

# Glossary of Cycling Terms



A

ABA

The American Bicycle Association, the world's largest sanctioning BMX organization.

abubaca

A trick where the rider goes straight up the ramp and while they are still facing forward they tap the back tire to the coping/obstacle, then drop back down the ramp riding backwards or fakie. The rider's body faces the same direction through the whole trick.

adventure race

A multi-discipline team race that varies in length and distance from a few hours to several days. Involves multiple sports such as cycling, running, orienteering, boating, rappelling, etc.

aero

(Say: air - o) - Slang for aerodynamic, streamlined. Anything that helps a cyclist cheat his main opponent, the wind. Aero devices include handlebars, bullet-shaped helmets, even windshields.

aero handlebars

Handlebars or bolt-on (often called "clip-on") bars made for road riding that put you in a streamlined position for more speed with the same effort. These usually include elbow pads, which support your weight. The bars place your hands in front of the body, where they poke a hole in the air, which decreases wind resistance. Using aero bars and finding an aerodynamically optimum riding position are the best ways to reduce your time in

time trials, triathlons, even centuries. Many riders like and use aero bars not for speed but because they provide a relaxed position for cruising the flats.

aero helmet

A special helmet with a streamlined shape to reduce wind drag and offer an advantage in races against the clock. Often pretty funny looking.

aerobic

(say: air - o - bick) - Cycling or exercising at a pace that allows breathing comfortably because you're getting enough oxygen. Think of it as a "conversational" pace. If you're breathing too hard to talk, the pace is too fast.

aftermarket

A component or accessory that wasn't intended to be used as original equipment on stock bicycles.

AheadSet

Component manufacturer Dia-Compe's brand name for a headset (the mechanism in the front of the bike that lets the fork turn for steering). This type is designed for forks with threadless steerers (the fork's top tube).

air

If you like to leap over obstacles or fly off ramps, this is what you're trying to put beneath your wheels, as in, "I got big air." Also, it's what you put in your tires and some suspension forks and shocks so you have nice, soft landings.

air shock

A suspension that uses air pressure as its spring medium.

all mountain

As in all-mountain bicycle, this means a bike or ride that encompasses all types of off-road terrain, climbs, descents, technical and jumping.

Allen wrench

A hexagonally shaped tool for turning the ubiquitous recessed bolts found on bicycles. There are L-shaped Allen wrenches, ones with screwdriver handles and ones with ball-ends so that you can turn bolts in tight spaces. Get a set for your toolbox and on-the-road/trail kit that includes at least 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8mm wrenches, and you'll be prepared to fix most things.

alloy

A blend of metals. Also slang for "aluminum."

## Alpe d'Huez

A legendary Tour de France climb to the French ski station of the same name, Alpe d'Huez is renowned for its brutal steepness and 21 switchbacks, each bearing the name of a past Tour stage winner. The Alpe became the Tour's first mountaintop finish when the then-unpaved climb was used in 1952. Fausto Coppi won the first stage to use the 8.6-mile, 7.9%-grade climb with a time of 45 minutes and 22 seconds. Now paved, debate remains as to who holds the record for the fastest ascent of the climber's crown jewel. Marco Pantani is generally acknowledged to be the fastest at 37'35" with Lance Armstrong a close second at 37'36".

## aluminum

(Say: aloo - min - um) - A super-light, durable and affordable material that's widely used for bicycle frames and components.

## anaerobic

(Say: an - air - o - bick) - Cycling or exercising at a pace that causes labored breathing because you're struggling to get enough oxygen. Obviously, you can't keep at it for long.

## anatomic seat

Seats scientifically shaped to accommodate the body. There are models for women and men.

## anchor bolt

The bolt on brakes and derailleurs that is tightened to hold the cable in place.

## anodized

A finishing treatment for hardening and coloring aluminum.

## apron

A bicycle track term that refers to the transition area just beneath the racing/riding surface of the track. Also referred to as the "cote d'azur" due to its blue color, it usually represents about 10% of the track's surface. It's not illegal to ride on the blue band but if you use it to get around another rider you'll be disqualified. Plus, it's dangerous to ride there as you're more likely to strike your pedal in the corners.

## arm warmers

Sleeves for keeping your arms warm. They're easy to put on and remove and they easily fit in a jersey pocket.

## Armstrong, Lance

America's most revered cycling celebrity. He's a hero to millions for surviving and fighting cancer with his foundation and for his seven-consecutive Tour de France wins.

Ashtabula crank

(Say: ash - ta - beau - la) - Also called a one-piece crank, this is a steel crankset found in some cruisers and BMX bicycles. It's simple, heavy, durable and named after a town in Ohio.

ATB

(Say: A - T - B) - For All Terrain Bike (another term for a mountain bike).

attack

Trying to get away from the group in a race by accelerating hard. Good luck.

auger

Or "auger in," this is slang for crashing, usually head- or shoulder-first.

autobus

This stage racing term (the Tour de France is the most famous stage race) is used for the group of racers riding near the back who work together to finish the stage just before the time limit expires.

automatic transmission

A bicycle drivetrain that shifts gears on its own. Ideally, it shifts into the gear needed, too.

axle

The shaft that a wheel, pedal or crankset revolves on.

