Fall-Hamilton Bike Club Curriculum

Walk Bike Nashville suggested curriculum. Based on running two clubs of 9 weeks each during double (90 mins) Enrichment time in 2018.

For further information call Robert Johnson, Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator, Walk Bike Nashville 615 928 8801

WEEK 1

Meet and greet your students - Tell them your name (Coach Smith works better than Ms./Mr. Smith). Write your name on white board and ask each student his/her name and then write it on white board. Then ask each student where she/he would like to ride to in their neighborhood (or any other engaging question). You can start this off by telling them where you’d like to ride in your neighborhood e.g., the Mapco for a cold drink. If your class it too big, don’t write the answers but do ask the question to get them thinking about using the bicycle to expand their comfort zone.

Fit Helmets – If there might be a lice transmission issue, consider using disposable hairnets during this fitting. If possible, identify each rider’s helmet, writing names on easily-removable colored tape applied to the helmets. Try to minimize helmet swapping during later sessions for this same reason.

A helmet should ride two fingers above the eyebrows, have the two straps on each side of each ear, and have no more than two fingers space between the chin and the strap. Demonstrate how a helmet should fit; show what happens if it’s too far back (doesn’t protect the front of brain), or if it’s too loose (rocks around and may cant to the side).

Let them try the two-fingers test on themselves or their neighbor, so they can feel that the helmet should be snug but not choking.

Fit Bikes – Riding the correctly sized bicycle is very important. Help each student find one that she/he can easily straddle: check that there are at least two inches of space between the top bar of the bike and the child’s crotch (you may have to tell them to hold their pants way up and let them laugh about it looking nerdy). Emphasize that when they stop, if they land on the crossbar, it will hurt.

Adjust the seat post so that the student can easily mount and dismount from the bike. Again, you may demonstrate what happens if saddle is too high (easier to tip over to the side) or too low (might land on the crossbar and is harder to pedal). When on the saddle the rider should be able to reach the handlebars comfortably, without being too cramped.

Again, if possible, label each bike with matching colored tape for quicker transition to bike each time.
Free Ride – If weather permits, take the riders outside and have them ride around in a big circle together. Watch them on the bikes to gauge their abilities and let them ask you questions.

If helmets and bikes are not labeled, tell students to remember which helmet and bike is theirs, and hang helmet on bike at the end of each session.

If you are having a hard time keeping the riders attention, develop your own fun cue to get it, e.g., tap your helmet two times, use a bicycle bell, or a whistle. Staff will have their own class or school cues you could ask about.

**Week 2**

Greet the riders, remind them of your name and show them your "pay attention" cue again, be it helmet tap, whistle or bell. Ask if they had a chance to ride since their last meeting or if they’ve spotted a new place they’d like to be able to ride to.

Have the riders locate their bikes, and put their helmets on. Check the fit again and remind them of the two-finger rule. You can also ask if they remember what happens when the helmet is too far back on the head or too loose.

Do the straddle test for each rider and ask if they have any questions. Adjust bikes as necessary.

**Slow Race** – Mark two lines about 15 feet apart and wide enough for all students to line up on with elbow room. Have the riders walk their bikes to the start line and then straddle them. The object of the race is to be last with the winner being the last rider to cross the finish line; There is no stopping, no going backwards, touching other competitors, or putting a foot down. (If able, do a frenzied commentary as for a speed race, except they are going really slowly – very funny). If you have some very slow music, you can also play that to help set the tempo. Riding very slowly is quite a skill, so you may have to run multiple heats.

**Slalom** – To set a course, place at least eight tennis half-balls six feet apart in a straight line (if you do not have the tennis half-balls, then small cones may be used). Have the students weave alternate sides of the obstacles without touching them. Then place half-balls (or cones) two feet away from those and parallel, to create gates they must ride between. After they have mastered the six-foot slalom, reduce the six feet to five feet apart, which makes it more difficult. If you have more skilled riders, have them weave around the outside of the pairs of balls, not within the "gates", which makes it no longer possible to go in a nearly straight line. As always, you may demonstrate this skill for your riders.
Free time - It is important that all the riders get to practice their newly developed skills, so let them try the slalom some more, or try to ride very slowly near the outside of the room. Or, simply ride around, enjoying being a kid on a bicycle.

