

# SADDLE HEALTH TOP TIPS

## SKIN CARE

Keep the genital area, buttocks and inner thighs clean and use an emollient (chamois cream) to keep it moisturised. Any products used here should not be perfumed (such as petroleum jelly).

## KIT

There are female specific shorts available. Look for these, as they will improve fit and comfort. Within the shorts is a chamois, a soft cushioning to provide support for your sit bones.

Getting the right fit is important, as it protects against pressure, friction, chaffing or irritation depending where seams are. We recommend trying a variety of shorts out for comfort and fit before you buy, including sitting on the bike saddle to check the fit, and where seams sit when you are in the riding position.

## CHAMOIS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider the size of the chamois as body shape and size will determine which you need.
- Think about the type of riding you are going to be doing and the duration. For example, if you're riding a sportive, you may require a more comfortable chamois whereas if you're riding in short spells on the track, you may not need as much comfort.
- Don't wear underwear (especially cotton) with a chamois, they are designed to be worn with no other material to avoid any friction or chaffing.
- Wash kit in a gentle detergent such as non-biological to help avoid skin irritation.

## SADDLES

Some bike shops offer saddle fittings which can help you find the right saddle for you. If this service isn't available, we recommend simply trying out different saddles to find the right fit for you. Everyone is different, so one size fits all doesn't apply here.

Another consideration is if you have different bikes you might find you need different saddles depending on the position you ride in and the terrain you ride on.

Remember, your saddle will "break-in" over time and mould to you slightly.



## STRETCHING

Hip mobility can cause saddle discomfort or potentially chaffing. Try to mobilise hips before riding as this can help. We recommend using specific stretches before riding and yoga to increase flexibility and range of movement.

## STAND UP

Even on flatter rides, try to stand up out of the saddle every 10-15 minutes to give your sit bones a bit of a break and to restore some blood flow.

## REGULAR MONITORING

Monitor any levels of saddle soreness regularly. If there is any broken skin or sores, these should not be ridden on as they can be made worse or become infected. Keep any sores clean, dry and moisturised. Keep an eye on any swelling in the area. This could mean the chamois or saddle isn't right for you. Putting ice on the area can help reduce any swelling.

If a rider is concerned about saddle health. They should speak to their GP.

Even though pain and discomfort can be a normal part of sport, don't normalise all pain and discomfort, and if you are finding riding painful, take action.

Remember, everyone is different when it comes to finding the right saddle and chamois, however, having the conversation with other riders and coaches can help.

## DON'T FORGET

Similar to all aspects of cycle training, you need to allow your body to adapt, so **build up slowly**. Your sit bones do get used to the saddle in time, but don't rush this process.

Novice riders tend to sit fairly heavily on their saddles, and because of this, typically bounce more in the saddle.

More experienced riders will put more weight through their pedals, therefore creating a more stable position on the saddle.