

Cycling answers

Your technical, legal and health questions answered by CTC's experts

THE EXPERTS



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Scavenge spacers to fit a 7-spd cassette on a 9-spd hub

TECHNICAL NEW WHEELS IN OLD BICYCLES

Q I have a 20-year-old Dawes Galaxy with 7-speed cassette on a hub that's 130mm over locknuts. The side of my rear rim split, so I want to buy a new wheel. But all modern wheels seem to be for 9-speeds and 135mm wide. Where can I buy a suitable wheel that isn't too expensive? Or could I just replace the rim? Or would this work out a more expensive option?

Ian Oldfield

A 130mm is still the standard hub width for 'road' wheels, but that means road racing. Touring wheels, with wide enough rims for 32mm tyres, when you can find them, are generally built on mountain bike hubs measuring 135mm over locknuts, since this makes a stronger wheel with a better chainline in low gears.

If necessary a 135 hub can be wedged into a 130 frame, but panniers make that more awkward and punctures become a real chore, so I advise spreading the frame – permanently. It's more necessary and just as possible to 'cold set' even narrower frames: and any good cycle mechanic can

do it. Browse the CTC website and Google sheldonbrown to read all about 'cold setting' – after which you might even do it yourself!

Your next problem is that a 7-speed cassette is 4mm narrower and will slop to and fro on a 9-speed freehub. I nevertheless advise you begin to equip this bike for the day when a shifter etc. wears out and you can't find anything suitable in 7-speed. For now all you need is some packing, which can be got from a worn-out 8-speed cassette. This should yield 3mm plastic spacers from between most of its sprockets and 1mm steel washer between 6th and 7th. Put the steel on the hub first, then plastic, then your cassette.

Replacing the rim is an option, but might cost almost as much – especially near London. Ask your local CTC member group about local wheel builders.

Chris Juden

LEGAL FOOTPATH FORBIDDEN?

Q On a footpath near Guildford, a sign has appeared that says: 'Public footpaths are waymarked using yellow arrows. Only walkers may use these routes. You may take a dog

provided it is under close control. If the path is suitable, a pram or pushchair may also be taken. You must not push, carry or use a bicycle on a footpath.'

I don't know who put this sign up, but as a CTC member who has both pushed and carried a bike on this path, I need to know if I am breaking the law by doing so.

David Williamson

A The Highways Act 1980 defines a footpath (which is not the same thing as a pavement) as a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only. Cyclists have no right to cycle on a footpath. If you do so you will be committing a trespass against the owner of the land unless permission has been given to do so. However you will not be committing a criminal offence unless there are local by-laws or traffic regulation orders in place creating such an offence.

If the public footpath referred to is in fact a public footway (i.e. a pavement), cycling is prohibited and is punishable by a fixed penalty notice of £30.

The Highway Code states that a cyclist must not ride on or over a pavement, footpath or footway except to gain lawful access to property or in the case of emergency.

In respect of pushing or carrying your bike along this footpath, you would need to check local by-laws and traffic regulations as these could prohibit you from doing so. If not, it is unlikely you will be committing a criminal offence. In one case considered by the courts, it was held that a person pushing her bicycle on a pedestrian crossing was a 'foot passenger'. The fact she was pushing her bicycle was considered to be immaterial as she was walking and not



■ **CYCLE REGULATIONS**

NICE LIGHT, BUT IS IT LEGAL?

You are nowadays allowed to fit any lights of appropriate colour (red at the back, anything except red at the front) on a bike, including flashing lights. But what's *allowed* is not the same as what's required. No matter how many and how bright those lights may be: to ride legally on the road at night at least two of them, one at the front and one at the back, must also be approved. Most cyclists, however, including the cycle trade and even British manufacturers of cycle lighting, no longer pay much attention to whether a light has UK legal approval. All they ask is that it works. Fortunately the Police take a similarly pragmatic view – usually.

A British Standard is not the only path to UK approval. Lights approved by one or two other European countries may also be acceptable. (See ctc.org.uk/lightingregulations.) In Britain, however, the leading brands of larger English-speaking countries are much more available. The CTC shop, for example, sells 143 different lights, many of which will function perfectly well, but only one rear and two front that are clearly approved.

With approved lights like needles in a haystack, it no longer seems reasonable to penalise cyclists who fail to comply with this letter of the law. Neither will lighting reviews in *Cycle* necessarily point out when a functional light lacks UK approval, since that has become the norm. CTC will nevertheless continue to work for a more widely accepted International Standard for cycle lighting, in the hope that manufacturers might possibly conform with that.

Chris Juden

cycling. That said, the land owner can withhold permission for bikes to be pushed or carried on the footpath and to do so would be a civil trespass against them.

Paul Kitson

six years after purchase.

It's unlikely to be worth repairing the frame, but I do know of one person (vernonbarkercycles.co.uk, in Dronfield, tel: 01246 411759) who does this in aluminium alloy.

Chris Juden

(Above) Turn to page 74 for a review of this Vis180 rear light

■ **TECHNICAL**

BROKEN ALLOY FRAME

Q In 2001 I purchased a Kettler bike. This year the top tube broke while I was cycling, about 10mm from the front weld. Whilst I don't expect anyone to guarantee a cycle for a lifetime, I would expect a frame to last longer than ten years. I ride it gently, I am 65 years old, and it has always been kept in a locked shed. Would I have any claim on Kettler to fix the bike, or failing that do you know anyone who would weld aluminium?

