seat height includes when the pedals are attached. However, we know that every child is different. Feel free to try a few different seat heights to accommodate your child's comfort level. Once your child is proficiently pedaling, a higher seat may offer more efficiency.



Why is balance so important?

Balance is key to almost every physical sport and activity. Kids need to be active on a daily basis. Balance plays a big role in the development of our children. People of all ages and abilities can benefit from working on their balance and from being active.

Balance strengthens all of these important developmental building blocks:

- Attention and Concentration
- Body Awareness
- Bilateral Integration
- Crossing Mid-Line
- Hand-Eye Coordination
- Hand Dominance
- Muscular Strength
- Muscular Endurance
- Self Regulation
- Postural Control
- Sensory Processing
- Isolated Movements



To tighten a quick release clamp press firmly with the palm of your hand to close. If it leaves a mark on the inside of your hand, it should be perfect to make the seat stay put but also easily allow for future adjustments.





Ride the line

Get out the sidewalk chalk and make your own road or racecourse in your driveway.

Make turns, loops, stop signs... anything!

Try drawing obstacles like bridges that go over a raging river, or a tight rope that spans across an enormous canyon.



Pocket full of pennies

Set up a course with cones or obstacles in your garage.

Along the course set up several empty cans or cups and have riders carry the same amount of pennies in their pockets.

Challenge riders to stop and drop a penny in the cans.

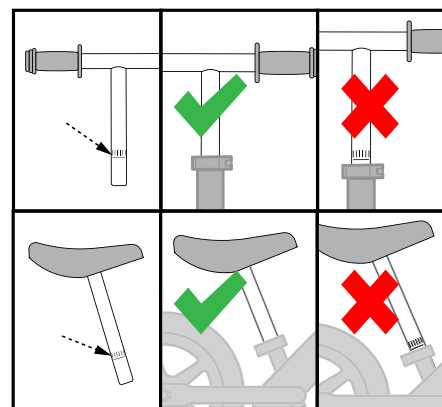
This is a great exercise for practicing starting and stopping.



Handlebar height and reach

The second most critical adjustment is handlebar height and reach. The best starting point for handlebar height is to set it with respect to the seat. If the seat is at its lowest setting, set the handlebar to also be at its lowest setting, etc.

Typically the handlebars are set about belly button level, but feel free to try out different heights and see what makes your child feel the most confident. The Strider 14x allows for handlebar adjustment reach as well as height. When your child is sitting comfortably on the bike their reach should be a distance where there is only a slight bend to the elbows (see image above).



On both the seatpost and the handlebar of the 14x there are minimum insertion marks. For your child's safety, insert the posts into the frame far enough so the dashed lines don't show (see diagram above).



Does your child have the tendency to hit the frame of the Strider Bike while running? Try lowering the seat to allow more leg clearance. If necessary, you can also remove the footrests on the 14x Balance Bike.

Safety gear

Adjust the crown of the helmet so it doesn't move while the child rides. The helmet should be worn low in front, slightly above the eyebrows to protect the forehead. The helmet should fit snugly, but not uncomfortably tight. The chin strap should be worn well back against the throat, not on the point of the chin. If a child opens their mouth wide the helmet should pull down on the head.

To check the basic fit, hold the helmet with both hands and twist it gently to the left and to the right. If the helmet fits properly, the skin on the forehead will move as the helmet moves. To check the strap tension hold the helmet with both hands and try to remove it by rolling the helmet forward and backward. If you can roll the helmet forward so far that it blocks the child's vision, or backward far enough to expose the forehead, it doesn't fit correctly. Repeat sizing steps until helmet movement is minimal.

Don't forget shoes! Children should always wear closed toe shoes while riding. Remember, these are their brakes, and they need to protect those precious piggies! Lead by example. Parents should always wear a helmet and proper safety gear as well.



Pretend

If your child is still not quite getting the hang of the pedaling motion, try laying on your back with your child with your feet facing each other. Bend your knees and have your child place their feet on yours. Together, you can pretend you're pedaling in the air.

Keep practicing by trying out different speeds, and by starting and stopping.



Practice makes perfect...

In the "Learn-to-Stride Guide" we stressed the importance of letting your child set the pace. This is still the case. They have the perfect tool for the job they are trying to accomplish (learning to pedal a bike) now all they need is practice. Avoid the urge to hold the bike up for the child. Positive reinforcement is a must and they will eventually get the hang of it. Ignore occasional struggles and focus on fun.

