

## Short History Of The Bicycle

The bicycle, bike or cycle is a human-powered vehicle that is driven by foot pedals. It has a basic frame with two wheels attached to it, one after the other. Almost 1.4 billion people in the world use this vehicle, and is obviously one of the most popular and cost-effective vehicles in use today. Not only is it an important and popular means of transport, but also an effective recreational tool. It has several uses such as police and military applications, courier services and cycling sports as well as adult fitness equipment.

Introduced in the 19th century in Europe, bicycle has a host of innovators and inventors credited to its name. The bicycle is supposed to originate from the human-powered vehicle called Draisines. This was introduced to the people in Paris in 1818 by German Baron Karl von Drais. Kirkpatrick MacMillan made an upgrade to this vehicle by adding a mechanical crank drive that as used to drive the vehicle. Thus, the modern `bicycle` came into being.

The French inventors Pierre Michaux and Pierre Lallement designed a high-seated and big front-wheeled bicycle (ordinary bicycle, as it was formally called) that wasn't much preferred as of its bad weight distribution. The dwarf ordinary bicycle mended these faults but the front oversized wheel remained a problem to be solved. J.K. Starley's 1885 Rover was the first modern bicycle in its true sense with even wheels and a proper seat.

The modern bicycle has many parts. They may be jotted down as follows.

**Frame** - Every bicycle today has a `diamond` frame, where the front triangle consists of the head tube, top tube, down tube and seat tube. The rear triangle consists of the seat tube and chain stays as well as seat stays. The basic of bicycle frames is to have high strength yet low weight so as to optimize the energy of the rider to the fullest. Women's bicycles generally have a step-through frame. This defines that the top tube is absent as it allows the rider (usually a woman) to mount and dismount in a dignified way while wearing a skirt or dress.

**Drivetrain** - The pedals which rotate the arms of the mechanical crank and chain rings and the brackets, all are elements of the drivetrain. They are used for gears and other related functions in the bicycle.

**Handlebars** - The handlebars are one of the most important parts of a bicycle. Upright handlebars are used in normal bicycles while dropped handlebars are used in racing and mountaineering bicycles. The latter are used because they give aerodynamic steering and speed to the biker.

**Saddles** - The saddles are varying depending on the journey and preference of the rider. Cushioned ones are usually used for short journeys while narrower ones are meant to give more space for leg swings.

**Brakes** - Modern bicycle brakes are usually rim brakes that use friction pads to de-intensify speed. There are also internal hub brakes that have friction pads within the hubs that halt a speeding bicycle. Disc brakes are used on mountain, racing etc bicycles that need braking to be immediate and accurate.

**Suspension** - A bicycle has suspension to guard itself from the hard roads and also provide comfort to the rider who has to face the rough road.

**Wheels** - Wheels are necessary for a bicycle to run and reach its destination. Sizes, shapes and powerful wheels vary as per the rider's needs and choice.

Cities such as Lyon, Barcelona and Paris have used bicycling schemes to good effect. The journey of the bicycle with the human race has been long and important, and will continue to lengthen as long as the human race still exists!

## About the Author

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