



Bicycle Security



It may seem as though there are lots of things to think about when locking your bicycle but once you get into the habit, you will be able to lock your bicycle within seconds and it will be well worth the trouble.

So when buying a bicycle, remember to budget for security as well. You will need one or more locks and somewhere secure at home to keep it.

At home

- Keep bicycles in a secure shed or garage and ensure the door is locked. If it is in a shed, ensure there is a robust lock for the door.
- Secure it to an immovable object or consider installing a floor or wall-mounted anchor lock for extra security.
- If the bicycle is in a communal area, is there anything to lock it to?
- Keep bicycles out of public view, away from prying eyes. A bicycle, alone, could provide an irresistible incentive for burglars.
- For additional protection, bicycles should be locked when left at home.

Out and about

- Avoid leaving bicycles in dimly-lit or isolated places. Leave them where a potential thief can be easily seen.
- Bicycles should always be locked, even if they are left just for a couple of minutes. Think about using two different types of lock – see advice on 'Locks' below.

Secure locking

Bicycles should be locked to an immovable object: where possible, use a proper bicycle rack, ground anchor or street furniture that offers multiple locking points and will stop your bicycle falling and causing an obstruction. Bicycles locked to lampposts, railings or anything else not designed for this purpose are more vulnerable to theft. Thieves can remove drainpipes and lift bicycles off signposts.

- Lock both wheels and the bicycle frame to the bicycle stand or other immovable object.
- Secure removable parts. Lock both wheels and the frame together. Take smaller components and accessories that can be removed without tools (for example, lights, pumps, computers, panniers and quick-release saddles).
- Fit secure skewers to wheels, headset and seat posts. Ask a bicycle shop for specialist advice.
- Make the bicycle and the lock hard to manoeuvre when it's parked.
- Keep the gap between bicycle and lock small – the smaller the gap, the harder it is to insert levers or other tools.
- Keep the lock or chain away from the ground; never leave them lying on the pavement – a lock can be sledgehammered while on the ground.
- Locks can also be picked, so face the lock to the ground (but not resting on it) so it can't easily be turned upwards for picking easily when it's resting on the ground.

Locks

- **Invest in good quality locks.** Hardened steel D-shaped locks and sturdy chain locks are recommended. Be prepared to spend 10% of the value of your bicycle on locks.
- It is always best to use two locks. Go for two different types of lock, for example a strong D lock and a sturdy chain lock. This means that a thief will need different tools to break each lock, making theft less likely.
- There are many different security products on the market; price and resistance to attack are the main considerations so try to choose products with a Sold Secure logo, as these are police-approved products.

Record & register your bicycle

- Take a clear colour photograph of your bicycle and make a written record of its description, including any unique features, so that you can report it accurately if it is stolen; this will help prove it is yours if it is recovered by the police.
- Register your bicycle model, make and frame number at www.immobilise.com. The frame number is often underneath the bottom bracket where the pedals attach, or on the frame under the seat. Again this will help anyone who subsequently finds (or even buys) it to check whether it is stolen – and return it to you.
- Add an additional security mark or tag to your bicycle to make it easier to identify as yours. The mark can be obvious, which may help deter thieves; or hidden, such as ultraviolet; or a combination of both. Clearly visible marks should be securely applied. A hidden mark or electronic tag is less likely to be identified and removed by thieves.

If your bicycle is stolen

- Report the theft to police - you can do this via our Do It Online page (using the 'Report a non-emergency crime' button) and report the theft or by ringing the police non-emergency number 101. You will receive a crime reference number. This will help you trace the progress of your case and may be needed for your insurance claim.

When buying a bicycle

- Don't create a market in which thieves can operate.
- If no one bought stolen bicycles there would be no reason to steal them. If you buy a bicycle from a legitimate seller, it is likely to be more reliable and you'll probably be covered if anything does go wrong with it. If it seems suspiciously cheap, ask yourself why.
- You may be able to check the ownership of a bicycle you intend to purchase by searching a property register such as www.immobilise.com or asking for proof of purchase or ownership.