

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RACING

All you need
to know to get
you started.

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Women and Girls Commission Cycling Victoria



VicHealth



Cycling
VICTORIA

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Welcome

Welcome to the sport of cycling!

There are many reasons why people race. They race for fitness, the challenge and the sense of achievement obtained from finishing a race. It isn't about winning at all costs or the prize money. Mostly people simply race for the pure enjoyment of it. Racing is a lot of fun!

Initially, however, the concept of racing may be intimidating. You may be comfortable rolling turns with your mates on the weekend, love to set 'PBs' and beat your best mate's time up your local climb. But when contemplating racing, heaps of questions run through your mind: 'What equipment will I need?', 'Will I 'look' the part and blend in?', 'How do I even enter a race?' 'Will I be good enough?' and 'What actually happens at a race?'.

There is a wealth of information around about racing, race strategy, cycling equipment and gear. Most of it can be found on the Internet. However, when you start out it is not always easy to find the right information at the right time.

To help you find the information you need and to help you discover the joy of racing, we at Cycling Victoria, with support from VicHealth, have provided this guide for first time racers in Victoria. We hope it provides the answers to some of your questions, and points you in the right direction for others. The guide should not be considered a definitive guide to racing, but a handy reference tool that you can use in preparation for racing in Victoria.

It is important to remember that all those cyclists already racing were beginners once themselves, so don't be afraid to ask them questions. Your fellow club members will also be more than willing to assist, so ask them for help if you have any questions.

1. Who is Cycling Victoria?

Okay, before we answer all those questions you have, first let's give you some idea of what Cycling Victoria (CV) is all about.

CV is the peak governing body for both organised competitive and recreational cycling in Victoria, Australia. It is an affiliate of Cycling Australia (CA) and the International Cycling Union (UCI).

CV is committed to the ongoing development of cycling in Victoria for men, women and juniors. Hence the development of this guide. It is also involved in the coordination of competitive road and track cycling at club and state level, provides a calendar of challenging recreational events, coordinates coaching and officials courses, junior development camps, school programs and 'Come N Try' road and track cycling days.

2. What type of racing is available in Victoria?

Track, Crits, Cyclo-cross, TTs, BMX 'What does it all mean?' you ask!

There are many forms of bike racing and at first glance, it can all look very confusing. So, to help you decipher the jargon we've provided a little clarity below.

If you've had a read and you're still confused, don't stress. After you've watched and done a bit of racing yourself, have another read; we're sure it will all make far more sense to you then.

Road

Road races are generally held over the winter months, and as the name suggests, they are held on road or paved off-road courses. The races vary widely in length and style, with the main types of races being: Criterium, Road Scratch Races, Road Handicaps and Individual Time Trial.

- **Criterium** races are run on short street circuits or dedicated off-road criterium circuits from 600m up to around 2km in length. Although they can be held over winter, they are most commonly held in the warmer months. The race length is not set by distance, but over a set period of time. Thus, if your category happens to be quick, you will complete the circuit more times than if your category is having a slower day. This enables the race program to keep to schedule and you can make sure you are back home before the babysitter charges you overtime. Races in Victoria can last 15 or 20 minutes for juniors and up to 60 minutes for senior men. They are great spectator events and provide plenty of opportunity to learn important skills such as accelerating out of corners, how to use change of pace for your benefit, and how to sprint around others (refer to Section 10 for more information on what to do in these races). The first to cross the finish line wins. A Kermesse is similar to a criterium, but longer, with a single lap length around 3-10 kms and race time closer to 120-180 minutes.
- **Road Scratch Races** (commonly known as Road Races) are typically held on longer road circuits or out-and-back courses (where you might ride out to a point and turn around at a witch's hat in the middle of the road). Road circuits can be as small as 10km or as large as 60km for a loop, with the total distance varying greatly depending on age and grading. Similar to a criterium, the first to cross the finish line wins. Road races are usually held on country circuits to minimize issues with traffic. They are normally held on 'open' roads, which means traffic may enter the circuit or pass your grade. You must obey the road rules, never cross the centre line and obey race official or traffic marshall direction in relation to road safety. In a small number of races in Victoria, races may have a 'rolling' (non race-related traffic must stop until the race has passed) or full road closure (non race-related traffic must not enter the circuit). These are normally limited to events such as the Cycling Australia Road National Championships (held in Ballarat each January).

- **Road Handicaps** are a common type of race largely unique to Australia. The race 'handicapper' allocates all riders into groups of similar abilities. The weaker groups are allowed a head start (with the weakest bunch called 'the limit bunch'), while stronger groups are set off at a later time (with the strongest bunch known as 'scratch'). All racers are in the same event, and a good handicapper will calculate the starting times to ensure all riders arrive at the finish line at the same time...in theory. In order to succeed in a handicap you need to work together with your bunch so you can catch the weaker bunches ahead and ensure the stronger bunches don't catch you from behind. Everyone works hard the entire race, and you can learn cycling skills for life on how to effectively share the workload. There are two guarantees in handicap racing: you will always get a good workout, and no one is ever happy with the handicapper (unless you are the happy winner)!
- **Individual Time Trials** provide a great introduction to road racing and suit triathletes. The race is all about you, and how you can cover the designated course the quickest. Riders are set off individually, and no assistance is allowed from other riders shielding you from the wind or from friends in cars driving ahead of you. Serious time triallers will use a dedicated time trial bike (refer to Section 5), but you can enter these races with a simple road bike. Entering a number of time trials across a season will provide you with a great indication of your improvement from comparing your times and average speeds. Team Time Trials are similar to Individual Time Trials, but are contested by teams with any number of riders, from 2 to 9, forming a team. All the riders on the team are set off at the same time and the aim is for them to work together to complete the course in the shortest possible time.
- **Stage Races (Tours)** are conducted over a number of days and can be made up of a series of road races, criteriums and time trials. At entry level, the best opportunities to participate in a Stage race are the 3 Day Tours held by the various combines on the June long weekend.

Track

Track racing can take place on either an indoor or outdoor velodrome, which is a banked oval track typically measuring between 250 and 500m in length. There are around 27 velodromes located across Victoria. The indoor tracks such as the one at the Darebin International Sports Centre (DISC) at Thornbury, are made of wooden boards. Generally the outdoor velodromes, such as the one located in Brunswick, are concrete.

Some of the bigger tracks, such as Wangaratta, Bendigo and Chelsea have hardly any banking on them at all, but others can have around 30 degrees. At DISC, the 250m timber velodrome has slopes ranging from 13 degrees up to 42 degrees. From the stands it seems to defy logic to be able to ride at this angle, but once out there having a go you soon realise that anyone can do it. Special track bikes must be used on tracks (refer to Section 5).

The standard equipment enables riders to ride the track and interact with each other safely. Like road racing there is a variety of different types of races including Scratch, Points and Elimination races, Individual and Team Pursuits, the Keirin and the Madison. The Omnium event, which consists of six different racing disciplines over two days, was a new event at the 2012 Olympics. The rider who performs best across all events is declared the winner. Track racing tends to be most popular in summer, but races are conducted all year round at DISC.

Cyclo-cross (CX)

Cyclo-cross, sometimes also referred to as CX, is a race held over a variety of terrain. The course is usually a short loop that features some paved sections, some grass sections, some dirt sections, and usually some very popular mud sections. Riders are also forced to dismount and remount their bikes at times, through use of barriers, steps or 'run-ups' (sections that are impossible to ride). Basically, it's an obstacle course that you ride around. Races are generally held in the winter, as the emphasis is on racing in less than perfect conditions. It's all about the mud, and you can't have mud without a bit of rain!

