

9. Looking behind, riding with one hand and signalling

National Standard reference: 2.2.2

Instructing points

Look behind

- Look over each shoulder when you ride in a straight line while pedalling to maintain speed.
- To help you look behind, rotate your neck, shoulders and (if necessary) hips while keeping your arms still and rest your chin on your shoulder.
- Identify what is behind you and make eye contact with someone riding behind you.
- Check it is clear before you turn or change position.

Ride with one hand

- Ride with one hand with control: you're able to lift your hand, wave and signal.
- To help you balance, sit up straight, relax, look straight ahead, do not over-grip the handlebars and pedal in a comfortable gear.
- Take your hand off the handlebars, so you can do the following:
 - tap the handlebars
 - touch your knee or helmet
 - signal with a straight arm and with your palm facing forward
 - wave
- Carry out the *look, tell, check again* routine (look back, signal and perform a last check before turning or changing position).

Activity ideas

Look behind

Demonstrate by riding away from the riders in a straight line and looking back at them with clear eye contact. Ask them to watch what you do with your head and your pedalling, and whether they were able to make eye contact with you.

Explain techniques for looking behind: rotate the hips to the side, aim your chin towards your shoulder, changing position on saddle, keeping arms still.

Ask riders to cycle down a central path (in an oval of cones). As they ride away from you, ask them to look back over their shoulder (they should practise both sides). Ask them to get information from behind such as how many fingers you are showing, or what colour cone you are holding up. Ensure they practise looking over both shoulders. If working with a co-instructor, they can also ask the riders to look behind at a different point of the circuit.

Activity ideas (continued)

Play the 'snake and split' game:

1. Get the riders to cycle inside an oval of cones – riding any direction they like provided they ride slowly and observe before they change their position.
2. Nominate a particular rider in the group to lead the snake. On calling their name, all the riders need to check again that it is clear and then move into a snake behind that rider.
3. Ask the lead rider to look and name the rider behind them, then ask the same to the second rider, the third rider, and so on. You can also ask questions such as, “Is [name of the rider behind] covering their brakes?” or “What colour is [name of the rider behind]’s helmet?” Ask these questions when the riders cycle down the central path (where they must look behind when riding in a straight line). Also, prompt riders to make eye contact with the person behind.
4. Once all the riders have looked behind, get the group to split up and move back into the oval of cones to ‘free ride’, before naming another leader for the group to follow.
5. Repeat the above, giving each rider a turn being the leader of the snake.

Riding with one hand

Demonstrate by raising your hand a little or waving. Ask riders to notice what you do with your head, body position, arm and hand, and pedals. Ask them why pedalling can help when riding with one hand.

Then get the riders to ride towards you mirroring what you do. Mime holding some handlebars then lift a hand up and then down from them, then left and right off them. Eventually end up with a full signal with a straight arm and palm facing forward.

The riders cycle around an oval of cones and on reaching you at the top or end of the oval, turn down a central path. They then need to look back at you (you will be directly behind them) and attempt to signal in the direction that you point. Before reaching the end of the path, they should put their hand back on the handlebars and perform a last check before turning in that direction at the end of the path. If riders are asked to turn in different directions, when they ride around the oval and reach the ‘gate’ for the central path again, they will need to negotiate with each other before entering the central path again. Consider allowing the riders to choose which way to signal and turn.

Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. Why do you need to be able to look behind while cycling?
- Q. How can we ride one-handed with control?
- Q. What should we do if we are not comfortable taking our hand off?
- Q. What is the communication routine if you want to signal?

Differentiation

Inclusion

Riders with one arm or a prosthetic limb should be asked to remain in control of their cycle, and alternative methods of communication will be explored during on-road training. This may also apply to some non-standard cycles.

Riders with restricted mobility may struggle to look behind or to perform a sequence. If, due to a health condition, they can look over one shoulder but not the other, consider asking them to use that shoulder all the time. Also consider using mirrors or a 'ride buddy'.

Riders with dyspraxia, co-ordination issues or restricted mobility may struggle to ride one-handed. Progress activities at their pace.

Extension

Simplify

For riders struggling to ride with one hand, start by asking them to only lift a hand off the handlebars. You can then move on to waving and signalling when they are ready.

Challenge

Get riders to signal for longer or when riding at slower speeds.

Challenge riders to maintain as straight a line as possible when looking back.

Practise signalling while braking or at the same time as looking behind.

Risk benefit assessment

Risk

- A rider wobbles and may fall while looking behind or signalling.
- A rider falls off after squeezing their brake when riding with one hand.

Mitigation

- Build up skills gradually. Ask riders to start with quick glances, or to lift their hand slightly off the handlebars. Ensure that they keep pedalling in a comfortable gear for balance. Also make sure that they attempt the activity away from hazards and consider asking riders to cycle two cycle lengths apart.
- Advise riders to start one-handed riding activities without using the brakes and then progress onto this when ready. Coach them on the need to use 'soft' braking if riding with one hand.

Benefits

Through progressing activities at a suitable pace for each rider, they are able to develop their technique as smoothly as possible and without incident.