



The  **BIKE** to
WORK
GUIDE



Presented by Momentum Mag



HOW TO BIKE TO WORK: A BEGINNER'S TOOLKIT

Forget your ideas of bike commuting. Bike commuting is practical, liberating, and a great way to integrate fresh air and exercise into your daily routine. It allows you to arrive at work energized and ready for the day, and is not nearly as challenging as you might think. While your transportation choices may be an afterthought now, joining the growing ranks of people cycling to work offers you the chance to turn your commute into something more meaningful. It's a small

choice that's part of a much broader movement towards a cleaner, healthier planet and happier, more connected communities. And the best part? It's really fun.

While bike commuting can seem daunting to those who don't currently ride, it need not be. In the next few pages, we'll outline that major benefits of bike commuting, go over the equipment you'll want, provide solutions to common concerns, and offer advice on route planning and other practicalities to get you started.

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WHY SHOULD YOU BIKE TO WORK?

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About 10 years ago, the Canadian government administered a survey attempting to understand its citizen's feelings towards their morning commute. The results were varied. While most respondents fit somewhere on the spectrum of "very unsatisfied" to "satisfied" with their daily travels, there was one tiny, peculiar group of people who stood out. Three percent of respondents claimed that their commute was "the best part of their day." The common narrative is that commuting is, at best, palatable, and at worst, a total drag. So who are these nutjobs who love commuting? Bicyclists, of course.

Biking to work has innumerable benefits, not least of which is that it is truly enjoyable. Cycling to work is a chance to clear your head between the rush of morning and the start of the work day. Numerous studies have shown that bike commuters are more focused and have more energy when they arrive at work than those who arrive by any other means, and daily exercise can sharpen memory and forestall cognitive decline as people age. When work is over, the ride back is a time to shake off the stresses of the day and arrive home relaxed. For the time-strapped (and who isn't),

bike commuting is a chance to integrate exercise into your daily routine, the benefits of which extend well beyond your physical health to your mental health as well.

Cycling is, next to walking, the most affordable transportation option. The average American car owner will spend \$12,544 a year to own a car, which they drive on average only 14 hours per week. Tack on another \$1,908 if it's an SUV. Public transit is relatively affordable, an average of \$680 in most big cities, but that's still around \$480 more than a decent used bike and considerably less fun. If you factor in the long-term savings of reduced spending on health care due to your increased fitness from cycling, you have a strong economic case for taking the bike.

Beyond your physical health and the size of your bank account, biking to work has some serious savings for the environment as well. The global transportation sector is one of the primary causes of climate change, and cars and trucks account for a full 83 percent of US transportation emissions. Biking to work is a chance to get some fresh air every day, while doing your part to ensure the air stays fresh for future generations.

Biking to work is safe, fun, good for you, good for others, good for the planet, and easy on your wallet. Have we convinced you yet?



WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED

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A working bike. That is honestly all you need to get started. While there are a million products on the market to make biking to work easier and more convenient, the only thing you genuinely need is a bicycle, and a good set of lights if you plan to ride in the dark. If your workplace doesn't have secure bike parking and you can't bring your bike inside, or plan to make any stops on the way home, a decent lock will also be in order.

Beyond that, there are a few things that will make your commute more convenient and therefore more enjoyable. A basket, or a back rack and pannier will relieve your shoulders of the burden of carrying your work materials. A pannier is a bag that attaches to your bicycle's back rack, enabling the bike to do the heavy lifting. Just toss your purse in the basket or put

your work materials in the pannier and go. There are briefcase panniers, laptop panniers, and even a garment bag pannier to ease the process for bicycle commuters of all stripes. A good helmet will keep your noggin protected in case of a fall, and are mandatory in a few places around the world. Some jurisdictions require cyclists to have a bell, but many people prefer to use their voice to indicate when they're coming up behind another rider.

You could spend years diving into the world of bike accessories for urban riders. Everything from waterproof smartphone handlebar mounts to GPS-tracking pedals to bespoke leather wine bottle holders – you name it, somebody's figured out how to put it on a bike. We'd recommend starting with the basics, and once you're sure you like bike commuting, you can trick out your ride with as many accessories as you please.



WHAT TO WEAR - AND BRING -

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All too often, potential bike commuters are dissuaded from making the lifestyle change by the perceived requirement to buy a closet full of special clothing in order to ride a bike. But for the majority of commutes, you already own all of the clothing you'll need. Simply get dressed in whatever you would wear if you were driving to work, then get on the bike and go.