Bicycle Motocross (BMX)

Bicycle Motocross or BMX is also a highly popular form of riding in Victoria. Essentially BMX racing involves racing on a dirt circuit consisting of a series of jumps. The circuit is completed in a short period of time e.g. 40 seconds, with the average length of a circuit being only 300 to 400 metres. Most BMX clubs run club meetings all year round on Friday nights or Saturday afternoons, weekly, fortnightly or monthly. State level 'Open' races are held mostly on weekends and only during the fair weather months.

BMX racing is very popular with juniors, with age categories starting from 3 years of age. The races are short and fast, requiring good bike handling skills and explosive acceleration. BMX was introduced to the Olympic program in 2004 as a demonstration sport and then officially in 2008, and has seen strong growth in its popularity.

Mountain Biking (MTB)

Mountain bike racing takes place 'off road' over rough terrain and involves a high level of technical skill. There are a number of types of races including Cross Country and the 'Gravity' events. Cross Country or XC events include the Olympic Cross Country (OXC), Marathon Cross Country (XCM) and Mountain Bike Enduro (XCE) and Stage Races. These are circuit or 'point to point' racing over varied terrain including climbs and descents and in the case of the 24-hour event, involve riders attempting to complete the greatest number of laps of a circuit over a given time. The 'Gravity' events include Downhill (including Super D) (a steep downhill course which riders complete while being timed individually) and Four Cross or 4X (essentially a Downhill race contested by four riders side by side).

3. Who runs the races?

There are a variety of hosts that provide racing opportunities in Victoria.

Road and Track

From the road and track perspective there are five layers of groups organising races.

- **Club**

Each club hosts its own racing over the winter (April-October) and summer (November-March) racing months. Over summer, clubs tend to offer weekly races, but this is less the case over the winter months. A summary of some of the weekly club road and track racing can be found on the CV website. You can also look on the websites/Facebook pages of the various clubs for details of the racing they offer.

- **Combines**

Combines are classified as groupings of up to ten clubs who collectively pool resources to host events (typically road events where logistics are much harder to organise). These include the Northern Combine (Melbourne), Southwest (Portland, Port Fairy, Hamilton, Warrnambool, Camperdown) and Gippsland (Warragul, Leongatha, Latrobe, Wellington and Bairnsdale).

To race in a combine you first need to be a member of a club associated with that combine. If you want to race outside your club's combine you will need written permission from your club.

While combine events are held throughout the year, the annual designated combine weekend is the June Queen's Birthday long weekend. No other races are scheduled for this weekend, allowing combines from across the State to provide multi-stage tours for their member clubs and riders.

- **State**

CV hosts a number of state level events (Junior, Elite, Masters and Road, Track and Cyclo-cross) for the various cycling seasons. The calendar can be found on the CV website.

Major events at this level in Victoria include Metropolitan and Country Road Championships, Victorian Club Teams Championships, Victorian Schools Cycling Championships and Victorian Elite, Masters and Junior Criterium, Road, Time Trial and Cyclo-cross Championships.

CV also hosts some of the major track events including the Melbourne Cup on Wheels and the Austral.

- **Private Promoters**

Private individuals, companies or organizations are also able to host and run cycling races. Called race 'promoters', they must have special authorization to organize events, and work closely with CV to meet event sanctioning requirements. Events in Victoria such as the Jayco Bay Series Criteriums and the Jayco Herald Sun Tour are examples of privately promoted events.

- **National**

CA also publishes a racing calendar for national events such as the Cycling Australia National Road Championships and Cycling Australia Masters Road Championships, which can be found on the CA website.

CX

There are currently three different groups running Cyclo-cross races in Victoria. CV (which runs the Cyclo-cross Open), Dirty Deeds, and Cross Melbourne. More details are available on their websites (refer to Section 16).

BMX

BMX Victoria administers BMX racing in Victoria. A major event for Victorian BMX riders is the BMX Victoria Open State Championships. There are 17 sanctioned competition BMX tracks across Victoria, each associated with a local club that hosts events throughout the year. Details of the events can be found on the relevant club's website.

MTB

Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA) is the peak body for mountain biking in Australia. There is currently no state mountain bike association within Victoria. However, there are approximately 22 mountain biking clubs within the state that coordinate mountain bike races.

Private promoters also develop and host events. MTBA endorses these events and therefore, they can be found on its website: www.mtba.asn.au

4. How will I learn how to race?

So, you're keen to race, but you've got no idea where to start. So, what do you do?

Well, you don't become a proficient racer overnight and it is a process of development. It is possible for a rider to be quite strong on the bike very early in their racing career, particularly if they have crossed over to cycling from another sport such as triathlon. However, it is extremely important that a rider develops adequate bike handling and racing skills both for their own safety and for the safety of those racing alongside them.

The requisite skills and fitness levels will be developed as a rider progresses along the racing pathway. Of course, not everyone will (or wants to) end up a Pro rider! In fact, you don't actually have to be super fit. Provided you have the requisite skill level to keep yourself and other racers safe, or if you just want to race around a muddy field with fifty of your new best friends (as in the case of Cyclo-cross), you can be as unfit as you like!

Learning the skills

- **'Come and Try' Days**

'Come and Try' days are often hosted by clubs or by CV. They give a rider, regardless of age or ability, the opportunity to try a new type of riding (e.g. track) and learn new skills under the supervision of qualified and experienced coaches.

- **Club Training Rides**

Most clubs will also offer regular club training rides during which riders can practice skills useful in racing such as bunch riding, rolling turns and echeloning.

- **Latte Laps / Skills Sessions**

Hosted by clubs, Latte Laps or Skills Sessions focus on teaching and developing the requisite racing skills. For example, a St Kilda Cycling Club Latte Laps session will focus on the skills required for criterium racing such as cornering and sprinting and a mentored Skills Session such as that offered by Hawthorn Cycling Club's women's program might focus on techniques to assist in maintaining steady power during a time trial. The Dirty Deeds Cyclo-cross Worker's Collective also organises skills sessions for women and kids prior to each season to learn how to remount your bike on the run while covered in mud.

- **Training Days / Camps**

Some clubs also hold training days or weekend camps some of which are female / junior specific. These training days or camps will usually cover a wide range of skills and drills aimed at improving general riding as well as racing techniques. Often, they will also include educational sessions that cover topics such as core strength and nutrition.

- **Coaching**

You may also want to engage a personal cycling coach. You should ensure that any coach that you engage is an accredited cycling coach under the National Coach Accreditation Scheme. Most clubs have active coaches who are more than willing to assist you to learn and develop your potential. The CV website has a list of accredited coaches and your club may be able to make a recommendation.

You can access the CV Coaches Register at www.vic.cycling.org.au

- **Practice**

Practice makes perfect they say, so do it! For example, skills that are important to Cyclo-cross are getting on and off your bike without losing too much momentum. If you want to practice, head down to your local park, ride for a bit, jump off your bike, pick it up, run for a bit, then jump back on – all without stopping! When it's done well, it's poetry in motion.

Starting to Race

- **Racing Guides**

Often clubs provide their members with 'How to...' guides. These may focus on how to train for and what to be aware of during certain types of races. Ask your club for their guides and read, read and read!

