

MY BIKE

WHAT TYPE OF BIKE SHOULD I RIDE?

The Annual Tour is a ride for everyone with kilometres of roads perfect for uninterrupted touring. The route will follow roads that are all sealed tarmac - the bitumen is good and most of the roads are broad and some have a shoulder. There are however some narrow sections featuring repair patches and potholes, so wider tyres would be more comfortable. On some days there will also be the option of riding on some unsealed roads to enable you to explore some more of the sites and attractions along the way.

We recommend wide touring tyres for road bikes and hybrids, or slick tyres (minimum tread, but best with knobbly edges) for mountain bikes. Check out the tyre options at your local bike store.

Road bikes are for riders who like to travel swiftly. A well set up road bike can be great to ride, making it easier to cover those kilometres. However they're not always the most comfortable, but by fitting slightly wider road tyres (28mm across) with good tread you can improve the quality of the ride.

Mountain bikes can be very comfortable and easy to ride. They're usually fitted with a wide range of gears, which helps when taking on the big hills. The easiest gear is often called the 'granny gear', though it's not always grannies that use it! Mountain bikes are, however, heavier and slower than other bikes, partly because of their robust construction, but also because the tyres are wider increasing the friction with the road. By fitting lower profile tyres with road tread (slicks) you can improve the performance on road, especially if you pump the tyres to at least 50psi. Using this type of tyre will reduce your rolling resistance on sealed roads compared with big beefy knobbly tyres, which are designed for off road action.

Hybrid bikes offer the comfort and robustness of a mountain bike with the sprightlier handling characteristics of a road bike. They are usually fitted with flat handlebars and mountain bike brakes and gear levers. Their wider wheel rims and slightly larger road type tyres provide a comfortable ride. Hybrids sometimes come fitted with rear racks so you can use a pannier bag to carry your gear rather than lugging it around in a backpack.

Tandems, tag-a-longs and trikes and other exotic machines are very welcome on the Annual Tour. Tandems are great fun to ride and combine the wind resistance of one with the power of two, though they tend to be more of a struggle getting uphill. Recumbents offer a reclining riding position but because you're riding low to the ground, you need at least a flag and ideally lights and reflective clothing so you're easily visible to other road users. Like tandems, recumbents can be very fast, but tend to make you work harder uphill. Tag-a-long tandem trailers allow children to ride behind mum or dad and enjoy the ride at their own pedalling pace.

The best way to carry basic gear (such as rain jacket, puncture repair kit, spare tube, sun block, money, Ride Guide, snacks and your cup for morning and afternoon teas) is in a lightweight compact saddlebag or a seat pillar mounted rear bag, or simply in a small backpack. You'll be carrying plenty of water too, so keep the weight down to a minimum.

In all cases, you should choose the bike and tyres you feel confident about riding on various surfaces, and be able to quickly and safely pull off the road (on to dirt or gravel) if you need to.

A final word of advice about your choice of bike: Nine days in the saddle is a long time, so you need to be very comfortable with your bike. Once you've made your choice, and especially if you're purchasing a new one – or even a new component such as a saddle – give yourself plenty of time to train with it. Arriving on Day One of the Annual Tour with a brand new bike out of the box, or a new saddle that looked good in the store, may not seem like such a great idea 40km, 100km or 400km down the track when your body starts to rebel against this unfamiliar machine. Your bike should be like a familiar friend, perfect company for a tour of regional South Australia.

BIKE HIRE

If you don't have a suitable bike or don't want the hassle of transporting your bike to Adelaide you can hire a bike from Bicycle SA for the tour
Email office@bikesa.asn.au for rates and details.

HOW SHOULD I SET UP MY BIKE?

Taking the time and effort to set up your bike properly is the best way to ensure happy and comfortable riding. When your bike is carefully adjusted to fit your particular body size and shape you'll feel more relaxed and will be able to ride longer distances with less effort. Once you have made the adjustments recommended below, ride gently for the next few days to give your body time to adjust to the new settings.

To set up your bike for an optimum riding position you will need a few bike tools and may need someone to assist you, or help from your local bike store.

Foot position: If you have Shimano SPD shoes / pedals or other clip less pedals you can make this adjustment by clipping your shoes into the pedal and adjusting the cleat fixing bolts. The ball of your foot should be centred over the pedal axle. For small feet and high rpm (revolutions per minute) you can place the ball of your foot slightly behind centre. If you have toe clips there should be a 2mm clearance between your shoe and the clip.

Saddle position: First adjust your saddle so that the top surface is parallel with the road surface. Then set the saddle height the following way: With the crank arm at the bottom and top of the revolution, sit on the saddle and place your heel (shoes on) on the top of the pedal. With the saddle height correctly adjusted your leg should be in the straight 'locked' position. Make sure to take account of oversize heels on your shoes if you have extra thick soles.