Just like in the last step, it helps to count steps and gain momentum before attempting to pedal. If they are skipping that step be sure to count to 5 steps to get them up to speed before rotating those cranks.

Or just a simple reminder to "take 5 big steps before you put your feet on the pedals" should do the trick.

Usually kids need a little reminder to watch where they are going, especially with the distraction of the added pedals. They want to find the pedals with their eyes and *then* feet! Simple "look ahead", "look up" or "watch where you're going" cues give them a gentle reminder.



3 Encourage pedaling

This is probably the first time your child has ever attempted pedaling. Walking and running are the natural means of propulsion to a child, so using a circular motion to propel the bike with the pedals is a whole new concept. Usually letting the child experiment with the pedals on their own is enough to allow them to figure things out with time. If you want to show them how the pedals turn in circles try having your child get off the bike, lift up the seat with one hand and with your other hand turn the pedal slowly to show them how it makes the wheel turn.



Demonstrate

Get your bike out and let your child watch you pedal.

Being told verbally to “turn your feet in circles”, “watch where you’re going!”, “push hard”, and “keep going forward” all at once can be overwhelming.

They may just need a visual cue instead. Grab your bike and show them how it’s done!



1 Balance is key

After you transition your child’s Strider 14x to a pedal bike do not be discouraged if they aren’t ready and want to go back to balance-bike mode.

It’s more important to have your child gain the confidence and skills necessary to evolve into pedals at their own pace than to advance too quickly.

This process should be fun. Not stressful. You are your child’s best cheerleader. Keep up the positive reinforcement for any progress they make.



Hot lava

Not sure if your child knows how to put their feet up while riding? Turn it into a game!

Pretend there are patches of hot lava all around and we don’t want it to touch our feet! When you say one, two, three “hot lava!” have your child pick up their feet while they ride. This encourages imagination and helps develop balancing skills.

Strider Balance Bikes have kicked tricycles and training wheels to the curb and proven to be the newest and best method to prepare your child to ride a pedal bike. So how do you know exactly when your child is ready to transition to the next step?

Look for the signs below **before** installing the pedal kit onto your child’s Strider 14x Balance Bike:

“While riding his/her Strider Bike my child...” :

1. can support all their weight on the seat.
2. is able to gain momentum by running with the bike.
3. balances with feet up for extended periods.
4. is able to avoid obstacles in his/her path.
5. can lean through turns with feet off the ground.
6. is able to find and use the footrests while riding.
7. can control their speed.
8. is able to stop safely.







2 Ignore the pedals

Okay, so you've taken the plunge and attached the pedals to your child's Strider 14x Bike. Now what? First of all, keep the seat height the same as it was in balance-bike mode. This is where your child is comfortable and it will help them maintain control and stability while learning the pedaling process. Avoid the urge to hold the bike up for the child. You already know they can do that on their own. There is no need to hold the back of their seat and point them downhill like we learned to ride as kids. In fact, there's no reason to assist them at all.

The Strider 14x has proprietary narrow "stride around" pedals, so your child can get used to the feel of a pedal bike without having to pedal at all. Have you ever heard the saying "Life is like a bicycle, in order to keep your balance you must keep moving"? Let your child gain momentum and get their balance the same way they did in balance-bike mode by initially using the pedals as footrests only. As a parent if you tell your child to ignore the pedals and stride like they already know how—it will make the pedaling process easy. They already know this stuff!

Is your child having trouble getting on and off the bike on their own? Try having them step over the frame of the bike while it is lying on the ground and then lift it between their legs by grabbing onto the handlebar and pulling it upward.



The rocket game

The rocket game is a super fun way to encourage your child to continue their skills and practice gliding with their feet up through imagination and play.

Have your little Strider rider run with their bike to gain some speed, when you say "3...2...1... Blast Off!" Encourage them to pick up their feet to build their balance and coordination by coasting.



Gaining momentum

You can ignore the pedals all day long but more than likely your child knows they're there and is anxious to use them. If the distraction is too much for your little rider to handle, try to encourage them to take 5 big steps before they explore the pedals. Just counting their big steps with them while they ride is usually enough encouragement to gain the momentum necessary to get some good balancing and allow them to put their feet on the pedals like they did with the footrests on their balance bike.

Just a quick verbal countdown is fun and also extremely helpful.