There are a few simple things to keep in mind:

» If you're wearing something that could get caught in the chain such as a long skirt or baggy pants, you should have a bicycle with a chain guard, or bring along some way to secure your clothing. A simple ankle strap works for pants, and an elastic band or something similar can tie up the skirt to keep it out of the chain.

» While we're not suggesting you take a Tour de France approach to your bike commute, bicycling will still require a little more energy than any other form of commuting. Dress for slightly cooler weather than the temperature calls for, so you remain comfortable as you warm up riding along.

If you live in a hot, wet, hilly, or cold climate:

» Biking to work in the rain or snow is a

whole different ballgame than biking in the sun. Depending on the severity of the weather, it could require extra gear ranging from rain jackets and pants to sub-zero gloves and a ski mask. Check out our online guides to [Cycling in the Rain](#) and [Biking through Winter](#) for the full rundown.

» If your region is very hilly or very hot, you can expect you're going to arrive at work much sweatier than if you'd taken the bus. If your workplace doesn't have showers, a simple trick is to pack baby wipes in your bag and freshen up in the bathroom upon arrival. It also never hurts to bring a bottle of water, no matter how quick the commute.

If your commute is long and/or rural:

» If your commute is in the area of 10 miles (16 km) or over, you may want to consider "lifestyle fitness" clothing such as spandex pants and sweat-wicking tops, partly for comfort and for the ability to ride faster without worrying about sweating through your work shirt. Pack your office gear (and baby wipes!) in your pannier and head off.

» If your commute is rural and involves stretches of road with no bike shops, pack a patch kit in case you get a flat.



ROUTE PLANNING

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Half of the fun of bike commuting is that it relieves the burden of stress caused by rush hour traffic. Cycling to work is a chance to relax, engage with your surroundings, and clear your head on the way to and from work. For that reason, it's important to look for a route that enables you to take advantage of those benefits.

The route you take to bike to work likely won't be the same you'd take in a car. That busy 4-lane artery you've been driving on for years which funnels traffic quickly into the city? Try riding down the minimal shoulder of that thing on your first day and you'll probably never get on your bike again.

Most municipalities have route maps of their dedicated cycle paths available online or at city hall. If you can't find one through the city, speak to your local bike shop or bike advocacy organization to see what materials they provide about route planning.

Try to plan the majority of your route on dedicated bike infrastructure. In order

of safety and comfort, bike paths and protected bike lanes should be your first choice. After those, look for well-used bike lanes on traffic-calmed streets. If you suffer from a real lack of safe cycling infrastructure, try to plan as much as your ride as possible on quiet back streets where motorists tend to drive more slowly.

If your commute is particularly long or you're not comfortable riding the whole way, you can integrate public transit into your ride. Check with your local transit system to learn about bringing bikes on board, most buses and an increasing number of commuter rails enable passengers to bring bikes. If you can't bring your bike, you could always lock it up at the station and pick it up on the way home.

It's a good idea to test your route out ahead of time on a day off. Make sure your pace and allotted time is suitable for the route you planned, so you can make any needed adjustments before your next work day.