**Week 3**

Repeat slow races if popular.

Repeat slalom until everyone can at least weave between pairs of half-balls 6 ft apart.

**Pedal Power Position** - This emphasizes starting with your pedal in the power position, about 2:00, if viewed from the right side of the bike. The rider pushes the pedal down firmly as he/she rises onto the saddle. Demonstrate how this gives the rider a smoother, more efficient start and then demonstrate what happens when you try to start with your foot all the way at the bottom (it usually involves the dreaded wobble). Tell them they will need to use this skill to take off fast in races or catch up with their friends who are ahead.

**Braking** - Starting and stopping quickly, without wobbling, helps a rider maintain control of his/her bicycle. When riding in town, you must be ready to stop quickly if a dog, a child or even a friend steps in front of you.

The course should have a starting line, with a seven-foot approach to a two-foot x three-foot rectangle, created with four half-balls.

The goal is for a rider to approach the two-foot side and then stop her/his bicycle entirely within the rectangle. You may demonstrate and then use students on bikes with front and back brakes first. Then have the students on bikes with only coaster (back-pedal) brakes do the exercise. The ability to stop with the front wheel within an inch of the target line (say the exit side of the box) should also be practiced and achieved.

Once they can all do this, then get them to demonstrate the effect of front only, rear only, and then both brakes, (three separate passes) by using each brake as hard as they dare when the front wheel first enters the box. Use a tennis half-ball to mark where the front wheel stopped on each occasion. Seeing where their front wheel ends up with both brakes versus only one brake may help them understand the importance of braking with both hands, while also dispelling some of the fear of using the front brake.

**Rock Dodge** - When riding city streets, you may come across a rock, a turtle, or a pothole that you didn’t see until it was right in front of you. Rock dodge helps you maneuver around sudden obstacles while keeping control of your bike.

The course will have a starting line with a seven-foot approach to a rectangle two-feet (entry and exit) by three-feet (sides). In the middle of this rectangle you will put another half-ball, or "rock".
A rider will power start from the start line and once in the rectangle, twitch his/her bike to avoid the rock with the front tire going to the right, keeping his/her body relatively still. This "twitch" is accomplished by quickly turning the wheel to the left and then quickly back right. Doing this enables the bike to make a quicker and tighter turn. It is okay if the rear wheel hits the rock – in fact if riders are not going close enough to the “rock” then ask them to make the back wheel touch it will ensure they correctly practice the maneuver.

Free time As before, let them enjoy riding around practicing new skills or simply riding safely!

**Week 4**

Previous Drills - Repeat any drills that were popular and might need work. In order to get them working on their starting and stopping, you can play a game of Musical Bikes, where they would start with the music and stop when it stops. You could eliminate the last rider to stop each time.

Mountain bike handling - Place two pairs of half-balls two feet apart, 15 feet from each other. Have the students roll through this straight line course standing up on the pedals, with the pedals at 12 o’clock and 6 o’clock, and then again with the pedals at 3 o’clock and 9 o’clock. It is much easier to move efficiently from seated to having one or both legs straight than it is to hesitate, and have weight on legs bent at the knees for a long time.

Have the riders roll through the course while leaning as far forward, and then as far backward, as possible, including while standing up.

Have the students roll through the course while standing on the pedals and leaning the frame of the bike to the left, and then while leaning it to the right. Doing this while maintaining a straight line through the course requires practice.

Demonstrate the above skills, if possible.

Free time
**Week 5**

Repeat Drills - Work on any drills that the riders found popular or need work on.

**Looking over Shoulder** - Checking over your shoulder for traffic (or scanning) is critical when swerving around something in your path, changing lanes or getting ready to make a left turn. As a bike tends to go where the rider is looking, the rider needs to learn how to avoid this tendency to swerve. Demonstrate this skill, if possible.

A rider can scan by simply turning his/her head, or by taking his scan-side hand off the handlebar and turning his/her body to look behind.

This course is set up as a straight line, 20-feet long, using ten half-balls, with two half-balls set up 18 inches apart for gates, at intervals of five-feet.