- **Club / combine racing including novice races**

Of course, one of the best ways to learn how to race is to race! This can be done as you gradually build your skills base. However, it is important that you enter a grade that is appropriate for your strength and skill level.

At the club and combine level there are introductory grade races. These can include D or E grade mixed and C grade women's criterium and road races. It is usual for these to be marshalled by mentor riders.

When you register for races online, you will often be required to complete a form which will ask you to name other riders of a similar standard to you or what grade you usually race. Simply indicate that you haven't raced before and the organisers will place you in the right grade. Similarly, if you register for an event on the day, talk to those on the registration desk and they will grade you appropriately.

So, don't be afraid to have a go. You'll be racing with others that are at the same stage of the learning pathway as yourself. They will be feeling just as nervous, so give them a smile and learn together! Of course, you can always start with a Time Trial. It is always a 'one rider' race – you're on the road by yourself!

- **Watch others race**

Sitting around after you race to watch higher grades race is a good way to see how a variety of race strategies work. Also, discuss strategy with more experienced riders, read race reports on line, and of course, camp out in your lounge room every July for your winter schooling from that certain race in France.

- **Development Squads & Riding Groups**

Some clubs have development squads and riding groups. These may either be run on a formal or informal basis. The purpose of these squads and groups is to assist develop an understanding of the world of competitive cycling and to develop riding and racing skills.

They provide support to the rider including:

- valuable information to help the rider navigate the sometimes mind boggling world of racing red tape;
- access to mentors;
- skills development sessions; and
- specific target races.

The More Experienced Racers

Once you have a feel for racing you may wish to go on to join a team.

Teams can be a group of friends, club or bike shop/industry based, State based such as the VIS Jayco team, at national level such as Australia's Olympic team or a UCI Continental team such as Orica-AIS. A rider is usually invited to join a team, but sometimes a team may just be formed by a group of friends with an interest in racing and who obtain independent sponsorship.

Often a team will include a mix of more experienced and less experienced racers. Regardless of its composition or its level (from club to pro), being part of a team provides a fantastic way to develop race tactics, high-level race skills and share experiences both on and off the bike with a group of people with the same goals.



5. What equipment do I need?

You won't need the most expensive bike in the store, you just need the right bike i.e. one suitable for the type of racing you are doing and one that fits you.

Specific rules regarding bike set up and requirements (in line with UCI regulations) do apply. Unfortunately, this is where things get a little technical. We've given you a general idea of what is required below and the rules can be found on the CA and CV websites, so read on if you're interested. However, if you're not interested in the technical detail and would rather leave it to others that are, your local bike shop and club should be able to assist you with compliance.

Road and Track

For criterium and road races there are a number of general requirements: the bikes must have drop bars and no time trial bar extensions are allowed. Front and rear hand brakes are required.

There are also very specific rules governing the requirements of bikes used for time trials including specific body position and bike component specifications e.g. time trial bar extensions are allowed, but the horizontal distance between the centre of the bottom bracket axle and the tip of the bar extensions must not exceed a specified length and measurements can be taken to ensure that the angle of a rider's arm when in race position is compliant with the regulations.

Specific 'track' bikes (i.e. single speed, fixed gear, no brakes), which can't be used on the road, are used for track racing.

Specific gearing restrictions apply to juniors' bikes. The details of the restrictions can be found on the CA website, under their technical regulations (refer to Section 16).

CX

Organizers of Cyclo-cross races in Victoria have taken into account that it's a relatively new sport, and not everyone has a Cyclo-cross bike (a bike that looks like a road bike, with drop bars and bigger wheels, but has bigger knobby tires like a mountain bike, and brakes that have a bit more clearance, so the mud can get through). So they have invented the Open category for all kinds of bike. A mountain bike would probably be best, but folks have ridden Cyclo-cross races on track bikes, road bikes, a woman's step-through, a unicycle, a BMX and even a tandem! Essentially, you can ride whatever you like.

BMX

To compete in a BMX race, any 20 inch or 24 inch (cruiser) BMX bike will be fine. The wheels must be in good working order, your brakes must work and a rear hand brake is compulsory. Handgrips on the handlebars are required, the seat and cranks/pedals must be tightly fastened, as must the number plate. There must be no cracks in the seat or frame and no additional parts are allowed on the frame. No chain guards, handle, kick stands or reflectors are allowed. When racing BMX, top bar, gooseneck and handlebar pads are not compulsory, but are recommended particularly for beginners.

MTB

- **Cross Country/Enduro Cross Country**

Cross Country bikes are generally lightweight and have short travel front and rear suspension to smooth out the rough and bumpy trails or are a Hardtail (without rear suspension).

Wheel size configurations include 26 inch, 29 inch and 650b, to name a few. Gearing can be anything from a single speed i.e. single gear, upward. Generally the more gears the better, as it will be easier when riding uphill.

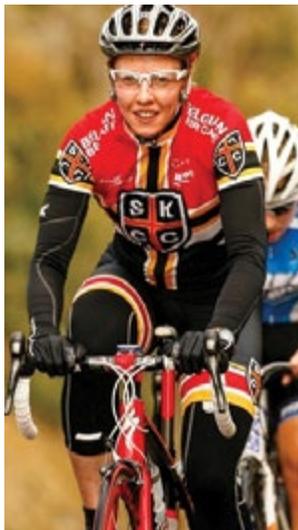
- **Downhill / Four Cross**

Downhill bikes are generally long travel full suspension bikes. They are normally heavier as they have large disc brakes, fatter tyres and durable parts to accommodate the demands of very rough, steep tracks and trails.

Four Cross bikes can vary between front suspension hard tail bikes to full suspension bikes depending on the course. These bikes tend to be robust to cater for the rigors of jumps, berms and racing side by side other riders.



EXAMPLE OF MTB CYCLIST



EXAMPLE OF ROAD CYCLIST



EXAMPLE OF BMX CYCLIST

6. What do I wear?

Cyclists can be the subject of much ridicule due to their clothing choices. However, their choices generally reflect the need for safety or comfort. Accordingly, it is important that you have appropriate kit.

The general CA requirement is that your helmet, shoes and clothing must all be in good condition and clothing must be neat and clean (at least on the start line!).

- **Australian Standard Helmet**

It is a requirement that an Australian Standards (AS) approved helmet must be worn at all times during road, track and Cyclo-cross racing. All helmets must meet the AS/NZS 2063 standard.

Helmets used for Cross Country mountain bike races are the same or similar to the road racing style of helmet (some have a small peak). For BMX races, a full-face helmet that covers the ears must be worn. A full face Downhill or BMX style helmet is used for mountain bike Downhill racing. Some clubs have spare full-face helmets if you need to borrow one initially.

Mountain bike Cross Country and BMX helmets must meet the AS/NZS 2063 standard. All helmets used for mountain bike Downhill racing must meet that same standard or specified international equivalents.

If your helmet falls within the approval standard, you should find a sticker on the inside of the helmet confirming this. It is important that this sticker remains affixed as race officials may check the sticker to confirm compliance. So, if you are buying a helmet outside Australia either in person or over the Internet, buyer beware! The helmet you purchase may not be compliant.

FRONT



SIDE



BACK



AS / NZS 2063 SEAL



- **Jersey that covers your shoulders**

For road and track cycling, all competitors must wear a cycling jersey (i.e. top) that covers his or her shoulders. Triathlon style sleeveless tops are not permitted.

Generally speaking, at the club and combine level, you can wear whatever kit you like.

