

Buy a Bicycle

Do you remember first learning to ride a bike as a kid? Do you remember the exhilarating sense of freedom and the feel of the wind on your face? It's time to reconnect with our old childhood friend – the bicycle – and learn about some of its more practical, adult applications. Reintroducing the bike into your life can save you tons of money on gas for your car, pricey auto maintenance and that gym membership you won't need anymore!

Gas prices are soaring and there's no indication that they're going to come down anytime soon. In fact, some geological experts predict that we've already reached a peak in gasoline production – a point at which it becomes increasingly more difficult and more expensive to drill and refine fossil fuels. And no matter how hard we try, we can't ignore the fact that global climate change is occurring and is caused, at least in part, by human actions.

Ignoring gas prices, it's expensive just to keep a car. Most poor secretaries are stuck driving used vehicles that need seemingly constant maintenance just to stay running. One week it's the alternator, the next it's the transmission – those repair bills add up fast. Reducing your auto usage by taking your bike on short trips helps to extend the life of your car since you're putting less wear and tear on it.

But riding your bike doesn't just cut down on car bills; it also helps you get in shape! Things like obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes have become all too common lately, largely because of our sedentary lifestyle. By making the bicycle your mode of transportation, you automatically put an end to that. And seriously, what's more fun? Rushing down hills with the wind at your back or spending a half hour at the gym, counting the minutes on the screen of the recumbent bicycle?

Getting a bicycle is easy. You can find them in specialty shops, sports equipment stores and some thrift/reuse stores. Buying from a specialty shop is the easy way to go – you know you're getting a solid, reliable bike, but you'll pay a little extra for the privilege. Watch for season-end sales and ask the salespeople to recommend a decent, reasonably priced bike. If you find a bicycle at a garage sale or thrift shop, take it into a specialty store to have it checked out and have any necessary maintenance performed.

And don't scrimp on safety gear just to save money! A helmet is non-negotiable and you might like some elbow and knee pads if it's been awhile since you've ridden. You'll also need some basic maintenance equipment. See if any local specialty shops or bike societies offer maintenance courses so that you can learn how to do simple repairs on your own. Also look for a bicycle safety class – learning to ride safely in traffic is essential if you plan to use your bicycle to commute to work.

A final note of caution – be reasonable with yourself. If you're out of shape, don't expect to be riding 20 miles a day to start. If you have any health concerns, check with your doctor before making the bicycle your primary mode of transportation. Work your way up to longer and longer rides and say goodbye to the gas pump that's siphoning away your money. The bicycle is financially and environmentally friendly, and can bring an experience of new energy and enjoyment to your life. So what are you waiting for? Buy a bicycle!

About the Author

Sarah Russell, aka "The Sexy Secretary," is a connoisseur of living the good life on a budget. Check out her website at www.thesexysecretary.com for more fabulous ideas on how to trim down your expenses without reducing your quality of life.

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