Saddle front / back adjustment: Sit on your bike in your normal riding position with the cranks in the 3 and 9 o'clock position. Your saddle is correctly positioned when your tibial tuberosity (the bump at the top of the shin bone) is 1cm behind the pedal axle. You may need a plumb line and a helper to make this adjustment and may have to readjust saddle height if you move the saddle significantly.

Stem and handlebars: Correct stem height can be between level with the saddle height and 6cm below. The generally preferred range is 2.5 to 4.5cm lower. To ensure good chest expansion and breathing your handlebars should be as wide as your shoulders. On a mountain or hybrid bike some riders may prefer a more upright riding position with a higher stem. Extra wide flat-type mountain bike handlebars may give more stable control on unsealed roads but you may find them uncomfortable on long rides over sealed roads. Bar extensions and narrower handlebars will give you greater variety of comfortable hand positions and also place your upper body in a slightly lower position to reduce your overall resistance to the wind.

Check your set up: When you have made your new bike set up adjustments, go for a short ride and monitor your riding position. Get someone to accompany you on their bike so that they can observe your riding position from the rear and side.

Your riding position should feel very comfortable and not stressed and your legs should feel that they almost extend with each pedal stroke. If your pelvis rocks from side to side on your saddle then it is set too high. Make new adjustments and try again until you feel comfortable.

Adjusting to your new position. It takes time to settle in to your new position and you may still have to do some fine-tuning. Overall you should feel much better when you ride and less strained when you arrive at the finish.

IS YOUR BIKE AS FIT AS YOU ARE?

If you're not able to provide your bike with all the TLC it needs then take it to a bike store for a thorough check up. Book it in at least a month beforehand, especially if major work is needed, otherwise you might find the work's not completed in time, and anyway you need these last few weeks for more training. If you always keep your bike in good mechanical order, you may simply need to lubricate the chain and check the adjustment on all moving parts, especially brakes and gears.

Here is a list of items that you need to check on your bike:

- ALL THE BEARINGS
 - Wheel bearings, front and rear
 - Headset
 - Bottom bracket
 - Pedals
- DRIVE TRAIN
 - Chain (has it stretched - i.e., worn – beyond its limit?)
 - Chain rings
 - Cogs
 - If any one of the drive train components is suspect the other components need to be carefully assessed also. Worn drive train components can lead to poor gear shifting, or the chain slipping.
 - Cranks and chain ring bolts should be tight
- GEARS
 - Derailleurs
 - Cables
 - Replace any frayed cables, or any cracked or broken cable outers
 - Shifters
 - Gripshift style (twist) shifters need to be cleaned and lubricated from time to time
- BRAKES
 - Pads
 - Not too worn, properly aligned (disc brake pads wear too)
 - Pads (rim type or disc) not dragging
 - Cables – as for gears above
 - Hydraulic discs – should not be spongy
- WHEELS
 - Check for buckles, large or small
 - Buckled wheels will also affect braking performance
 - Check for broken or loose spokes

- TYRES
 - Inspect the tread for cuts, wear and tread condition
 - Inspect the tyre side walls for cuts and bulges
 - Check for recommended tyre pressure (marked on the tyre side wall)
- SUSPENSION
 - Performing correctly, without leaks, rattles, or backwards and forwards play
- ACCESSORIES (racks, lights, drink bottle cages, etc.) should be tight, not broken, and with all the correct fixings.

Spares and tools that you should bring with you include:

- Spare tubes of the correct size for your wheels and tyres
- Patch kit and tyre levers
- Basic tools (Philips and flat screwdrivers, Allen keys or spanners) or a multi-tool

Talk to your bike shop about the need to take any special tools specific to your bike.

Check out www.bikesa.asn.au for information about Bicycle SA maintenance courses.

BIKE REPAIRS ON THE ROAD

Even though your bike may be in top mechanical condition you can't predict when parts will break or get damaged during the course of a normal day's riding. To cope with the most common type of breakdown – a flat tyre - we recommend you carry the basic tools and repair equipment. You will need tyre levers, patch kit, pump and, if it all goes pear-shaped, spare tube. You might prefer to pack these tools and equipment in a small saddle/seat pillar bag. Your pump will usually strap into a special bracket, which attaches to your bicycle frame.

On this year's Annual Tour there will again be a comprehensive bicycle service and support crew supporting the ride. This will include personnel traveling with the ride and a mechanic located at each campsite. Let them know about any mechanical problems as soon as you arrive at campsite, and in almost all cases they'll make sure the repairs are made that afternoon in time for you to get back in your saddle the following morning. Fees apply for parts and labour.

If your bike does break down along the cycle route, stand it upside down well off the road surface to indicate that you need help with repairs. If you have a mobile phone and are in range you can also call one of the support crew for help. The phone number will be in your Ride Guide. Alternatively you can contact the Sag Wagon or any of the Ride Marshals, as they may be able to help.

For more information go to www.bikesa.asn.au or email office@bikesa.asn.au