B



baby head

In mountain biking, this is a section of trail with loose rocks about the size of a baby's head.

bacon

Slang for scabs, cuts, scars and other scrapes and abrasions from crashing. See also: road rash.

bail

To ditch (toss away) your bike before a crash, oftentimes done mid-flight during a jump.

balloon tire

A 26 x 2.125-inch tire with a tread pattern designed for road use. For example, the tires on most cruisers.

ballooner

A cruiser bicycles with fat tires. Think Pee-Wee Herman's bike.

banana seat

Fun and nicely descriptive name for the extra-long, narrow and curved seats that first became popular on the 1960's kids' bike called the Sting-Ray (viewed from the side these seats are shaped like a banana). They are so long that they attach in front to the seatpost and are supported in the rear by a strut. Today these seats are still found on high rise-style kid's bikes, called that because of their high-rise handlebars (sometimes these bikes are called "chopper bikes").

bank

A sloped embankment under 90 degrees. Found on dirt (MTB and BMX riding) and paved and wood tracks (track racing).

bar end shifters

Sometimes called "bar cons" (short for bar controls), these are shift levers that mount in the ends of the handlebars so that you can shift without removing your hands from the bars.

bar ends

1. Add-ons fit to flat handlebars to provide additional hand positions. Popular with some mountain bikers. 2. Little caps that are pressed into the ends of handlebars to seal them and for protection from puncture wounds should you crash and land on the bars.

bar plugs

Little caps that are pressed into/onto the ends of handlebars to seal them and for protection from puncture wounds should you crash and land on the bars.

bar spin

A trick where the rider releases and spins the handlebars. The standard bar spin is one full rotation of the handlebars, however riders can spin the bars twice, even three times, etc. This trick is often coupled with other tricks to add to the degree of difficulty.

bar(s)

Short for handle**bar**(s).

bashguard

A mountain bike accessory that protects the chainrings/crankset from damage should you run into a rock, log, etc. when you're riding over it.

bead(s)

The edges of the tire casing. When you inflate the tire, they're held by the rim to keep the tire in place.

bearings

Usually comprised of hardened-steel balls in some type of holder, these fit inside the hubs, pedals, bottom bracket, headset, sometimes derailleur pulleys, and often suspension frames to ensure parts turn with as little friction as possible.

beat

To abuse equipment as in, "That bike was beat."

beater bike

A bicycle that runs okay but looks nasty. Great for city riding because it's unlikely to be stolen.

beef-it

Slang for crash.

bell lap

In races with laps, like criteriums which typically race around city blocks, or cyclocross, which follows a fixed route, the bell lap is when the official at the starting line rings a bell. This is done either to signal a one-lap race within the race to contest a mid-race prime (the winner of that lap gets a prize), or as a signal that you're on the final lap and it's time to do your best to win.

berm

A small or large raised embankment usually in a corner that allows you to maintain speed without losing traction and sliding out.

biathlon

Also called "duathlon," this race is comprised of a running and cycling leg.

biff

Slang for crash.

big ring

The large chainring. Also called "the big meat."

bike boom

A period in the early seventies when bicycles suddenly became super popular due to many factors, not the least of which was an international oil crisis that saw gas prices soar.

bike hooks

These inexpensive bike-storage devices are shaped like question marks with threaded ends and they're rubber coated. Screw one into a stud in the wall and hang your bike by the wheel to get it off the floor and keep it from falling over. Bike hooks make it easy and affordable to store several bicycles neatly in a tight space.

bike lust

A common affliction for all cyclists, this is slang for when you covet new bicycles, accessories or anything cycling.

bike walk

A super-easy ride used to recover the day(s) after a hard race/event.

binder bolt

(Say: byen - der bolt) - Found on stems and frames, a binder bolt is what tightens a seatpost in a frame and a handlebar in a stem. Usually, binder bolts are Allens.

bladder

The part of a hydration system that holds liquid. Bladders are made from polyurethane or similar materials, are often antimicrobial to fight germs and bacteria, and come in various sizes up to 100 fluid ounces.

blades

Also called "legs," these are the two parallel tubes that make up the lower part of the fork (the topmost tube is called the "steerer").

blocking

Helping a friend escape up the trail or road by riding in front of the group and getting in the way to slow down followers. An important team tactic.

blow up

You have to pace yourself on rides, especially hilly or long ones, or you might blow up and tire yourself out so much you have to stop, or find another way to get home. You can blow up due to riding too hard, too far and by not drinking or eating enough.

BMX

Bicycle Moto Cross. A popular type of racing, trick riding and jumping usually done on 20-inch-wheel one-speed bikes.

bonk

The miserable condition you suffer if you don't eat and drink enough on a ride. Symptoms include a pins-and-needles feeling in the arms and legs, light-headedness, disorientation and nausea. It can lead to loss of control and crashing. Prevent it by always carrying food and water and eating and drinking before you're hungry and thirsty.

boot

A tire patch. Place it between the tube and tire to cover a gash in the tire's casing that otherwise would not contain the tube. Almost anything can be used as a boot, even paper money and roadside trash.

boss or bosses

Not the guy(s) running the show, bicycle bosses (also called "braze-ons") are the posts attached to frames and forks to accept components and accessories. For example, the brake bosses on a fork are where the brakes are attached. And, water-bottle bosses are where the bottle cage is attached.

bottom bracket

There are actually two meanings of bottom bracket. It's the term used to describe the cylindrical shell at the bottom center of the frame that the crankset (the part the pedals turn) is attached to. And it's the term for the parts that fit in this part of the frame so there's something to attach the crank to.

box jump

A common feature found in skateparks, stunt demos and competitions. It consists of two ramps separated by a 10-foot "deck" (flat section) in the middle (top).

BPM

Beats Per Minute, as in how many times your heart beats in a minute. It's the basic measurement used in training with a heart-rate monitor.

brain

Slang for "cyclo-computer," a small handlebar-mounted device that measures current, average, maximum and top speed. Plus, trip distance, total distance and often other things (depending on the model) such as cadence, temperature, elevation, even heart rate.

brain bucket

Helmet.

brake booster

A horseshoe-shaped add-on sometimes used on older mountain-bike rim brakes to increase braking power by eliminating flex from the brake posts (what the brakes mount to).

brake bosses

Also called "brake posts," these are the studs on the frame that bicycle brakes mount to.

brake bridge

The small diameter tube on the frame that runs between the two seatstays and on road bikes, where a rear sidepull brake is mounted.

brake fade

Usually caused by wear or improper adjustment, this is when the brakes lose power while you're braking. Bad brake fade can be scary and dangerous.

