

Using the gears on your Brownie 21

Your gears are there to help you navigate different terrain. They help you to get up hills, roll along the flat and pick up speed if you are in a rush.

Our bikes with 7 gears have 7 cogs on the rear wheel. The gear shifter is positioned on the right of the handlebar. When you shift gears, a cable moves the 'derailleur' at the back which lifts the chain up and down the cogs. The easiest is 1 (like a car). As you pick up speed you can go up the gears all the way to 7.

On our Brownie 21 model, you have 7 cogs. You also have something extra: 3 chainrings. The shifter for the chainrings is on the left of the handlebar.

The combination of shifting between the left (3) and right (7) gives you 21 different gears. This is useful if you are in very hilly areas.

The Shifters



Your right hand shifter (R) has numbers 1-7. This moves your chain up and down the 7 cogs on the rear wheel. There are two "triggers" on the shifter. Your thumb moves up from R1-R7. Your index finger moves down from R7-R1.



Your left hand shifter (L) has numbers 1-3. This moves the chain up and down the three chainrings. There are two "triggers" on the shifter. Your thumb moves up from L1-L3. Your index finger moves down from L3-L1.

Choosing which gear to use

Your gears are like musical notes. The right hand shifter gives you a scale or “range” from R1-R7 (1 = easy. 7 = hard/fast).

The left hand shifter is like a musical key. It shifts the whole range up a key from L1 (easy), to L2 (regular) and L3 (hard).

Broadly speaking, for regular riding you’ll use the right hand shifter whilst staying in L2. You’ll shift down to L1 for hills. You’ll shift up to L3 to pick up speed on flat terrain.

Test out your gears to find the right combinations for you. We can talk about gears in a scientific way, but the machine is powered by a human, not an engine! Everyone is different.

When you first start riding, explore the right hand range whilst remaining in L2. See which of the numbers on the right hand shifter feels comfortable for just “going along”. It might be R4, R5 or R6. Remember that combination because that will become your favourite gear.

When you’re ready, see how R4-R6 feel when you shift down on the left hand to L1. Try tackling some uphill with these gears.

Now, staying between R4-R6, shift up on the left hand to L3. Try gaining some speed on flat terrain.

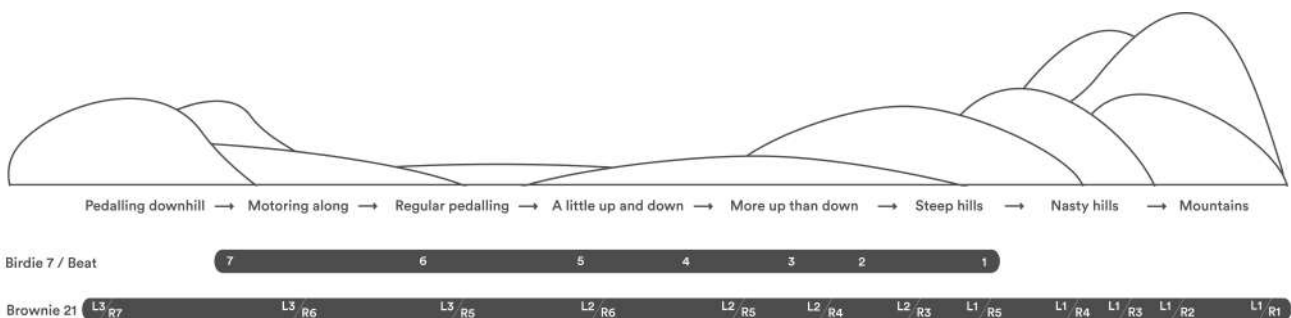
If you cycle in a hilly area, or you’re late for something and need to go fast, you might want to explore the other gears.

Remember:

Easiest gear (hills) = L1 / R1.

Hardest gear (fast) = L3 / R7.

The combination of 3 chainrings and 7 cogs creates 21 gears, but it’s likely you’ll only use a handful of them regularly. After a bit of practise you’ll soon find your personal favourite combinations, depending on the strength of your legs and the size of the hills.



Some things to Note

- Try to change gears when you're pedalling, not when you're stationary. This is because you need to do a pedal rotation to move the chain.
- The triggers on your shifter "snap" into each gear as you shift. The thumb triggers have a handy additional feature: press the trigger far inwards with your thumb and jump over two cogs for a quick change to an easier gear.
- Sudden stopping: If you have time, shift down on a few gears before stopping, so you're prepared to start off again in an easier gear.
- Sudden hills: Use the left hand shifter first and go straight to L1, then shift down on the right if it's still too hard.
- Having 3 chainrings creates a few "awkward gears". Avoid using:
L3 / R1 (use L2 / R6 instead)
L1 / R7 (use L2 / R2 instead)
- Remember to keep your chain oiled and don't knock the gears when locking up or leaning the bike.
- In the first few months your gears might need adjusting as the bike "beds itself in". You'll know when this happens because they won't shift smoothly and might click/rub. The gear cables must be tightened. Your local mechanic can do this very quickly on their workstand, or you can have a go yourself by following our assembly instructions.