

7. Stopping quickly and managing hazards

National Standard reference: 2.1.2, 2.2.2

Instructing points

Quick stop

- Pull both of your brakes evenly. Do not 'snatch' at the brakes.
- Brace both your arms when slowing down or stopping suddenly.
- Stay low and move to the back of your saddle (or off the back of it if appropriate).
- Shift your weight back by pushing on the pedals with your feet, keeping them parallel with the ground.
- Look ahead when you stop quickly to help you balance.
- Put your foot down after the cycle has stopped.

Manoeuvre around a hazard

- Ride towards a hazard.
- Swerve around the hazard and remain close to it.
- Return to your original riding line after passing the hazard.

Activity ideas

Stopping quickly with control

Demonstrate a quick stop, asking riders to observe what you do with your hands, arms, feet and body weight. Emphasise the need for weight shifting. Stop in a place where all riders can clearly observe you bracing your arms while pulling both brakes, moving your weight back and pushing back on the pedals. Consider demonstrating in different directions to ensure riders can see the technique.

Draw out the key coaching points from the riders.

Ask the group to line up side by side and with enough space between each rider. Then ask the group to set off all at once and then practise the quick stop when you call out "Stop!" For larger groups, the riders can be given a number (1 or 2) and then be set off in two groups. Give feedback between attempts and progressively increase the speed that riders practise their quick stops. Ensure that the riders always ride towards an instructor who will be able to see them clearly and assess their technique.

You can potentially come back to this activity as part of a later group riding exercise by asking riders to practise stopping quickly using a central path of an oval cone circuit. Call individual riders up the central path inside the oval where they can practise their quick stops while the rest of the group continue to cycle around the oval.

Activity ideas (continued)

Manoeuvring around a hazard

Demonstrate by cycling towards an object (such as a cone or a drain/pothole). Swerve around the hazard (getting close to it) then get back into your original line. Ask riders to observe how close you passed the hazard, and what you did after you swerved around it.

Ask the riders to practise by swerving in and out of cones in an oval circuit. Progress the activity further by asking the riders to swerve in and out of cones using two separate lines of cones on either side of the main oval. Ensure that these two lines are of contrasting levels of challenge – once riders have completed the easier of the two lines, they can attempt the more challenging one.

Alternatively, ask riders to cycle through a ‘gate’ of cones and swerve around you (swerving to the side that you point to at the last moment). The riders will need to swerve around you but also return to their original line by cycling through a second gate (in line with the first gate).

Sample questions to check understanding

- Q. What do you do to keep control when stopping quickly?
- Q. What can happen if you only pull the rear/front brake, not both?
- Q. Where should we look when stopping quickly?
- Q. Why is it better to swerve close to a hazard such as a pothole rather than wide of it?

Differentiation

Inclusion

Some cycles may brake by back-peddalling or back-hand-cranking. Before delivering the activity, check the technique required and assess the rider’s normal stopping technique.

Riders using BMXs or mountain bikes with low saddles may be required to come off the back of the saddle and position themselves above the rear wheel to stop quickly.

Riders of cycles with more than two wheels will need to explore techniques for swerving around hazards and will need to swerve wider in some cases.

Extension

Simplify

Ask riders to watch an extra demonstration, or have a go at each activity slowly, gradually building up their confidence and speed.

Differentiation (continued)

Challenge

Consider mixing up quick stops and swerves for riders who demonstrate good stopping and swerving skills. Ask them to cycle towards you. At the last minute, indicate whether the rider should stop or swerve.

Provided riders are ready, practise quick stops down a slope.

When stopping at even higher speeds, coach riders to move to the back or even off the back of the saddle.

Risk benefit assessment

Risk

- A rider goes over the handlebars when attempting a quick stop with an incorrect technique.
- The surface in the training area is slippery and this leads to a rider falling off due to skidding when attempting a tight swerve.

Mitigation

- Practise quick stopping slowly at first so riders who still need to master the technique do not go over their handlebars. Build up speed as they demonstrate good technique. Also ensure they cycle towards you so you can provide verbal coaching when required.
- Deliver swerving or quick stopping activities at suitable speeds that consider the surface conditions. Where necessary, practise at slower speeds. Also ensure that riders don't ride over cones which could make them slide.

Benefits

Riders are able to develop their technique in a safe and progressive manner so that they can improve their overall control skills.