brake pad



The piece of rubber inside the brake shoe that provides the stopping power when the brake is applied.

brake posts

Also called "brake bosses," these are the posts on the frame that bicycle brakes mount to.

brake shoe

This includes the brake pad and its holder and sometimes the hardware to hold it on the brake.

brakeset

A complete brake system; levers, calipers, cables.

braze-ons

Small fittings (also called "bosses") that are usually brazed on (a type of welding) to frames for holding parts of the bicycle such as the water bottle cages, pump, rack and fenders.

breakaway

To ride away from the peloton in an effort to win a race. Because the peloton can ride much faster than an individual, breaking away is often a futile effort and leads to exhaustion, with the peloton eventually catching the rider. However, sometimes the attack pays off and the rider captures a dramatic win.

brevet

(Say: bruh-vay) - A brevet is an official randonneuring ride of at least 200 kilometers usually completed to qualify for longer and major events, such as Paris-Brest-Paris and Boston-Montreal-Boston. Just as on the longer events, in order to officially complete a brevet you must ride the entire route and stop at checkpoints along the way between certain times to get your route card signed. Failure to do this means the ride doesn't count.

bridge

Or "bridge a gap," "close the gap," this is to ride from one group of cyclists to another.

brifters

Slang for dual-function road bike levers that both brake and shift. Comprised of the "br" from brake and "ifters" from shifters.

brinelling

When a bike mechanic says a part is brinelled, it refers to components with bearings inside, like headsets or hubs. If they are brinelled, they've worn out over time and there's a pattern of dents in the bearing track.

broom wagon

The last vehicle in a race caravan, that "sweeps" the course and picks up crashed, broken-down and off-the-back riders who can't continue.

## bunch

Or "the bunch," this is used to refer to the main group of riders sticking together in an event or race.

## bunny-hop

A useful maneuver for clearing obstacles such as curbs and logs. You either jump and lift both wheels simultaneously or you lift the front and then the rear wheel. Careful! If you tag the rear wheel, you'll probably crash (see "faceplant").

## burrito

Primary food for many mountain bikers.

## bushing

A type of bearing that's essentially a sleeve (often made of nylon). They're commonly used in telescopic suspension forks between the inner and outer legs to provide smooth fork action.

## butted tubing

Bicycle frame tubes with variable wall thicknesses. Typically, the ends of the tubes, where stress is greatest, are thicker. This design saves weight while ensuring strength at the key stress points and weld (joint) zones. Butted frames usually offer a livelier ride, too.

## C



### cable cutter

A special tool for cutting brake and derailleur cables. A handy tool to have because bicycle cables have a nasty habit of fraying if you try to cut them with ordinary hand tools.

### cable end

Also called a "cable cap," this is a small aluminum cap that's crimped onto the ends of cables to prevent the cable from fraying.

### cadence

The average rate that you pedal when riding. Count the revolutions of one pedal in a minute. A good goal is averaging 90 to 100 rpm.

### cage

The part of the front derailleur the chain passes through. Also, that thing that holds your bottle, which is called a bottle cage.

### calipers

That part of sidepull, centerpull and disc brakes that attaches to the frame and holds the brake shoes.

### Campagnolo

A revered Italian manufacturer of road components and wheelsets. Founded by Tullio Campagnolo in 1933.

Campy

Slang for Campagnolo.

can-can

A trick where the rider removes a foot from the pedal, extends it over the top tube and to the side of their body and then returns it to the pedal before landing. There's also the "no-foot can-can." It's the same as the can-can except when the rider's one foot crosses over the top tube, the other foot comes off the pedal, and both feet are kicked out together.

cantilever brakes

(Say: cant - ee - lee - ver brakes) - A type of brake comprised of two arms that bolt to posts attached to the frame and fork with a crossover cable that connect the two. Common on mountain and touring bikes, cantilevers provide excellent braking power.

captain

What the front person on a tandem (a bicycle built for two) is called.

caravan

The motorized "circus" that accompanies most major professional stage races and even some amateur events, the caravan is composed of officials' vehicles, motorcycle police, team cars, medical vans and photographers hanging precariously off the back of even more motorcycles.

carbo loading

A popular energy-boosting practice for the days before a race or event, where the cyclist consumes as many carbohydrates as possible to store fuel for the race. Most riders' favorite part of training.

carbon fiber

One of the lightest frame and component materials, carbon fiber (also called just carbon) is unique in that it's a fabric, not a metal. This allows gossamer weights, incredible strength and impressive frame/fork compliance (vibration damping) because the fibers can be oriented in myriad ways.

cardiovascular

(Say: Card - ee-o - vask - you - lar) - Having to do with the heart and blood-supply system.

cartridge bearings

A bicycle-component bearing that is self contained and pressed in place. It's designed to be easier to replace when worn out. Sealed cartridge bearings have covers to keep dirt and grit from getting inside and contaminating the bearings and grease inside.

case

Not jumping the total distance of an obstacle and coming up short causing the rear wheel to tag the landing in an awkward, un-smooth style possibly resulting in a crash.

casing

(Say: kay - sing) - The material that makes up tire sidewalls.

cassette

The cluster of gears on the rear wheel of a bicycle. A cassette differs from a freewheel (which is also a cluster of gears on the rear wheel) in that it fits onto a splined interface on the hub. Freewheels are screwed onto threaded hubs. Also, cassettes do not include the drive mechanism while freewheels do.

cassette hub

A hub on which the freewheeling (coasting) mechanism is built into the hub as contrasted with freewheel hubs on which the mechanism screws onto the hub.