However, clothing restrictions apply when competing in a Victorian open (state classified) event. There are 3 options you can wear:

- a. your club's official registered apparel;
- b. completely plain apparel (no logos except for the small clothing manufacturer logo); or
- c. approved sponsored apparel e.g. local bike shop, employer etc.

This is to protect the interests of sponsors who are supporting events, individual riders and teams, and to ensure that no one confuses you with Simon Gerrans in your GreenEDGE kit and complains to event officials.

If you are representing your club at a State Club Championship, you need to wear your club kit or completely plain apparel. Similar rules apply at the national level.

You can pretty much wear whatever you like for Cyclo-cross. Whereas, when racing BMX, a long sleeved top such as a windcheater, is required. Cross Country mountain bikers can wear a top similar to a road racing style of jersey or a looser fitting, mountain bike specific top. Loose fitting long sleeve tops are generally preferred by Downhill mountain bike riders.

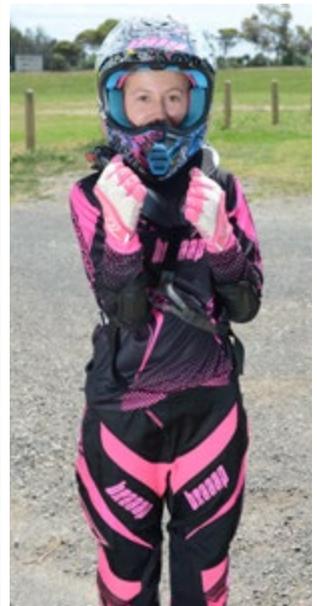
EXAMPLE OF ROAD OUTFIT



EXAMPLE OF MTB OUTFIT



EXAMPLE OF BMX OUTFIT



- **'Bib n Brace' knicks**

Unlike regular lycra cycling knicks (shorts), 'Bib n Brace' knicks cover your back and go over your shoulders. Road and track racers favour them as they ensure your lower back is covered even if your jersey does a bit of creeping. Cycling knicks are designed without seams to avoid chafing, so don't wear underwear under your knicks! Chamois cream can also be applied to your knicks' chamois or directly to your skin to reduce friction. It also has antibacterial benefits, so it's worthwhile using.

Long pants (e.g. jeans or track pants) are recommended for BMX racing. You can also wear loose fitting mountain bike shorts, but only if you also wear approved knee/shin guards for protection. The same requirements apply to mountain bike Downhill racing. Cross Country mountain bike riders opt for lycra knicks like those worn by road and track racers, or looser fitting mountain bike specific, baggy shorts.



- **Shoes**

There is a variety of different cycling shoe manufacturers and there are many colours and styles available. There are also different pedals including 'clipless'. One benefit of clipless pedals (and there are many) is that they greatly assist the transfer of power from foot to pedal.

Primarily there are two different kinds of clipless pedal systems – road and MTB. The cleats used in the MTB system are generally recessed into the cycling shoe making walking or running on them far easier than with the road cleats, which sit proud of the sole of the cycling shoe.

Generally road clipless pedal systems are used for road and track racing. Track racers can also have their pedals fitted with straps to ensure extra protection against 'pulling a foot'.

Flat BMX style or clipless pedals are used for BMX, although the former are highly recommended for beginners.

For Cross Country mountain biking, your pedals and shoes can be a configuration with which you are most comfortable e.g. flat BMX style pedals, clipless pedals or the conventional pedals with toe straps (although these are rarely used). Downhill riders will go for a flat BMX style pedal or clipless pedal system.

Your shoes must fully enclose your feet to ensure appropriate protection and having correctly fitting shoes is a must! Ill-fitting shoes can cause knee and other problems, so ensure that you get your cycling shoes expertly fitted. This is often best done in conjunction with a professional bike fit.

EXAMPLES OF CYCLING SHOES:

ROAD SHOE (SIDE)



MTB SHOE (SIDE)



ROAD SHOE (BOTTOM / SOLE)



MTB SHOE (BOTTOM / SOLE)



- **Undershirt**

Wearing an undershirt is a personal choice. Some riders wear one all year around. Others only wear one when the weather turns cold.

An undershirt helps wick away sweat from the body keeping you drier and improving the evaporative effect in the heat. It will also provide an extra layer of warmth when it is cooler and keep the sweat away from your skin. It also provides an additional layer of protection in the case of a fall.



- **Socks**

Like all trends, sock height trends come and go. The only rule for road or track is that they may not be higher than the midpoint between ankle and knee joints. For BMX they must cover your ankles. You also need to make sure they are comfortable and that they are suitable for the riding conditions e.g. coolmax for summer and merino wool for winter.



- **Gloves**

If you are racing BMX, gloves that have complete hand and finger protection are required. Full-fingered gloves are preferred for Downhill mountain bike racing. Gloves whether long or short fingered, are not mandatory for road or track racing. However, they do provide protection from blisters, sun, the cold and injury and are highly recommended.



- **Arm / Knee / Leg warmers**

If the weather is cold, you can wear arm, knee or leg warmers. Sometimes, knee and leg warmers can work their way down your leg, which can be a little problematic mid race! Some riders choose instead to use warming oil on their legs to increase the blood flow to their legs and provide a barrier against the elements, keeping them warm during competition.



- **Eye protection**

Dark or clear tinted glasses are not compulsory. However, they provide eye protection from insects and other foreign objects. Outdoors, dark tinted glasses also provide sun protection.



If you are racing on an indoor velodrome, you are not permitted to wear dark tinted glasses under any circumstances. Similarly, on an outdoor velodrome you are not permitted to wear them after sunset or when the velodrome lights are on. However, clear or light enhancing glasses are permitted.



Most mountain bike Downhill riders and some BMX racers wear racing goggles.



- **Misc**

Body Armor and additional knee and elbow protection is recommended for mountain bike Downhill racing.

Finally, you can be outside racing for hours on end; so don't forget to slop on the sunscreen. Some riders also wear a cap under their helmet and even sun protecting arm covers to prevent sun exposure.

Of course if it is cold, wind vests, rain and cycling jackets are very desirable.



WIND VEST



RAIN JACKET

7. What should I do before the race?

No doubt you will be nervous before your first race, which is completely natural. However, the music, the crowd, the anticipation make it all good ... and the following hints will make it even better!

Pre race

- **Prepare**

A couple of days before the race you should ensure that your bike is in good condition and that your tyres are not worn in any way. Do not change or adjust anything on your bike the day before the race. You don't want to be trying out a new saddle, tyres or handle bar height on race day. Similarly, race day is not the day to try out a new gel, sports bar or sports drink brand!

You should also be aware of the weather conditions and dress appropriately. The night before the race organise your race kit. Work out every piece of gear you will need for the race from your helmet down to your shoes and your on bike nutrition/ fluid. Set it aside ready to go. For your first race, it is also worth thinking carefully about how you will carry your gels/bars etc. These can be placed in the side pocket of your jersey that you are most comfortable accessing while riding. Gels can also be placed under the elastic leg band of your knicks.

- **Arrive early**

It's always best to arrive early so you can register and properly prepare yourself for the race. Often there will be a coffee van near the start line, so you won't have to miss out on your pre race coffee!

- **Check out the course**

You always race a race better if you've raced it before. However, if you haven't raced a course before, you should check it out beforehand. Ride the course as part of your pre race warm up (e.g. criteriums), review the course profile (which is usually available online e.g. road race) or check the surface quality (e.g. track).