Have each rider start (with power pedal push) and as he/she rides away from you, yell scan while holding up one or two hands, or none. He/she should then scan over his/her left shoulder and tell you what they see. Do this three times for each round, then have them repeat the drill scanning over their right shoulders.

You will want the riders to turn enough to identify the number of hands held up, maintain a straight line, and recover well from swerve.

Free time

---

**Week 6**

Repeat Drills - Work on any drills that the riders need work on.

**Hand Signals** – This skill involves maintaining a straight line while cycling with only one hand. This is important as having control of your bicycle in traffic during simple tasks helps a rider avoid crashes.

Show the different types of road signs: Stop Sign, Four-way Stop Sign, Yield Sign; explain the differences. Remind the students that when they are riding, they are a vehicle and must obey all the signs, e.g., stopping at the 4-way stop and taking his/her turn. Point out that, when turning right, they do it from the right-hand lane. When turning left, they must move into the lane that goes left, signal and then turn left. Their signals must be deliberate and predictable.

They must yield to pedestrians when turning. At any intersection, be visible and make sure the car drivers can see them.

A difficult concept to teach is that when cycling on the roadway, they should act like vehicles: But when cycling on the sidewalk they should act like pedestrians.

If they get off their bicycles and walk them across an intersection, they are then pedestrians. They will have the right-of-way in many cases, but must be sure any car drivers see them crossing the street.
Discuss the different road markings they might see. Pedestrian crosswalk lines (cyclists must yield to pedestrians), RR crossing (emphasize crossing tracks perpendicular), arrows indicating which lane is going straight or turning, etc.

Ask the students if they can spot possible dangers in going through intersections.

Course Layout – Using stop signs and spray chalk available from Walk Bike Nashville, set up a course for a four-way stop and a course for a regular (two-way) stop. Make each course with 15-20 feet lead-in roadways on at least two sides. If using one course, start with the regular stop, complete all the drills for that and then change out for the four-way stop.

Instruct the riders to start riding, scan early (give them a prompt), then signal for count of two (helps to count this out loud with them), return hands to bars, and then scan and signal one more time before the stop sign. The rider should return both hands to the handlebars and then make the turn indicated. Have each rider do the right-turn scan and signal course three times, then have them do it turning left three times.

Emphasize the importance of road positioning for predictability and their visibility, particularly for left turns.

Emphasize the dangers inherent in left turns versus right turns; crossing traffic lanes, being exposed to cars coming from behind, being away from the safety of the side of the road.

Have riders negotiate the intersections with you acting as a car, and then with you acting as a pedestrian. Emphasize the ability to ride straight with one hand and the returning of both hands to the handlebars after each signal and during the turns.

Free time Encourage them to role play during free time, by taking turns through the stop sign courses.

Wk 7

Greet riders and ask if any of them were able to practice their new skills since last time. Also, ask if any of them watched how cars go through intersections.

Repeat Drills from Week 6

Free time

Wk 8

Road ride to Dozen Bakery, ¾ mile. Walk Bike Nashville can explain the route we have used previously.
Walk Bike Nashville’s recommendation is that riders, at a minimum, should have completed Week 3 lesson and one of Week 6 or 7 lesson’s to be allowed to go on the road ride. If there is any disagreement between adults that a rider is competent, arrangements need to be made in advance for that rider to stay behind at school, because the teacher and the Coach will be escorting the rest of the club on the road ride that day.

Coach should be at the rear of the group. Another adult should be at the front of the group, at least initially. Riders may be allowed to be in front of lead adult rider, based on competence and demonstrated self-responsibility. No riders should be allowed to be behind the Coach.

Walk Bike Nashville can give advice on cycling on the sidewalk of Martin St and how the intersection of Hamilton Ave and Martin St was blocked by an adult rider to facilitate the whole group safely passing through. The other roads and intersections were used on-road and crossed as vehicles would, for the purposes of demonstrating normal cycling procedures.

A teacher must go with the group so that it is treated as a field trip, with normal MNPS waiver requirements.

Dozen Bakery may donate a cookie to each child, if this is arranged in advance.

**Wk 9**

Repeat Road ride to Dozen Bakery, ¾ mile. Coach may let riders take turns leading based on competence and demonstrated self-responsibility.