

Looking good and being practical

If you're serious enough about cycling that you're thinking of signing up for one of our bike events, then you need to think about clothing.

The right kit can make an enormous difference to how much you enjoy your bike riding. Your usual shorts and a t-shirt may be fine for heading down to the shops, but if your going to be doing 75k a day or more, then don't even think about wearing that stuff.

Shorts

Padded cycling shorts are a must. There is nothing in the world more uncomfortable than chafed thighs or a blister on the bottom. Buy the best shorts you can afford.

You'll need two pairs unless you can wash them every night. You don't have to go for the tight lycra look; there are casual shorts available which have padding hidden away inside. If you've got delicate skin, get some cream from the bike shop to rub on those delicate areas. (NB – don't use Deep Heat down there).

Tops

Long sleeve, short sleeve, no sleeve – cycling tops come in all shapes and sizes. Get something that will wick the moisture away from your skin. Cotton is really a no it will leave you feeling wet and cold.

Don't get anything that's too baggy. Wind resistance is a big issue on a bike.

A windproof gilet can be a useful bit of clothing and you'll probably need a long-sleeve top to go over everything when it's cold.

You'll also need a waterproof top. Again, ensure it's made of a breathable material. Anything really cheap is likely to make you turn into a puddle of sweat.

Gloves

Apart from the fact that it can get cold on a bike, proper cycling gloves will help you avoid blisters from gripping the handlebars and will give you some protection if you have a spill.

Shoes

It's best to cycling in something that has a stiff sole. Bendy trainers are not ideal. They will sap power and you may end up with sore feet. You can, if you want, buy cycling shoes, which start at around £40 a pair.

Helmet

It's a must. You won't necessarily look terribly stylish, but you'll look a lot more silly if you fall off when you're not wearing one. Helmets are compulsory on all Marie Curie Cancer Care's cycling events.

Glasses

It's a good idea to wear a pair of sunglasses or clear glasses to avoid eyes drying out or the risk of getting a bit of road grit in your eye.