John Cunningham

A Unless the bike came with a specific frame warranty of 10 years or more and you still have the receipt, you'll have no claim on Kettler. For regardless of what may be the normal life expectancy of a bicycle frame, your statutory rights under the Sale of Goods Act expire



■ **TECHNICAL**
GOING CLIPLESS

Q I've recently converted from toe-clips to clipless pedals and am generally very pleased with the change. However,

(Left) Note the M on the cleats, which tells you that they are multi-release



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I'm not confident being clipped in when riding through the centre of Cambridge in heavy traffic. And I haven't entirely mastered the technique of pulling up as well as pushing on the pedals.

One person I ride with can't manage clipless at all and has to stick with toe-clips. What do you think?

Clive Dalton

A I don't think the ability to pull up is relevant to most people. Simply pushing the pedals can use all of one's aerobic capacity and pulling up is less efficient, so it's useful only as a short-term boost. What clipless does for most of us, most of the time, is to keep our feet on the right bit of the pedal.

Toe-clips do that too of course, but are more fiddle to engage than simply plonking shoe on pedal. I think that it's also more natural to move a leg sideways from the bike in preparation for getting off it, than to pull it backwards. But for someone who's been doing the toe-clip routine for a decade or more, it can be difficult to learn a new trick. When I made the change I removed the toe-clips from all of my bikes. I'm sure that helped.

I think it also helps to start with actual Shimano SPD pedals, for when these are set on minimum tension I find that engagement and disengagement occurs more easily than any other system. And if someone needs to make it even easier the 'multi-release' cleats can be fitted to their shoes. (With those cleats pulling up is not advised, since that can also release them.)

But people vary in how readily they can adapt to new ways of doing things. Some may also have a physical problem in twisting their heels outwards.

Chris Juden

Apart from accidents, cycling doesn't often cause rotator cuff injuries – but cycling can be painful with such an injury

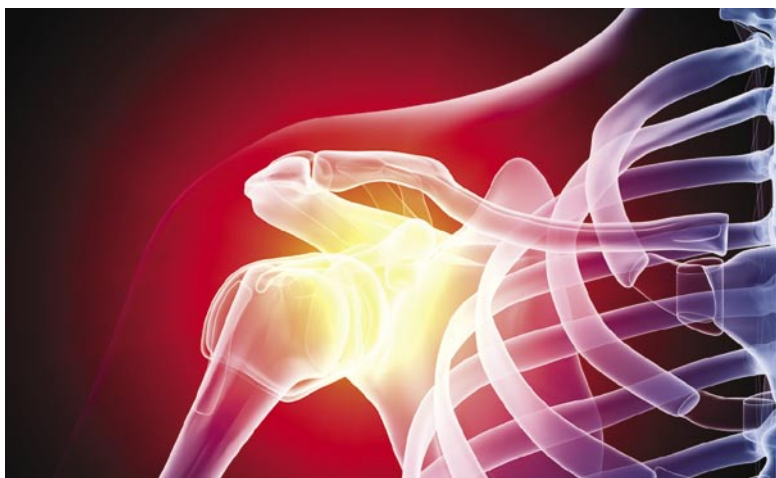


Photo: istockphoto.com

■ HEALTH ROTATOR CUFF INJURY

Q I'm waiting for a physio appointment for a rotator cuff injury, which has appeared over the last few months. It seems to be exacerbated by cycling as I get pain in my shoulder and down my arm when riding, which is accompanied by pins and needles down to my hand. I ride most days, but only for an hour or two.

I was thinking about raising the bars slightly to see if it helped, but the stem is not adjustable, so it would be a case of changing the angle. Do you think this would help?

Alison Garnett

A The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles arising from the scapula (shoulder blade) and attaching by their tendons to the head of the humerus (top of the upper arm bone). It stabilises the shoulder joint and assists its movement.

A common cause of shoulder pain, rotator cuff disorders can be subdivided (rotator cuff tears, tendonitis, impingement syndrome and subacromial bursitis) though there is considerable overlap between them. A diagnosis can often be made from symptoms

(pain, typically worse on raising the arm, sometimes with weakness) and examination. Most respond to a combination of rest (keep it mobile but avoid aggravating activities), painkillers, anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen which relieve pain and reduce inflammation, physiotherapy and steroid injections into the joint.

Rotator cuff tendonitis (inflamed tendons) is usually due to repetitive overhead activity, often sporting (e.g. swimming) or occupational (e.g. decorating). In impingement syndrome the tendon becomes trapped and rubs against the scapula, which can lead to weakening and tears. Rotator cuff tears are more common over 40 years old, though they can result from trauma in younger people. Initial treatment is similar to that above, but an MRI scan and referral to a specialist for surgery to repair the tear are sometimes required.

I assume your doctor has already assessed your shoulder pain and diagnosed a rotator cuff problem. Although cycling is not often the cause, changing your riding position may help to reduce discomfort so do try adjusting the angle of the stem and also saddle height/tilt. Since most rotator cuff problems cause pain when the arm is lifted higher or reaches further in front of you, consider a more upright body posture with the arms less stretched out. Ultimately though, treatment of the underlying problem is likely to be the best solution.

Dr Matt Brooks

CONTACTING THE EXPERTS

Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p79). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, tel: **0844 736 8450**, cycling@ctc.org.uk (general enquiries) or Chris Juden, technical@ctc.org.uk (technical enquiries). You can also write to: **CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX**. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, tel: **0844 736 8452**.