Cat I, II, III, IV and V

Or Cat 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, these are designations used by the governing body of USA Cycling to rate racers' abilities and determine in which group they race. Cat I is the fastest ("Cat" is short for "Category"). Cat V is the entry level. You graduate to the next category by earning upgrade points racing in enough events, and/or placing in and winning races.

century

Any 100-mile ride. It's been considered prestigious to be able to ride a century in a day since the 1880s. Today, many clubs hold century rides, which include a great route, rest stops at regular intervals with food and drink and a bunch of great folks to ride with. There are also "metric centuries." They cover 62.5 miles.

chain

That grimy thing toward the rear of the bike that inexplicably manages to smear your leg with a black tattoo every time you even think of going riding. More importantly, it connects the crank and rear wheel so the bike goes when you pedal.

chain guide

An accessory usually on a bicycle with one chainring and derailleur gears, that is mounted over the chainring to keep the chain from dropping off. Often found on downhill bikes.

### chain keeper

A small device that's usually attached to the frame to keep the chain from falling off the small front chainring when you shift onto it. This is sometimes an issue with compact cranksets that have a bigger difference in the chainring sizes.

### chain slap

The tendency of the chain to move up and down and strike ("slap") the chainstay when you're riding over bumps.

### chain tensioner

A device that keeps the chain tight on singlespeed and one-speed bicycles that weren't specifically designed for a given chain length (those bikes don't require tensioners). There are many types. The most common ones are mounted at the rear axle or on the derailleur hanger. Axle-mounted tensioners typically use bolts to pull the rear wheel back and tension the chain, while derailleur-hanger tensioners use a sprung arm with a pulley.

### chain tool

Also called a "rivet extractor," and a "chain breaker," this special tool drives pins in and out of the chain. It's used for installing, removing and repairing chains, and is a good tool to carry on long rides.

### chain whip

This tool is a metal bar with a section of chain attached to the end. It's used for removing cassettes and cogs.

### chainline

The path the chain takes from the chainrings (in front) to the cogs (in back). Check chainline by placing a straightedge between the chainrings and seeing where it lines up on the cogs. Ideally the chainline will be in line with an imaginary line that bisects the chainrings and cogs. That will ensure a smooth, quiet-running chain and smooth shifting. If the chainline is misaligned it can cause shifting problems and even possibly throw the chain off.

### chainring

Also called a "chainwheel," this is the sprocket(s) attached to the crank. Multiply the number of chainrings by the number of cogs (on the rear wheel) to determine the total number of gears on a bike. For example, some modern road bikes have 3 chainrings and 11 cogs for a total of 33 gears!

### chainstay bridge

The short small-diameter frame tube that runs between and connects the chainstays.

## chainstay guard

Anything applied to, or wrapped around the right chainstay to protect it from the chain, which has a tendency to strike that chainstay (and can ding the finish) when you ride over bumps.

## chainstays

The twin smaller-diameter tubes on a bicycle frame that run from the bottom bracket to the rear axle. They're called chainstays because they're close to the chain.

## chainsuck

An annoying ride-ruiner, chainsuck is when the small or middle chainring snags the chain beneath the chainstay and pulls it upwards (where the "suck" part of chainsuck comes from). This sometimes jams it between the chainring and the chainstay bringing pedaling to a grinding halt. Chainsuck is usually caused by mud, worn components and/or lack of lube.

## chainwheel

Also called a "chainring," this is the sprocket(s) attached to the crank. Multiply the number of chainwheels by the number of cogs (on the rear wheel) to determine the total number of gears on a bike. For example, some modern road bikes have 3 chainwheels and 11 cogs for a total of 33 gears!

## chamois

(Say: shammy) - The pad found inside most cycling shorts that cushions, wicks and breathes to ensure top comfort and protection. It also reduces friction and is seam-free to eliminate pressure points and chafing. Interestingly, the chamois was originally made of a thin leather just like the chamois you might use to dry your car. Today there are still leather ones but most are made of synthetic material, which often even includes antibacterial properties for additional protection and comfort.

## chase

What you do when you get dropped by your buddies on a ride. No fun.

## chrome

(Say: k - rome) - A plating treatment that leaves a super-hard mirror-like finish.

## chromoly

(Say: k - rome - molly) - Short for chrome-molybdenum, a high-quality type of steel tubing.

chuck

Also called a "pump head," this is the part of the pump that's attached to the tube's valve for inflating.

chunder

Loose trail debris, rocks, roots, etc.

circuit race

Usually a multi-lap road race around a course that exceeds one mile (versus criterium races that are held on shorter courses).

classic

Traditionally, a single-day European road race on the professional calendar. Examples include Paris-Roubaix, Milan-San-Remo and Liege-Bastogne-Liege.

cleaned

Or "clean," this is slang for making it through a tricky section of trail without putting a foot down as in, "I cleaned Slickrock trail today."

cleats

The parts that are attached to the soles of cycling shoes that connect the shoes to the pedals for more efficient pedaling.

climb categories

Climb categories are used in the Tour de France to rate difficulty. Climbs are ranked on a scale of 1 to 3, with Category 1 being the most severe. Riders are awarded points toward the King of the Mountains competition based on two things: their order over the top and the climb's difficulty. The harder the climb, the more points are available. There is also a "beyond category" climb called the Hors Categorie (HC). Its extreme difficulty makes it a big factor in stage races because better climbers can pick up more points here and make up time on their rivals.

clincher tire

Tires that are held on rims by a mechanical fit between the edges of the tire and the edges of the rim. It's the common tire found today on most mountain and road bikes.

clip-in, clip-out

(Or "click-in," "click-out") - To get in and out of clipless pedals.

clipless pedals

A popular way to attach your feet to the pedals for efficient pedaling is adding toe clips and straps, basically bolt-on cages and straps that form a harness to hold the feet. Another option is clipless pedals. Two parts make up the typical system, the pedal and the cleat. The pedal attaches to the crankarm, the cleat attaches to the shoe sole. Then, much like using ski bindings, you simply step on the pedals to click in and ride. To exit, you twist your heels sideways, which causes the pedals to release the cleats. Practice getting in and out before hitting the road or trail because it takes a little learning to get used to clipless pedals.

clunker

Or "klunker," this is a cheap bicycle that's used for errands and around-town riding, not serious cycling. Riding the clunker can be called "clunking."

cluster

Short for the cluster of cogs on the rear wheel. Better known as the "freewheel" or "cassette."