At BMX races circuit practice is scheduled. So, after you register and set yourself up, check both your race and the practice start times. Make sure you take the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the circuit during the practice period.

If you are going to compete in a mountain bike race, check with the host club or race organiser if there will be a course orientation ride day, or if they can supply a course map so you can pre ride the course in the days or weeks prior. Alternatively, arrive on race day early and orientate yourself with a warm up lap.

It is your responsibility to know the course!

- **Register**

At all races there will be a registration desk. You will have to give your name and your race licence to those behind the desk. If you have pre registered online your name will already be on the entry list. If you haven't pre paid, you will need to do so. Correct money always elicits a smile and is sometimes mandatory – be warned! You will then be given a race number for your back and your bike for some races. Number plates will be allocated to mountain bike race competitors at the registration point and are generally affixed to the handlebars with zip ties. If they are allocated for a road race, zip ties are used to affix the number to the bike's seat post.

Those managing the registrations may retain your licence, returning it to you once you return your number at the end of the race.

If you are given two numbers for your back one is generally pinned in the centre of the lower back and the other on the side of the body that faces where the judges will watch at the finish line. This can differ from race to race, so it's worth checking at the registration desk. It's also worth taking a few of your own pins along, as it's not much fun trying to punch rusted pins through your nice new jersey!

When racing BMX you won't be given a number for your back or your bike when you register on race day. As part of a BMX Australia (BMXA) membership licence, a racing number is issued to a rider. This number is then affixed to a race plate, this is placed on the rider's race bike and all their races will be raced under that number.

RACE NUMBER (JERSEY)



RACE PLATE (ROAD RACE)



RACE PLATE (BMX / MTB)



- **'Clean' your bike**

You don't have to give your bike and helmet a spa. However, for road racing you do have to strip them of anything that could fall off during a race - bum bag, pump, lights and helmet visor. Water bottles, bike computers and items in your back pockets are permissible. For longer road races, a gas canister, tyre levers and spare tube can save you a long wait for assistance in case of puncture, and will fit into a back pocket. Your track bike should be free of all attachments.

For the safety of you and other riders, when racing BMX you must also remove any mudguards, chain guards, the kick stand, pegs and reflectors and ensure that there are no sharp edges on your handlebars or pedals. Similarly, if you are competing in a mountain bike race remove all unnecessary items and accessories from your bike. You won't need a bell, reflectors, bike lock or kick stand. Do attach a seat bag or a carry a hydration backpack with a spare tube, tyre levers & multi purpose mini tool for any unforeseen mechanical issues you may have on course during an event.

Some races are held at night e.g. 24hr mountain bike races, so the rules may differ for specific races e.g. lights may be required.

Warm up

Warming up prior to racing is important for a number of reasons. It gets your heart rate up and the blood flowing to your muscles so that your body is able to meet the demands of the race situation. Warming up can be done on the road, track, course or on a trainer /rollers. It is fair to say that some races demand a more thorough warm up than others. For example, as the Individual Time Trial requires the maximum personal effort for the entire race, a thorough warm up is essential.

Listen to the race briefing

Prior to every race, the riders will be briefed by the Race Commissaire. The Commissaire will set out the rules of the race e.g. length of the race, sprint point timing, road rules etc., so it's important to listen carefully.



8. What can I expect during the race and afterwards?

Once you've completed your first race it will no longer be a mystery. Until then this is what you can expect...

During the race

Obviously the type of race will dictate generally how the race will unfold. However, the following points are worth noting, particularly in respect of a road race.

- At some point during any race you will ride so hard that you hurt more than you ever have in any training ride. You can be guaranteed, though, that the buzz that you get when you finish will more than make up for it. You'll be looking to sign up for the next available race and telling anyone in earshot that it's the best thing ever!
- The longer the race, the greater the need to drink and eat. To avoid the 'bonk', drink before you get thirsty and eat before you get hungry! Knowing how much drink and food you need for a race and being able to drink and eat in a race situation requires practice. So, practice on your training rides. It is worth noting that whilst BMX racing is short and sharp, as you can do multiple races that extend throughout the day, you need to keep yourself fuelled.
- Weather conditions will make a difference to the race. If it is very hot, you will need to ensure that you drink plenty. If it is very cold you will need to ensure that you dress for the conditions. If it is wet you need to be mindful of things like white lines and cat eyes on the road as they become particularly hazardous in the wet. Also, remember that your braking capacity will be less in the wet too.
- Generally a course will be marshalled with officials placed at key points on the course such as where a hazard may exist and where riders are required to turn. If you do end up off course, simply retrace your route until you end up back on course.
- If you have a mechanical issue, how you deal with it will depend on the type of race. For example, if you are racing a Criterium and have a mechanical you will be allowed to take a 'lap out' to deal with the issue and rejoin the race when it comes around again. If you get into difficulty in a BMX race, with the direction of the nearest official, make your way to the finish line without obstructing any other riders. Some road races have a 'neutral spares/support' vehicle. Riders can put their spare wheels in the vehicle. It will follow the race so if you puncture you can replace your wheel and continue racing. Check out the race information before the race and listen to any race briefing to understand the rules dealing with mechanicals for your particular race. Not all races have 'neutral spares/support' vehicles, so always carry a gas canister, tyre levers and spare tube!
- There is always the possibility of there being a crash. Obviously no one actually intends to crash, so be nice to everyone if you ever get caught up in one.
- Finally, don't give up! You may have missed a break and be off the pace of the leaders or even the main bunch, but don't give up. The other riders may have used up too much energy and fade as the race progresses. Remember, the race isn't won until the winner crosses the finish line.

After the race

At the end of the race, the results will be announced. Presentation of prize money or medals may occur immediately after your race or once some or all racing has been completed. You will have noticed how the professionals look on the podium, so if you are lucky enough to get there yourself, make your sponsors, friends and club proud by presenting yourself just as professionally. Give your face a quick wipe from any mud or sweat, and wear your racing kit with your jersey zipped up. If it is cold slip on some leg and arm warmers. You will be only on the podium for a short time, so remove any clothing you wouldn't race in. Of course, it is wise to remove any wet clothing as soon as possible. If you have a spare race kit and have time, you can do this before the presentation.

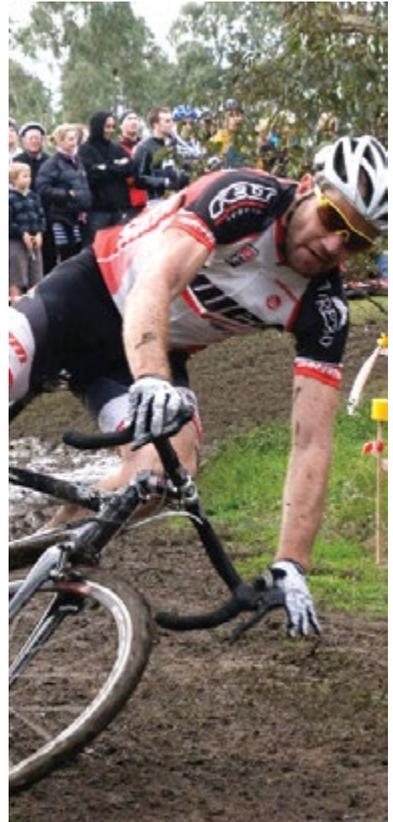
If a number has been issued to a rider at the start of the race, it must be returned to the registration desk.

Oh, and by the way, if after your Cyclo-cross race you want to remember what colour your bike is, grab the high pressure hose made available at most of those races and blast the mud off your bike!

