

CYCLING IN WINTER

A Short Guide to Starting
(Commuter) Cycling in Winter



Cycling is an excellent everyday mode of transport for people of all ages.

It is an ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable way to move around the city, benefiting both your health and the environment.

A separate “winter bike” is not necessary – a regular bike works perfectly well in winter.

This guide provides a brief overview of the basics of starting winter cycling. Winter cycling is easy to begin when you follow a few tips and when streets and routes are properly maintained during winter.



Safety: Lights and Visibility

1 In the dark, a white front light and a red rear light are mandatory.

- The light can also be attached to a backpack or clothing, as long as it is clearly visible and turned on.
- There is no power requirement – the main thing is that others can see you. If you ride a lot in low light, it's recommended to invest in a powerful front light that clearly illuminates the road and any obstacles.

2 Reflectors Complement Lights

- Lights are visible front and back, reflectors to the sides: 360° visibility.
- Easy options: spoke reflectors, reflective tape, reflective vest
- A reflective vest is most visible – especially when worn over a backpack

Tips

- Check that your lights are working before every ride
- Carry a spare battery or a portable charger just in case
- Look at your bike from the front and back with the lights on to make sure the front light doesn't dazzle oncoming traffic and the rear light is clearly visible

Studded Tires: Myths and Facts

1 Studded tires keep the bike steady on icy surfaces

- Suitable studded tires are available for almost every bike model – the exception is road bikes, which usually cannot use studs because their narrow tires and small rims don't provide enough space for them.
- **Remember maintenance:** road salt, moisture, and dirt quickly cause rust on chains and gears.
- Rinse and wash your bike regularly and apply oil suitable for wet conditions to the chain frequently.

2 Differences Between Studded Tires

Full Studded Tires

- Studs across the entire contact surface → excellent grip on ice and snow.
- The best option for Finnish winter conditions.

Half Studded Tires

- Studs on about half of the contact surface → a good compromise if temperatures fluctuate around zero.
- A more affordable option, but mainly designed for the milder winters of Central Europe.

Tips

- Studs take a little getting used to and may make a rattling sound on bare asphalt.
- Grip improves with use as the studs settle into place. Avoid sudden braking during the first 100 km.
- Remember: studs are sharp → be careful with floors when bringing the bike indoors.

Clothing & Practical Tips

1 Layering is Key

- **Base layer:** warm thermal underwear.
- **Mid layer:** fleece or other insulating layer.
- **Outer layer:** breathable and windproof shell jacket.
- A thin beanie or neck warmer fits under the helmet.

2 Everyday “Shortcuts”

- Prepare your cycling clothes the night before.
- Keep a towel and shower supplies at work or your destination.
- Rule of thumb: it's okay to feel a little cold when starting – you'll warm up while riding.

Tips

- **Waterproof gloves** – ski gloves or insulated mittens work excellently in cold weather.
- On an e-bike, the temperature feels colder than on a regular bike because your body produces less heat when the electric assist helps with pedaling.

How Can Employers Support Commuter Cycling?

■ Storage Facilities and Secure Parking for Bikes at the Workplace

- A major barrier to increasing commuter cycling is often the lack of a safe and reliable place to lock the bike for the entire workday – neither at the workplace nor along the route, such as near train stations.
- Employers can enable safe charging of e-bike batteries at the workplace by providing a charging cabinet, keeping batteries away from desks or workstations.

■ Drying Clothes and Shower Facilities

- Most workplaces have some kind of changing rooms or similar spaces where outer and mid-layers can be left to dry during the day.
- These spaces often also provide the possibility to shower after the commute and change into work clothes.

■ Bike Washing/Maintenance at the Workplace

Workplaces may have a washing station for cars in a parking garage or another area where sand and dirt drain away without soiling corridors. This same space can be used to rinse the bike free of salt and sand and for small maintenance tasks like oiling the chain and cleaning brake surfaces.

■ Company Bikes and On-Site Maintenance

A company bike is a great way to promote commuter cycling, giving employees a reliable and functional bike while saving on purchase costs. The removal of the tax benefit does not mean the end of the company bike benefit. More information can be found on providers' websites.



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Read more about the project:
<https://www.espoo.fi/fi/cycle4climate-2024-2027>
or use the qr-code.

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