CO2 pump

The smallest bicycle pumps (they easily fit in a pocket), CO2s use pressurized cartridges to fill tires quickly. It's almost like having a compressor with you.

coaster brake

Also called a "foot brake," this brake is found on many children's bikes and one-speed cruisers. It's built into the rear hub and applied by backpedaling. No skidding, kids!

cockpit

An airplane or automobile term that is now sometimes (and confusingly) used for the parts making up the rider "compartment" on the bicycle, like the seat, seatpost, handlebars, stem and levers.

cog

Any sprocket on the rear hub.

coil-over shock

A type of shock on suspension bikes that's based on a coil spring.

col

(Say: cole) - French for a mountain pass.

comfort bike

A popular type of bicycle built mostly for recreational use and designed for optimum rider comfort with features such as soft seats, suspension seatposts, upright riding position and easy gearing.

compact crankset

A double-chainring crankset designed to provide easier gearing by using smaller chainrings than found on standard cranksets. These typically feature 39- and 53-tooth rings, while compacts usually have 34- and 50-tooth rings.



compact frame

Standard bicycle frames usually have top tubes that are parallel with the ground. Compact frames have sloping top tubes (lower at the seat tube). This can reduce frame weight, increase pedaling efficiency and speed handling. Compact and standard frames may fit riders differently.

components

The individual parts on your bike such as the derailleurs, brakes, crankset, pedals, seatpost, handlebars, etc.

composite

(Say: com - paws - it) - A frame tube or component comprised of more than one material. For example, a carbon composite includes carbon, aluminum and other elements.

compression

The part of suspension travel that loads the system such as striking a hole or when landing a jump.

computer

Also called a "cyclo-computer" or a "brain," this is a small handlebar-mounted device that measures current, average, maximum and top speed. Plus, trip distance, total distance and often other things (depending on the model) such as cadence, temperature, elevation, even heart rate.

cone

The piece that rests on the bearings in any component that includes bearings such as the headset, hub, pedals, bottom bracket and cassette. Usually this part is cone shaped, hence the name cone.

contre la montre

French for "against the clock," and used to refer to time trials where it's the cyclist against the clock, no drafting allowed.

CoolMax

A fabric designed by DuPont that's widely used in cycling clothing. CoolMax features outstanding wicking properties to move moisture away from the skin and keep you dry and comfortable.

coping

The top portion of the lip on a ramp or obstacle that is usually made of metal tubing, PVC pipe or rounded-off cement.

corncob

Also known as a "straight block," this is a cassette or freewheel on which every cog is one tooth larger than the preceding one (as you shift up the cassette to larger sprockets).

#### cote d'azur

A bicycle track term that refers to the transition area just beneath the racing/riding surface of the track. It's the narrow blue band at the bottom of the track. Also referred to as the "apron," it usually represents about 10% of the track's surface. It's not illegal to ride on the cote d'azur but if you use it to get around another rider you'll be disqualified. Plus, it's dangerous to ride there as you're more likely to strike your pedal in the corners.

#### cotterless crank

All quality bikes today have cotterless cranks. The word cotterless comes from the word cotter, which is a type of pin that used to be the common way to attach the crankarms to the axle. Cotterless cranks in comparison have a tapered or splined hole in them that fits over a similarly shaped axle. There is no cotter, so these cranks are called "cotterless."

#### crankarm

There are two crankarms in a crankset. Pedals attach to the crankarms and chainrings are affixed to the right arm. Crankarms are available in lengths from about 165 to 180 mm (measured center-to-center from the pedal hole to the bottom bracket axle) to accommodate different-size riders. Bicycles typically are equipped with crankarms sized to match the person who fits that frame size.

#### crankarm bolt

The two bolts used to attach the crankarms to the bottom bracket axle. There are standard and Allen bolts.

#### crankset

Also called "cranks," this is the unit comprised of the crankarms, chainrings and chainring bolts.

#### Crested Butte

As in Crested, Butte, Colorado, this is a mountain biking mecca. It's also famous as one of the first places the originators of the mountain bike ventured for epic off-road riding.

#### criterium

(Say: cry - tier - ee - um) - Also called a "crit," this is a type of multi-lap road race held on a relatively short course often around a city block. It's an exciting venue because spectators can watch the riders come around lap after lap and get up close and personal on the difficult sections of the course such as the climbs and tight corners. It's a thrilling event to race because you're so close to others, must negotiate many corners at speed and have to be smart and tactical to compete successfully. Many races come down to sprint finishes, too.

#### critical mass

This controversial, loosely organized monthly group ride takes place in large cities around the world, often during peak commuting hours. It's designed to promote cycling by reminding motorists that there are viable alternatives to driving. However, by impeding traffic, it may simply prejudice motorists against cyclists.

#### cross training

Participating in other sports for training besides cycling, such as running, hiking, swimming, etc.

#### cross-country bike

An off-road bike designed to be ridden and/or raced over a mountainous course. Common features include low gearing, durable components, suspension and great handling.

#### cross-three spoking

(Or "cross-two, cross-four") - A spoke pattern on which each spoke crosses three others, or two, or four.

#### crown

The part of a fork that the legs and steerer attach to.

#### cruiser

1. A bicycle made for casual riding. Features include a large, comfy saddle, wide handlebars and fat tires for a soft, flat-free ride. 2. A BMX bike with 24- and sometimes 26-inch wheels, often preferred by taller riders or adjusts returning to the sport. Cruisers race in their own separate class.

#### cruiser seat

A wide, thickly padded seat, such as the type usually found on cruisers.

#### curb racing

Or "curb riding," this is a tactic used when there's a crosswind. Say it's coming from the left. If you're strong enough and want to set the pace you could move over close to the right curb to prevent other riders from coming up on your right side where they would be sheltered from the wind and could save energy. You're trying to ensure that they have to work as hard as you do.