WINNER AND PLACE GETTERS ON THE PODIUM



EXAMPLE OF CYCLOCROSS RACE



9. What is good racing etiquette?

The following guidelines for race etiquette are generally adhered to across all levels of racing, from Pro Tour events down to club racing.

While these tips are considered good etiquette, a failure to abide by some of these could result in a penalty issued by the race commissaire. Penalties can involve fines or, if severe, suspension.

Road/CX

Thanks to St Kilda Cycling Club member and Olympian Rob Crowe from Ridewiser Cycling Services for providing the following tips for criteriums (which also apply to road and Cyclo-cross racing generally):

1. Maintain your line and keep left unless overtaking.
2. Do not change direction suddenly.
3. Do not pass underneath in a corner.
4. Do not overlap wheels.
5. Do not pedal through corners.
6. Do not ride outside the cones.
7. Do not push, pull or interfere with another rider.
8. Do not contest sprint from further back than 10th wheel.
9. Sprint in a straight line once out of the final corner of a criterium.
10. As the lead rider – guide the peloton safely past hazards.
11. Communicate your intentions with others.
12. Keep both hands on the bars (unless taking a drink or eating).
13. Follow all directions from marshals and officials.
14. If you're a strong rider, ensure you take a turn at leading for a period.

Track

1. Once the final sprint has started you must hold a straight line.
2. If a rider is in the sprinter's lane (under the red line) during a sprint you cannot swing down into that lane except behind him or her.
3. Do not push, pull or interfere with another rider.
4. Maintain your line around the bank after completing a sprint including at the end of a race.
5. Have a quick look behind for riders before swinging up the bank.

BMX

Similar race etiquette applies to BMX racing.

1. Holding your line is imperative. Riders must maintain their line and not change direction suddenly.
2. You must maintain your line around the berm and once a final sprint has started, you must hold a straight line. You must also sprint in a straight line out of the final corner and not contest the final sprint if you are further back than 10th wheel.
3. Follow all directions from marshals and officials and do not push, pull or interfere with another rider.
4. Keep both hands on the bars.

MTB

We are also grateful to Pat Fitzpatrick, a highly experienced mountain bike coach, for the following guidance as to good racing etiquette in the mountain bike race setting.

1. Communicate with the rider in front of you. If you think you can pass safely, let the rider in front know that you will be "Passing on your left side" or "Passing on your right side" and don't forget to say "Thank You" as you go!
2. If a rider from behind calls that they would like to pass on either the left or right hand side of the trail, move to the opposite side of the trail when appropriate to allow the rider some room to pass by on the side they have chosen. Don't make any sudden movements or stop, do your best to move aside and keep rolling along where possible. Experienced riders will generally pass you with little fuss when it's safe to do so.
3. If you have a mechanical issue or a minor fall, make your way to the side of the trail as soon as it is safe to do so. If you feel you need medical assistance let another rider know you need help.

Finally, if practical and you can do so without obstructing or endangering yourself or other riders, if a rider has fallen from their bike always check if they are okay or if they require medical assistance before continuing to ride on.

10. What race strategy should I use?

Obviously, the strategy that you should use will largely depend on the type of race. For example, your strategy for a scratch road race will differ from that you would use in an Individual Time Trial.

Criterion/Scratch Race

Your best chance of winning in a scratch race is to get near the finish line the freshest and cross ahead of everyone else.

Unfortunately, that strategy is the same for everyone in the race. If the entire race field simply sat in the bunch conserving energy all race, you would barely raise a sweat and would find sprinting at the end to be tougher against everyone (who is just as fresh as you are).

The key is to try to balance expending energy in order to make the race tough enough to tire out your opponents, while keeping enough in reserve for you to whiz past them at the finish. Here are some tips to assist:

- **Avoid attacking while riding at the front.** As everyone can see you, you are giving them all an advantage by being able to witness the move and react accordingly. Attacking from 4 or 5 riders back enables an element of surprise.
- **Avoid attacking from the very back.** Attacking too far back in the field may result in you being too tired by the time you reach the front!
- **Use the natural elements.** Which way is the wind coming? Move up on the side of the bunch that is most protected from the wind to save precious energy. Is there a strong cross wind? Using the wind to your advantage, by positioning yourself to minimise the ability of others to slipstream behind you, can be an effective way to tire your opponents and change their focus from conserving energy to simply trying to stay with the bunch (an important mental edge for you!).
- **Climb smart.** On road races, start at the front of the bunch on a climb so if you cannot keep up with everyone, you will get some assistance as others pass you and you will hopefully still be in sight of the bunch as they crest over the top. And if you see the bunch go over the hill ahead of you, dig that little bit extra to push over the top and at the beginning of the descent to ensure you get up to speed quicker before you take a quick break.
- **Be aware of how your opponents are riding.** Are they breathing hard? Are they moving their body more than usual? This can be a sign of fatigue, and may be a good time for you to consider attacking (this also assumes that you are not breathing hard or moving your body more than usual!).
- **Change of pace.** Riders with a good level of fitness can follow a wheel around all day, conserving energy in the slipstream of others. But each time you change pace, slowing the bunch down or forcing a fast acceleration from an attack or driving the pace in a strong crosswind, you tire out opponent legs more than simply riding hard and fast the entire time.

Handicap

The winning strategy is one where a group works together well to stay away from the groups behind and catch or pass any groups in front. While your group may work well all day and succeed in making it to the front of the race, at some stage you need to decide when to stop working together to keep the pace high, and think about your own individual win. Many a handicap has been lost at this stage of the race from the indecision of the front group as the groups behind continue their chase and reel you in.

Time Trial

Whether they are hilly or flat, the key to a fast time is consistent output of energy, power and speed throughout the race. Don't go out too hard!

Where you are doing a team time trial (3 or 4 riders), constant communication between team members is essential. The team members will rotate using frequent rolling turns. The time will be taken from the second or third rider across the line, so it is important to stay together!

CX

When it comes to your first Cyclo-cross race, it's just a matter of picking out someone who you think is as fast as you and try to keep up with them. If they turn out to be too fast, look around and see who else is having a hard time. Try to beat them. If they turn out to be too slow, well, you should look ahead to faster people, try to catch up to them, and then try to beat them too.

BMX

When you start racing BMX the focus should be on being safe. Concentrate on getting a good start and like Cyclo-cross, try keeping up with someone who you think is about your speed. However, you should be concerned primarily with keeping your wheels on the ground, using good bike handling skills and maintaining control of your bike.

MTB

For your first race start at the back of your group. This will reduce the pressure on you to go too fast. You can then watch the more experienced riders in front of you and pass riders in front of you when it's appropriate.

First and foremost though, make it your aim of your first race to finish, don't get too caught up in the result. Use your first race as a learning experience so that you can come well prepared for your next race. At race number two you will be better prepared, have a greater understanding of racing, be more relaxed and race better.

11. I want to start racing, where do I sign up?

So, it all sounds like a heap of fun and you want to start straight away. However, before you can start racing road, track or Cyclo-cross you will need to become a member of CA through the purchase of a race licence, and join a club (refer to Section 12).

CA provides a membership portal that allows you to purchase your membership and join your club online (refer to Section 16).

A CA licence brings important benefits to your cycling: it provides personal accident, public liability and loss of income benefits for you regardless of whether you are out racing, commuting to work or simply riding with your family. Detailed information on the cover provided can also be found on the CA website.

