



## Enough Excuses... Let's Bike to Work!

By Delphine Taylor and Ira Liss

If you already ride a bike in Fort Collins, you know the freedom.

On a bike, you can go anywhere, anytime. You're not limited by subway locations or breakdowns. You're not stuck to fixed routes. You can be spontaneous. Choose from dozens of ways to get around. See more of the city.

You're not waiting - for the train to arrive, for your ride to show up, for traffic to clear. You're in control. You're independent.

If you ride, you know the ecological benefits too.

No fuel. No oil. No fumes. No noise. No hogging of space. No complicity in poisoning the environment.

If you're not already biking to work, you could be. What's your excuse? Here we describe common obstacles to bicycle commuting, and we offer help.

Lets get rolling.

Bike to work!

### **"Traffic is too scary."**

Minimize the risks. Bone up on bike safety; find an experienced commuter who lives nearby to buddy up with until you're comfortable going solo. Find car-free greenways and low-trafficked or traffic-calmed streets to incorporate into your route.

### **"Where can I park?"**

If you want safe parking, you have to arrange it. Talk to building management. What's their policy? Can you use the main entrance? If not, the freight elevator? Can you park in the basement?

Are they uncooperative? Take it to your boss, preferably the V-P who signed the lease. Ask him or her to negotiate with building management. Still can't crack the building? Look for ways to get your foot (and wheels) in the door; a Monday holiday when building traffic is light; a weekend; special occasions - Earth Week or an oil crisis.

Be persistent but don't threaten. Your goal is getting your bike in the building, not winning debates. Appreciation and respect will pave the way for the next commuter.

Getting nowhere? Scour the neighborhood for a bike-friendly building. If a friend near you has access, ask to park with them. Or ask at nearby garages. Some will allow bikes.

If all else fails, park outside - a big step. Plan it. Where are other bikes parked? What locks do they use? Two locks are much better than one: Install a seat chain. Take

your front wheel with you so thieves can't ride away. The sight of you bringing a wheel into the office every day may inspire others.

Or consider a [folding bike](#). There are several models that are perfectly safe, maneuverable and durable for NYC streets.

**"It's too far to bike."**

Try it. Ride the route on a weekend. You may find it invigorating, stimulating and easy to do. If you live outside the city, bike to the train station and park there. Or get a [folding bike](#). They go everywhere. Trains, buses, elevators.

**"What if I get a flat?"**

Carry a patch kit, spare tube and pump. Take a bike repair course. Know the bike stores and subway stops along the route, just in case.

**"I can't fit a bike in my apartment"**

No basement storage? Use your ceiling or wall. Ceiling hooks cost \$3 a pair at hardware stores. Wall brackets are \$20-30 at bike stores.

**"I'm afraid to ride at night."**

The more visible you are, the safer your ride. Lights cost from a few bucks to over \$100, depending on features. Slap reflective tape on your helmet and bike. Concerned about security? Find a partner and stick to well-traveled routes.

**"What If It starts raining?"**

"There's no such thing as bad weather," say veteran bike commuters, "just bad clothing." A thin nylon shell over your clothes will keep you warm, and you'll stay dry with Gore-Tex or Thinsulate jackets and rainpants. Consider garters, rubber boot-covers or even plastic bags over your feet. Fenders help too. If the weather's really grim, maybe that's the day you take the train.

**"My clothes will get dirty."**

They don't have to. Carry your good clothes and change at the office. Use a basket, bag or panniers (saddlebags, about \$60 a pair). Or wear part of your outfit, and slip on shoes, jacket and tie when you get there. Loose clothing cuts down on sweat, but don't forget pantclips. Keep a spare outfit at the office in case of a mishap.

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