#### cyclo-computer

Also called a "computer" or "brain," this is a small handlebar-mounted device that measures current, average, maximum and top speed. Plus, trip distance, total distance and often other things (depending on the model) such as cadence, temperature, elevation, even heart rate.

cyclocross

A type of off-season bicycle racing (usually held October through January) around a loop course, which includes natural and man-made obstacles that force dismounting and running while carrying the bike. It was invented in Europe to keep racers fit through the winter.

cyclocross bike

A bicycle designed for the rigors of cyclocross racing with a light, responsive and rugged frame, fork and wheels, plus wide gearing, grippy tires and ample mud clearance. Cyclocross bicycles can be used for commuting, training, off-roading and training, too.

D

↑  
dab

Touching a foot to the ground to hold yourself up.

damping

How suspensions are controlled to get them to react to impacts the way you want. An undamped suspension might provide too much springiness or too rapid action turning the bicycle into a dangerous bucking bronco. Damped correctly, a suspension will absorb the bumps predictably providing control and boosting your confidence.

dance

Standing and finding a nice rhythm on a climb as in, "I danced over that hill!"

death march

A ride that turns bad making it very difficult to finish.

degreaser

Also called "solvent," this is a spray or drip liquid that penetrates and cuts built-up grime and grease. It's great for cleaning drivetrain components.

derailleur

(Say: dee - ray - lure) - Also called a "shifter" or in England, a "mech," a derailleur is a mechanism that literally derails the chain moving it to another cog or chainring. There are rear and front derailleurs. The rear shifts the chain across the cogs. The front moves the chain between the chainrings. You must be pedaling to shift and it's best to use light pedal pressure when shifting.

derailleur hanger

Also called a dropout hanger, this is the tab beneath the right rear dropout (not all bikes have these), which the rear derailleur is screwed into.

derailleur pulleys

The small toothed wheels on the rear derailleur that carry the chain. The top one is called the "jockey pulley." It's responsible for moving the chain during shifting. The bottom

pulley is called the "tension pulley." It creates tension on the chain to keep it taut during shifting.

detangler

Also called a "rotor," this is a component found on the front end of many BMX bikes and some freestyle mountain bikes that prevents the rear brake cable from tangling so that you can do easy bar spins and tailwhips (spinning the bars or bike 360 degrees). It splits the brake cable into two segments, which are joined at a rotor installed above, or attached to, the bike's head tube. As the bars rotate, the top segment spins while the bottom stays stationary and full braking power is available at every point of the rotation.

dial or dial-in

To fine-tune your bike or components as in, "He dialed my fork and it's smoother than ever."

diamond frame

The name for conventional bicycle frames because they're shaped like a diamond when viewed from the side.

directeur sportif

French for "sport director," the directeur sportif is responsible for managing almost all logistical concerns of the racing team he/she is in charge of. At the highest levels of cycling, during races, the directeur sportif drives behind the peloton watching live race coverage on a dashboard-mounted TV and informs his team on proper race strategy via radio. He may also pass out drinks and help with medical or mechanical issues.

directional tires

Tires that feature tread patterns designed specifically for front or rear use. Usually, there are arrows on the sidewalls showing how to properly mount the tire. And most are front or rear specific.

direct-pull brake

Also called a "linear-pull brake," these are the most powerful type of rim brake. They feature long parallel arms (greater leverage), inflexible brake-pad mounts and short cable paths. They are common on mountain bikes.

dirt-jumping bike

Also called a "dirt-jumper," a type of BMX or mountain bike built tough for jumping and stunt riding.

disc brake

A type of brake system that uses discs (called rotors) that are attached to the wheel hubs and calipers attached to the frame that grip the rotors when the levers are squeezed. Discs provide maximum speed control and stopping power even in wet and muddy conditions.

Plus, because they do not rely on the rims for braking, wheel damage can't compromise braking the way it can with rim brakes.

#### disc wheel

Used for an aerodynamic edge, mostly in individual races against the clock, like time trials and triathlons, these high-tech wheels feature closed construction making them disc-like and super slippery so they slice through the wind for free speed.

#### dish

This is a term that describes a condition found on rear wheels equipped with cogs. Because these take room on the hub's right side, the rim must be centered over the axle instead of the hub. This requires tightening the right-side spokes more than the lefts. If you look closely, you can see that the spokes on the right side are more perpendicular to the hub than the lefts, too. This is called "dish."

#### DNF

What you don't want to see next to your name after an event. It stands for Did Not Finish.

#### DNR

Short for Did Not Race. If you register for a bicycle race or a century ride and then for some reason can't be there to ride it, the officials will usually put DNR next to your name. DNS is also used, for Did Not Start.

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#### domestique

(Say: doe - mess - teak) - A racer who sacrifices his own chance of victory to help a teammate win. Tasks of a domestique may include: carrying extra bottles and food for fellow riders, chasing breakaway groups, and even giving their bikes to the designated team leader should he have a mechanical problem.

#### double

1. Short for a double-chainring crankset. 2. A jump with a gap between the take-off and landing. 3. Short for double century (a 200-mile ride).