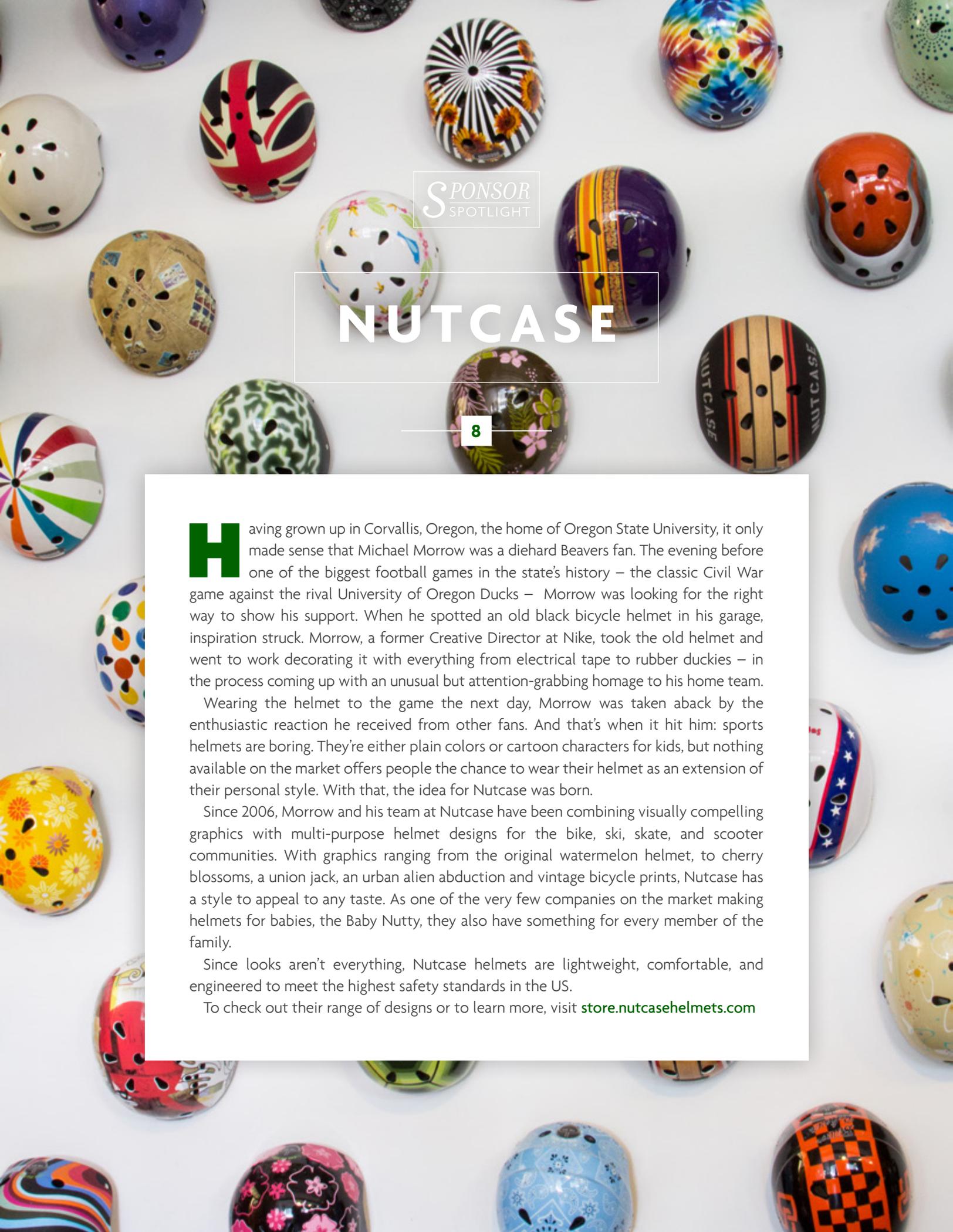
WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR BICYCLE

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A In an ideal world, all workplaces would have secure bicycle parking for employees, along with showers and change rooms for those who commute long distances or like to push it on their ride. As this isn't that world just yet, many of us still need to figure out how to fit bicycle commuting into our lives and jobs.

If your work doesn't have bike parking, talk to your boss about the potential of installing some. As more employers come to understand the benefits of having employees who cycle (more productivity, fewer sick days, reduced parking requirements), more are considering on-site bike facilities as a positive investment in their business.

If secure bike parking just isn't an option, ask if you're able to bring your bike inside. As a last resort (but in many cases not really a bad one), you can simply leave your bike locked up outside. Make sure to use a good lock, and if there are no bike staples anywhere in the vicinity, you can just lock up to a street sign until better bike parking is implemented.



SPONSOR
SPOTLIGHT

NUTCASE

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Having grown up in Corvallis, Oregon, the home of Oregon State University, it only made sense that Michael Morrow was a diehard Beavers fan. The evening before one of the biggest football games in the state's history – the classic Civil War game against the rival University of Oregon Ducks – Morrow was looking for the right way to show his support. When he spotted an old black bicycle helmet in his garage, inspiration struck. Morrow, a former Creative Director at Nike, took the old helmet and went to work decorating it with everything from electrical tape to rubber duckies – in the process coming up with an unusual but attention-grabbing homage to his home team.

Wearing the helmet to the game the next day, Morrow was taken aback by the enthusiastic reaction he received from other fans. And that's when it hit him: sports helmets are boring. They're either plain colors or cartoon characters for kids, but nothing available on the market offers people the chance to wear their helmet as an extension of their personal style. With that, the idea for Nutcase was born.

Since 2006, Morrow and his team at Nutcase have been combining visually compelling graphics with multi-purpose helmet designs for the bike, ski, skate, and scooter communities. With graphics ranging from the original watermelon helmet, to cherry blossoms, a union jack, an urban alien abduction and vintage bicycle prints, Nutcase has a style to appeal to any taste. As one of the very few companies on the market making helmets for babies, the Baby Nutty, they also have something for every member of the family.

Since looks aren't everything, Nutcase helmets are lightweight, comfortable, and engineered to meet the highest safety standards in the US.

To check out their range of designs or to learn more, visit store.nutcasehelmets.com

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