

# How To Find Time To Ride

By [Fred Matheny](#)



We shouldn't feel excessive admiration for pro racers who log 600-mile weeks. They have plenty of time to ride and recover — that's their job. The real heroes are people like you, who find time to ride while still having a life away from the bike.

Full-time work, family commitments and cycling can be efficiently interwoven into your busy day. All it takes to schedule everything into 24 hours is maximum use of time-budgeting techniques.

Here's where to look for time slots that can accommodate your love for riding:

## Commuting

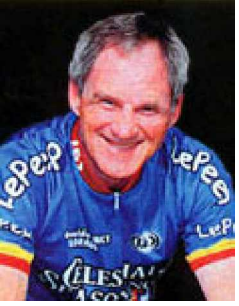
Riding your bike to work or school and back may be the best way to create cycling time.

When you commute by bike, time normally spent sitting in a car is used productively as part of the training day. An eight-mile ride to work or school takes about 30 minutes each way. Even if you do no other riding, that's still an hour of cycling each weekday. The trip home can be lengthened as much as time, daylight and energy allow.

Another benefit is arriving at your job refreshed and alert. It may be tough to get up earlier for the ride in, but the physical and mental lift of exercise will carry you through that 10 a.m. letdown that your sedentary colleagues experience. Then you ride home, clearing cobwebs and blowing away job-related frustrations. You're refreshed and ready for evening responsibilities or family fun.

## Commuting Logistics

- **Use a small backpack** to carry clothes, lunch and papers. A waist strap helps eliminate swaying and bouncing as you ride.
- **Keep a pair of shoes at work** so you don't have their weight and sharp edges in the pack. Take the week's clothes to work on Monday morning and shuttle them home Friday afternoon, or whatever arrangement fits your situation.
- **Clean up in the restroom** with a lightly soaped washcloth. Meanwhile, get coworkers interested in commuting and lobby your boss to install a shower.
- **Dress in your office** if it has a door. If not, use the restroom or a storage room.
- **Play on the way home.** Scout out a longer route and ride for an hour or more as time and commitments allow. Do intervals, time trials, or hit the hills hard to get a great workout while you're homeward bound.



If commuting simply won't work for you, here are two popular options:

### **Early Bird Special**

Consider an early-morning workout. By the middle of March it's usually light enough to get in a ride before work. At dawn there are few cars on the road and the day is brightening every minute.

Getting up in the pre-dawn hour may be the ultimate test of whether you really want to ride. Roll out of bed the minute the alarm rings and don't think about anything. The longer you lie there moaning about how early it is, the harder it is to extricate yourself from the sheets.

Sleep loss is the biggest risk. Make up the deficit with an earlier bedtime because it's vital to get enough rest. Lack of sleep can lead to deep fatigue and poor performance in everything you do.

### **Evening Rides**

If your schedule prohibits riding most of the day, try from 9 to 10 or 10:30 p.m. For most people, the kids are in bed, the chores around the house complete, and you're probably wasting time watching TV.

To make this work, eat a moderate dinner at 6 or 7 p.m., allowing the food to digest by riding time. As an additional benefit this provides motivation not to overeat.

Riding in the dark used to be dangerous because lights were poor. You couldn't see road hazards clearly, and motorists couldn't see you. Modern lighting systems make night riding safer, but it's still smart to use lighted parks or suburban streets if they're available.

---

This article is provided courtesy of [RoadBikeRider.com](http://RoadBikeRider.com) and was written by its co-founder Fred Matheny (left). Fred was the Training and Fitness Editor of *Bicycling Magazine* for a decade, has written many books on cycling including **Fred Matheny's Complete Book Of Road Bike Training**; and is a world-record-holding roadie.

[RoadBikeRider](http://RoadBikeRider.com) offers cycling books, many more cycling guides and even a [free weekly e-mail newsletter](#) full of tips and news for aspiring bicyclists. *Receive a FREE copy of the eBook "29 Pro Cycling Secrets for Roadies" by subscribing today.*