#### double century

A 200-mile road ride, usually completed in a day. Just like there are lots of popular organized centuries, there are also many organized doubles.

double-crown fork

A suspension fork that features two crowns, one above and one below the head tube. Usually, it's a long-travel fork and the additional crown reinforces the fork legs to improve suspension, control and handling at speed.

doubletrack

A dirt road overgrown with weeds, etc. so that there are two parallel tracks.

down tube

The frame tube that runs from the head tube to the bottom of the seat tube.

downhill bike

An off-road bike designed primarily for downhill use. Features include: long-travel suspension, rugged components and wheels and a long wheelbase for stability at speed.

downshift

To shift into an easier-pedaling gear.

down-tube shifters

Shift levers that attach to the bicycle frame down tube. Once standard on bikes, they're now rare.

draft

To ride closely behind one or more fellow riders so that you are shielded from the wind, thereby saving considerable energy. The drafting effect increases as the size of a group grows, creating the potential for a number of riders to travel much faster than an individual cyclist.

drag

Aerodynamic forces that make you have to work harder and slow you down. In cycling, drag is the result of a number of things, including the wind speed and direction, plus the bicycle, equipment and clothing that all catch the air to some degree. This is why so many companies use wind tunnels in their bicycle design and testing process.

drivetrain

It's comprised of the crankset, chain, front and rear derailleurs and pedals.

drop-off

A ledge that forces you to either dismount and walk or sail off the lip. Keep that front wheel up!

dropout

The usually crescent-shaped frame ends that the wheels fit into. Rear dropouts hold the rear wheel and front dropouts, found on the fork, hold the front wheel.

dropout hanger

Also called a derailleur hanger, this is the tab beneath the right rear dropout (not all bikes have these), which the rear derailleur is screwed into.

dropped

When you're not fit enough to ride with the group, you risk getting left behind, or "dropped." In a race, the goal is to "drop" everyone by the finish.

dropped handlebars

Racing/touring style handlebars that feature compound bends and provide several comfortable hand positions. Also called "drop" handlebars.

dropper seatpost

A spring-loaded mountain-bike seatpost that can be lowered or raised while riding so that you can dial-in the perfect seat height for a given section of trail without having to stop and get off the bike.

drops

The lowest hand position on racing/touring style ("dropped") handlebars.

dry lube

Chain lubricants that don't attract grit and grime and are best suited to dry riding conditions. They often include paraffin.

dual slalom

An exciting mountain biking event where two racers compete on side-by-side downhill slalom courses.

dualie

Slang for a bicycle with dual suspension. Also called a "full suspension."

dual-suspension bike

A bicycle (usually designed for off-road use) with front and rear suspension.

duathlon

Also called "biathlon," this race is comprised of a cycling and running leg.

dustcap

The cover on components containing bearings. It keeps dirt and grit out so it can't contaminate the bearings. Dustcaps are found on hubs, pedals and sometimes crankarms.

dynamo

Another word for "generator," a dynamo is a device that produces electricity as you pedal to power your bicycle lights. Usually they are either attached to the bicycle frame and rub



on the tire or they are incorporated into the front or rear hub and built into a wheel. As the wheel turns, electricity is generated.

## E



eat it

Slang for crash.

e-bike

Short for "electric bike," these bicycles includes battery-powered electric motors. They're popular with commuters, new cyclists and elderly riders who appreciate the engine's boost on the hills and against headwinds. Also, you're "encouraged" to pedal because the more you pedal, the longer the battery lasts.

echelon

(Say: esh - el - on) - An echelon is a riding formation used by a group of cyclists when there's an oncoming side wind. Riders stagger themselves forming a diagonal line across the road to best find shelter from the wind, save energy and maintain their pace. Riding in this formation is called "echeloning."

elastomer

(Say: ee - last - oh - mer) - A type of spring used for bicycle suspensions. It's usually cylindrical and elastic. Elastomers are lighter than coil springs and offer some built-in damping (suspension control), too.

endo

Slang for flipping over the handlebars and crashing.

energy bar

A nutritious bar eaten before, during and after riding to keep your energy up and speed recovery.

energy drink

Any liquid designed specifically for cycling. It should include the sugars and minerals needed to replace what's lost through exercise.

energy gel

A food carried and eaten on rides for energy. It's the consistency of pudding and tastes like cake frosting. It's more quickly metabolized by the body than bars because you don't have to chew it.

engine

In cycling, that's you!

epic ride

Also "epic," this is any ride that turns into a memorable adventure, or one you'd like to forget!

ergometer

(Say: erg - om - met - er) - An indoor cycling device used for training and/or testing fitness.

Ergopower

Campagnolo name for its road-bike shifting brake levers.

F



50-50

Coming up short on a landing of a jump so that the rider essentially lands on their bottom bracket. This is unsightly, uncomfortable and can ruin the landing.

faceplant

Slang for a bicycle accident that results in your mug contacting the pavement. A great reason to always wear your helmet.

fakie

Riding backwards.

false flat

1. A surprisingly difficult section of road that looks flat but is actually slightly uphill. Usually, no matter how hard you pedal you go way slower than you think you should be going. 2. A stretch on a long hill that looks flat and tricks you into thinking you've reached the top when there's still more climbing to come.

fan

As in "fan the pedals," this term describes a rapid pedal cadence (your pedaling speed).

fat bike

Not to be confused with "fat-tire bikes," which is a moniker for mountain bikes, fat bikes are a new type of all-terrain bicycle that feature super-wide frames, wheels and tires (often over 4 inches wide), that make it possible to ride over snow and sand with ease.

feeble

A trick where the back peg of the bike is grinding/stalling while the front tire is on top of the obstacle.

feed zone

A designated area on a race course where managers hand food to their racers as they pass.

fenders

Also called "mudguards," these mount over the wheels to keep water and muck from spraying all over you while you're riding on rainy days or on muddy trails.

ferrules

(Say: fair - rules) - Metal or plastic caps that fit on the ends of cable housing. There are several types. Some are used to provide a perfect fit between the housing and stops the housing fit into on the frame. Others customize the end of the housing to fit in the brake and shift levers (but ferrules aren't used on certain components so always read the directions to be sure).

field

Or "the field," this is used to refer to the main group of riders sticking together in an event or race.

fireroad

A dirt road; called a "fireroad" because it's used by the fire department to reach wilderness fires.

fixed gear

A one-speed bicycle (usually used on the track or road) that has no provision for coasting. You must keep pedaling when the bicycle is moving and your feet are on the pedals.