While MTB and BMX have their own race licence system, it is possible to also be a member of CA at a discount so you can ride all disciplines.

Road and Track

- **Gold membership**

A CA Gold Race membership provides you with a race licence that allows you to compete in all types of races conducted by CA or CV, or sanctioned by CV including club, combine and private promoters events. It is available throughout the year, but is renewable at the end of the calendar year. If a Gold membership is purchased after 1 October, the membership period runs until 31 December the following year so you get an extra three months for free! Half yearly memberships are also available from July 1 each year.

With the exception of the elite category, licences are age based. The CA website provides a link to an age category table that enables you to check which age category you fall within. The various age categories include Junior U9 to U19, U23, Elite and Masters 1 to 10.

A note on Master's category licences

It is possible to be of Masters age (30 and above) and hold an Elite licence. A Masters licence is less expensive, but you will not be able to contest Elite age category events e.g. State Championships, Cycling Australia National Championships, and if an Open event offers a Masters category you must race in it. For more information check out the Membership Categories tab on the CA website.

- **Silver membership**

A Silver membership enables you to enter any recreational ride sanctioned by CA or CV including Recreational Challenge events, Gran Fondos and Cyclo Sportif events. You are also able to use this licence to participate in club training events and restricted time trial events. In order to race road, track or Cyclo-cross events you will need to upgrade to a Gold membership.

- **Temporary memberships**

3-Ride Permits (valid for 3 months from the date of the first event for which it is used) and Day Permits are also available. The races in which a holder can compete are limited as is the associated insurance cover. However, these permits provide an inexpensive way to 'try before you buy'. If a rider decides to purchase a Gold membership, the 3-Ride Permit fee will be credited against the Gold membership fees provided the upgrade is applied for before the 3 month period noted above expires.

Gold memberships can be purchased via CA or your cycling club, but only your local cycling club can provide temporary memberships.

CX

A CA Gold membership or a Cyclo-cross Season Pass will do the job. The former can be purchased through CA or your local cycling club. The latter can generally be purchased on the day of the race. 3-Ride and Day Permits are also available. For more information on Cyclo-cross licensing, see the Dirty Deeds Cyclo-cross Blogspot (refer to Section 16).

BMX

BMX race licences are obtained through BMXA. There are basically three main types of licence: 'Open' (allows riders to ride at any club in the country, and at all kinds of events – club only or State/National titles); 'Sprocket' (allows riders under the age of eight to ride in Sprocket (Participation) races at Club, State or National level); and 'Club' (allows riders to ride only at club races at their own club - they cannot compete in any Open meetings even if held at their own club). An 'introductory' licence also exists. Like the 3-Ride Permits noted above, a 4-month temporary licence exists to allow new riders to try BMX before purchasing one of the three abovementioned licences.

MTB

A MTBA membership permits you to race MTBA affiliated events in Australia. Membership classes are: Senior Competition, Junior Competition, DirtMaster Competition and Social Membership. Each of the Competition memberships is based on a specified age group. If you don't have a MTBA membership, day licences are available for a cost additional to the regular entry fee. Do check with the club or organiser prior to the race to make sure day licences will be available.

12. Do I need to join a club?

Clubs are the foundation of the cycling organisational framework and provide a great source of information and guidance for the cyclist transitioning to racing.

You will need to join a CV affiliated club to obtain a CA membership to race. Similarly, it is also a requirement of any MTBA membership and BMX licence that the rider be a member of a club.

When selecting a club give some thought to its geographical location (e.g. Is it close to where you live?). Also, to ensure that you select a club that is right for you, don't be afraid to contact the club and ask questions such as the following before making a decision to join:

- does it have an active women or juniors program;
- does it have a club coach;
- what is the racing focus of the club e.g. track, road, mountain bike racing;
- what training rides, training days/camps does the club offer; and
- does it have regular social events?

There are numerous clubs in Victoria both in the metropolitan and regional areas. Lists of clubs can be found on the websites of CV, BMX Victoria and MTBA. The 'Find a club' function on the MTBA website will assist you to locate a club in your area that hosts your preferred style of mountain bike racing.

13. How can I find race event information?

Race event information can be found on the websites of CV, CA, BMX Victoria and MTBA as well as those of the various clubs and combines. Social media is also a common communication tool. Twitter feeds such as @cyclingvictoria, @cyclingaus and your own cycling club or combine are worthwhile following, as are the Twitter feeds and Facebook pages of other Victorian cycling clubs.



www.vic.cycling.org.au



www.facebook.com/CyclingVictoria

14. How do I enter a race in Victoria?

Now you have your race licence, in order to race you have to actually enter a race. Here's how you do it!

Road and Track

- **Club and Combine**

At the club level, registration can take place at the race or facilities may exist to pre-register via a club's website. Payment is usually made at the race. Try to bring correct money and avoid paying with large denominations or with silver – you may be turned away! Some club races are included on a combine calendar.

The combines usually have their calendars available prior to the start of each season. Further details may also be advertised on the relevant combine website about a week ahead of the scheduled race date. Only some combines have moved to online race registration. For those that have, entries via their website generally close a few days prior to the race date or earlier if the rider limit is met. Payment is made on race day. Race day entries may be accepted if the rider limit has not already been met. Obviously if the facility is available, it is better to register prior to race day to avoid disappointment!

- **Cycling Victoria**

Registration for a CV event is done via the online registration facility (using your license number) on the CV website. The process is straightforward: enter your last name and licence number on the Log-In page; select the desired race on your CV personalized race eligibility page (PREP); and then proceed through the payment process using your credit card. You will then receive a 'Confirmation of Race Entry' email. All the events for which you have registered will appear on your PREP together with any other races that you have not, but can still, enter.

The dates that entries open and close are noted on the CV calendar. The CV Racing/ Events FAQs on the CV website also answer some common questions about entering CV races, so check them out (refer to Section 16).

- **National and Special Events**

Registration for national events such as the Masters Road National Championships, is most conveniently done online via the event calendar on the CA website. Special events such as the UCI World Cycling Tour or events put on by race promoters (e.g. Cykel Women's Grand Prix) will have their own website and registration is usually done via that avenue.

CX

For the Dirty Deeds Urban Cyclo-cross Series and the Cross Melburn Series you can usually sign up on the day, but for the Cycling Victoria State Cyclo-cross Championships you need to pre-enter through the CV website.

BMX

Online entry for some races is possible via the online registration system on the BMX Victoria website. The process is similar to that described above for the registration for a CV event. Where online registration is not available registration is required using a manual process. Visit the BMX Victoria website for full details of the current year's racing and the appropriate entry process.

MTB

Check on each club or promoter's website if they are taking online entries prior to each event. It is possible to enter some events on the day, but always check the appropriate website or call the contact person from the club or organisation if you would like more information.

As with all types of racing, some events sell out quickly, so be sure to check with the club or organiser if you need to enter early to avoid the disappointment of not getting a guaranteed entry.



15. What does that mean? Basic Cycling Race Terms.

Well that's about it really. You're ready to go race!

There is one other thing though. When hanging around other cyclists and engaging in lively discussion about the latest racing either in Europe or at your local club or when you are just doing a social ride down Beach Road, it is possible that you will hear some terms which you have no idea what they mean. So, to ensure that you can talk the talk as well as race a race, listed below are a number of those terms and their meanings.

