

## **Smart Commute's Winter Cycling Tips**

### **ADJUST TO WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Winter months can bring forth a lot of unpredictable weather. From snow and slush, to freezing rain and black ice, there are a lot of things to consider when biking in these conditions. Keep a constant rotation speed when pedaling to maintain consistent pressure on your tires. If you pedal in short bursts, you will cause your bike to spin out. Slow down and ride carefully. We advise not slamming on the brakes, or making any sharp turns, and lowering your tire pressure.

### **MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE**

Canadian winters bring flurries, shorter days, and less daylight. With a decrease in overall visibility, it is important to be more distinguishable when on the road. It is the law to have your bike fitted with flashing lights, but it never hurts to add an additional reflector, light, or brightly coloured jacket!

### **LAYERING UP**

When going outside it is important to dress warmly and for the weather. Layers are a great way to keep warm when planning to hop on a bike on a cold day. This way, as you warm up while you ride, you can unzip or remove layers as needed. Wearing comfortable clothing is key. Gloves, and earmuffs or a lightweight hat are great for keeping exposed areas covered from the wind and cold.

### **PLAN YOUR ROUTE IN ADVANCE**

Whether you are commuting to work, running errands, or just out for some exercise, it is important to plan your route ahead of time for a predictable and safe ride. We all know that snow in Ontario is inevitable, and planning ahead could help you avoid delays and being stuck out in the cold. This also includes planning alternate travel arrangements in the case that you are unable to cycle back home due to unpredictable, inclement weather.

### **STAYING SEATED AND LOWERING YOUR SEAT**

Always use your bike seat when riding in the winter. While standing may be your go-to position for summer biking, staying seated provides additional traction for your tires. Your body weight will help your tires navigate the uneven terrain of snow, making for an easier and safer ride. The simple action of lowering your center of gravity is likely to make your bike far less wobbly, a small change that can make it far easier to manage icy patches.

### **CLEANING YOUR BICYCLE**

Winter roadways carry a lot of sand, salt and grit that will corrode your bicycle – damaging your suspension, bearings, and gears. Regular cleaning and maintenance can help keep you rolling safely, and efficiently throughout the winter months. A clean bike is a well-functioning and predictable bike! If available in your city, you could also consider using Bike Share in the winter, to save your own bike.

