

TIP: The height of your bicycle seat affects your comfort, how much energy you deliver to the pedals, and overall enjoyment of riding. A comfortable position may not be the most energy efficient position so you have to adjust your saddle to achieve the position that is both comfortable and efficient. Saddles can be adjusted 3 ways – height, forward/backward position and tilt. Let's just deal with height for now as this can make the most difference to your ride.

The height of your bike seat controls the leverage of your pedalling. If too low, there is too much stress on your knees and makes cycling more difficult. If too high, you may rub on the saddle too much. To determine if your seat is at the proper height have someone hold your bike or lean against a wall while you sit on the bike. With the pedals in the high noon and 6 o'clock positions your knee should be slightly bent with the ball of your foot on the pedals. This is shown below on the left. Another way to check seat height is to fully extend your leg with your heel on the pedal. The bottom pedal may be slightly in the 5 o'clock position.



If you have to rock your hips to reach the pedals on the bottom of the down stroke, then lower the saddle. If you find you are sitting on the narrow front of the seat, your seat is too high. In this latter situation, the seat may be tilted upwards at the front too much. Normally, the seat should be level front to back but women may want the saddle tilted down in front a little when men may want it tilted up a little in front. Any tilt adjustments should be small and gradual.

If the seat needs a large height adjustment, only move the seat about ½ inch and ride on this for a week and then move it another ½ inch for another week and so on until you become adjusted to the new height. Making a major height adjustment requires our body to adapt slowly to the new height or you may become unsteady on the bike and have an accident. If the new height feels uncomfortable, keep riding with the new height but make the adjustment smaller. You will get used to it and feel better on the bike for it. Do not raise the seat beyond the maximum marker placed on the seat post by the bike manufacturer.