Cycling term	What it means...
Banana Peel (Social) Turns	These are used in a social ride setting. A bunch of riders form two lines. After spending an extended period at the front of the bunch, the front two riders peel off down each side and roll to the back of their line allowing the two riders behind them to take their places on the front.
Berm	A banked turn made of soil.
Bidon	French word for a cyclist's water bottle.
Bonk	When a rider runs out of glycogen in their body and thus, deprives his or her muscles of the essential glucose to deliver required power. You may have needed to eat more, or perhaps have trained a bit more!
Breakaway	A small group of one or more cyclists who, as a result of an attack, have a clear margin that separates them from the peloton.
Commissaire	An official, like a judge or referee.
Creepin'	When your legs feel like they don't work properly and it is harder than normal to pedal. Usually caused from overtraining or from a big night out.
Criterion	A high-speed road event conducted on a closed street circuit approximately 800m-2km. The total race time is usually 45mins - 1hour.
Dropping the wheel	When you are unable to remain in the slipstream of the rider in front of you. Sometimes this is deliberate, but most of the time is unintentional.
Echelon	A diagonal line of riders form across a road to minimise a cross wind's effect. (See Rolling Turns.)
Elimination Race	This is a mass start race. The last rider across the line each lap (or every second lap) is eliminated until just two riders remain for the final sprint.
Handicap Races	Riders are set off at different times or positions depending on their past performances. Slower riders start first and faster riders last. The fastest riders start off the 'scratch mark'. The first riders, i.e. the slowest riders, are called the 'limit markers'. The handicap system allows all riders to race together with equal chance of victory.

Holding the wheel	When you remain in the slipstream of the rider in front of you, typically within one metre directly behind their back wheel.
Hold your line	Riding in a straight line and maintaining the same position in the bunch through a corner or in a sprint.
Hole Shot	In a BMX race, taking the lead out of the starting gate and going into the first turn.
Individual Pursuit	The Individual Pursuit is held over 4000m for senior men, 3000m for senior women and junior U/19 men and 2000m for junior U/19 women and Junior U/17 men. The riders start on opposite sides of the track and attempt to catch one another and record the best time.
Individual Time Trial	The distance depends on the course and location, but distances range from 10km for juniors to 40km for elite men. Riders set out one by one at 30-90 second intervals and the one with the best finishing time wins. Riding in the slipstream of another competitor is not allowed. If one cyclist catches up to another, he or she must leave a lateral gap of two metres between them.
Kermesse	Similar to a Criterium, but longer, with a single lap length around 3-10kms and race time 120-180 minutes.
Keirin	The Keirin is a 2000m sprint-type event, which involves a motorcycle (called a derny) pacing the riders for the first 1400m. Riders jostle for the best position but must stay behind the derny. The derny pulls off the track at 1400m and riders race to the finish.
Madison	The Madison is a race that is similar to the points race except that two riders work as a team. Only one rider contests the race at any one time and a 'Madison Sling' or change, is used by riders to rotate the work load
Manual/Manualing	The act of riding a wheelie without peddling, typically over the top section over various jumps in a BMX race.
Moto	A single BMX racing heat. Over a day's racing a rider will race a minimum of three motos. If the rider progresses to the finals, the rider will have more racing that day.
Pace Line	A single line of riders is formed and each rider takes a hard turn on the front of the line for an extended period before rolling back to the end of the line to recover. Pace lines are used when speed is most important e.g. to bridge a gap to a breakaway or in a team time trial.
Peloton	The main bunch of cyclists in a race.
Points Race	The Points Race is held over 40km for men and 25km for women in major competition, however it is a race that can vary in length from 5 to 50km at club level. Riders accumulate points through a series of sprints on designated laps during the race. The need for endurance and speed make it a race for the 'all round' cyclist

Pulling a foot	When a cyclist (often a track cyclist) exerts so much upward force on a pedal that they pull their cleat out of the pedal clip.
Pulling a wheel	An issue in track cycling when a rear wheel has not been appropriately tightened, and the pressure applied on the chain drags the wheel into the frame. As the result can cause accidents, riders may be fined for failing to correctly tighten their wheels before racing.
Road Race	This is cycling's equivalent of the marathon. It begins with a mass start and the aim is simply to cross the finishing line first. The distance depends on the course and location. It is a test of endurance and, ultimately, speed. Cyclists can legally travel in each other's slipstream, allowing them to conserve energy.
Roller	An obstacle on a BMX track that is rolled over as opposed to being jumped over by a rider.
Rolling Turns	A bunch of riders form two lines, rotating turns on the front for a few seconds each. A rider will roll through to the front of one line and smoothly roll off in front of the rider they just passed, reducing their pace slightly as they do so. If there is a cross wind, the riders roll off into the side being hit by the crosswind. This is the most efficient means of moving a group of riders.
Rhythm Section	A series of jumps or rollers back-to-back on a BMX track that pose an obstacle.
Scratch Races	The Scratch Race is a mass start race with all riders starting together and racing over a given distance. A win for each grade may be awarded together with overall line honours.
Stage Races (Tours)	Stage races are conducted over a number of days and can be made up of a series of road races, criteriums and time trials.
Staging	Behind a BMX start hill is the staging area i.e. where you get put into your moto and loaded into the start gate.
Starting Gate	A flat formed area with a hinged portion. This is where each BMX race commences.
Take a lap	When you are in a breakaway and are so far ahead you lap the field (typically in a Criterium or a track event).
Take a lap out	A rider in a criterium or a track event that encounters a 'mechanical' will be allowed to stop racing and re-join the bunch they were racing in when the mechanical occurred. A mechanical covers punctures that can be fixed by a change of wheel, but does not include issues with your bike that should have been taken care of prior to the race commencing (such as 'pulling a wheel' in a track event or something coming loose off your bike from poor maintenance).
Team Pursuit	This is the same as the individual pursuit except a team of four riders work together to catch the team starting on the opposite side of the track.

16. Useful Resources

- **BMX Australia**

<http://www.bmxaustralia.com.au/>

- **BMX Victoria**

<http://www.bmxv.com.au/>

- **Cycling Australia**

<http://www.cycling.org.au/>

- Rules & Regulations
Rule 3.6: Equipment Restrictions

http://www.cycling.org.au/site/cycling/national/downloads/Officiating/2011%20Technical%20Regulations%20update%20as%20at%2003082011_.pdf

<http://www.cycling.org.au/site/cycling/national/downloads/Officiating/CA%20Tech%20regs%20update%20summary%20and%20explanations.pdf>

- **Cycling Victoria**

<http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/>

<http://www.facebook.com/CyclingVictoria>

<http://www.twitter.com/CyclingVictoria>

- Rules & Regulations

<http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/default.asp?Page=16779&MenuID=Racing%2F20072%2F16049%2CCommissaires%2Fc20204%2F20127>

- FAQs on racing

<http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/default.asp?Page=33216&MenuID=Racing%2F20072%2F16049>

- Breeze Bunch Rides for Women

<http://www.breezerides.com.au/>

- **Cross Melbourne**

<http://www.fullgaspromotions.com.au/20120330234/News/specialized-crossmelburn-cyclocross-season-2012>

- **Dirty Deeds Cyclo-cross**

<http://dirtydeedscx.blogspot.com.au/>

- **DISC**

<http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/default.asp?MenuID=DISC/c20075/14939>

- **Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA)**

<http://www.mtba.asn.au/>

How to find a club:

<http://www.vic.cycling.org.au/default.asp?MenuID=Clubs/20076/33207>

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www.vic.cycling.org.au

