

Be Cool, It's a Bike Path

How to be safe and have more fun the next time you roll down a multi-use path
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Multi-use paths are being added to cities across the country at an exciting rate and more people are using them. That's a great thing. But crowding can lead to conflict. To stay safe, and make the experience more enjoyable for everyone, here are a few guidelines for blissfully sharing bike paths with fellow cyclists, joggers, dog walkers, and everyone else.

- 1. Get out of time-trial mode, duh.** It's fun to go fast, but a bike path isn't the place to **seek a KOM**. Yes, you can crank things up a bit if you have clear sight lines and few other users but, as a general rule, keep it under control.
- 2. Ride right, pass left.** Act like a car in these situations. Right for travel, left for passing. And, of course, obey all traffic signals.
- 3. Slow down—and be prepared to stop—when there are others around.** People are unpredictable. Kids and **pets** especially, but the truth is, anyone can be so involved in a conversation or wrapped up in their own thoughts that they'll make a bad choice even if they hear you coming. Slow to a walking pace and keep your hands on your brakes.
- 4. Make some noise well before passing.** **A bell is more charming** (and less startling) than an "on your left!" but either is preferable to a stealth pass. Make noise—be sure you're heard—well before you reach the person you're passing.
- 5. Look around (and signal!) before passing or stopping.** Just because you're doing it right doesn't mean everyone else is. Before you swing left to pass or **hit the brakes** to stop, throw out a hand signal, and take a look behind you for oncoming traffic.
- 6. Don't stand in the path.** Sometimes it's nice to stop and look around and **take a drink**. Pull off the path when you do so, otherwise you'll block the way for everyone else.
- 7. Be nice.** It's the most important thing. You're representing cyclists as a group. Don't be a stone-faced automaton hell-bent on maintaining your 19.5 mph pace. Treat people the way you want to be treated. Be friendly. Wave. Say hello. It will make all of our time on these super paths a little more fun.