fixie

Although there are different designs, most fixie bicycles are among the simplest two-wheelers on the road and trail. They're usually comprised of a frame, wheels, bars, stem, seat, seatpost, crankset, pedals and chain. There are no derailleurs and often no visible brakes (you slow/stop by holding back on the pedals). These elegant bikes are called "fixies," because the distinguishing characteristic is having only one fixed gear (it's attached to the rear wheel in such a way that you can't coast, the pedals always go around when the bike is rolling).

flair

A back flip combined with a 180-degree spin in which the rider lands riding forward going back in the direction from which he came, often done in a half-pipe or on a tall vert lip.

flange

(Say: flan - j) - What the spokes fit into on hubs.

flat bar

A handlebar that does not have any rise or drop. Flat bars are typically found on mountain bikes designed for cross-country riding and road-style hybrid bicycles.

flex

Often used in describing the feel of a bicycle frame. Ideally, frames will flex just enough to provide some comfort but not so much you lose pedaling efficiency.

flip whip

A trick that combines a backflip and a tailwhip.

floor pump

A bicycle inflator for home use (versus the one you carry on your bicycle). The best floor pumps have built-in gauges making it easy to check tire pressure.

fluid trainer

A device for riding indoors comprised of a stand that holds the bicycle upright, which includes a resistance unit that simulates the feel of outdoor riding. It's called a "fluid" trainer because the resistance unit uses a fan immersed in fluid (usually oil) to create the drag.

folding bike

A bicycle with a folding frame and components that make it easy to collapse the bike into a tiny package for storage and portability.

folding tire

These tires feature beads made of Kevlar, a flexible fabric, which allows folding the tire flat for easy storage and portability. It also makes the tire lighter for better acceleration and handling. Naturally, folding tires cost more.

food log

Slang for many cyclists' favorite post-ride "energy bar," the burrito.

foot brake

Another name for a "coaster brake," a type of bicycle brake that's built into the rear wheel of children's bikes and cruisers and actuated by pushing backwards on a pedal.

forcing the pace

Riding faster than your cycling companions want to.

fork

The part of the frame that holds the front wheel and that is turned to steer.

fork block

A device that can be attached to the bed or liner of a pick-up or van (many other places, too) for transporting your bike. It consists of a T-shaped block with a quick-release skewer running through it. You remove your bike's front wheel and clamp the fork into the fork block to mount your bike in the pick-up. Fork blocks can also be used for indoor bicycle storage.

fork crown

The part of a fork that the legs and steerer attach to.

frame

The frame is what the bicycle parts attach to. It does not include a fork.

frame angles

Usually shown on the frame or bicycle geometry chart (or found by measuring), frame angles help you understand a bicycle's riding characteristics. The angles used are the head-tube and seat-tube angles expressed in degrees. So, for example, a road bike might have a 74-degree head tube and a 73-degree seat tube. As a broad, general rule, as the angles steepen the ride stiffens and vice versa.

frame-fit pump

A type of pump that's held onto the bicycle without clips or straps. Spring pressure holds it in place beside a frame tube.

frameset

The foundation of every bicycle, it's comprised of a complete frame and fork.

freehub

The barrel-shaped and splined part found on the drive side of a rear-wheel cassette hub. The freehub contains the mechanism that drives the bicycle when you pedal. The cassette (cluster of gears) slides onto and is attached to the freehub so you can't see the freehub until the gears are removed.

freeride bike

An off-road bike designed for technical trail riding, downhill and general all-around use. Features include: long-travel dual suspension, beefy components, easy gearing and great brakes.

freestyle bike

A type of BMX bicycle designed for stunt riding on the street.

freewheel

A cluster of cogs that's screwed onto the rear wheel. It includes the bearings and drive mechanism. "Freewheel" also means to "coast." Note that a "cassette" is also a cluster of gears on the rear wheel. But a cassette slips onto the splines on a cassette hub and does not include the bearings and drive mechanism (they're part of the cassette hub in a piece called the "freehub").

front triangle

Also called the "main triangle," this is the part of the frame made up of the top tube, head tube, down tube and seat tube.

fufanu

A trick where the rider goes straight up a ramp and while they are still facing forward they tap the back tire to the coping/top of the lip, then turn back toward

the direction they came as they drop back into the landing. Similar to an abubaca except they do not ride the trick out backwards (fakie).

full-face helmet

A skid lid that offers more head protection than conventional bicycle helmets by including a reinforcing piece(s) that covers your lower face. It provides additional protection and is often used for downhill runs and extreme riding.

fun box

A four-sided box jump with a ramp on every side. A common feature in skateparks.

G

↑  
gap

1. The distance between groups of riders or a breakaway and the pack in a race. 2. The space between jumps or ramps, often where riders throw tricks while airborne.

GC

For General Classification, "GC" is used in stage racing for the current overall rider standings. Since stage races are comprised of several races, there are results for each race and also results for each rider's cumulative time for all stages. The person with the lowest time overall after all the races is first on GC and the winner of the race.

gear

The chain/sprocket mechanism that makes the bicycle go when you pedal. Also, commonly used to mean "equipment," as in, "Time to buy some more biking gear."

gear ratio

This is used to compare gearing. For example, on a road bike with 18 gears, there are 2 chainrings and 9 cogs. To check the gearing, count the teeth on the cogs and chainrings and create a chart with the rings on top and the cogs on the side. Then, to calculate each gear ratio, divide the chainring by the cog and multiply by 27 (rear wheel diameter). Put the numbers in the chart so you can compare and understand. The larger the number, the harder it is to pedal the gear. By comparing the numbers, it's possible to find overlapping gears and gaps that you might want to change to improve the gear ratios.

gearing

The range of gears on a multi-speed bicycle.

gel

A pressure-eliminating anti-friction material found inside seats (sometimes found in handlebar grips and cycling shorts, too) to cushion and protect your body. Many cyclists find gel seats supremely comfortable. Gel itself feels a little bit like jelly.

#### General Classification

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#### generator

A device that usually attaches to the bicycle frame and rubs against the tire to produce electricity to illuminate your lighting system via pedal power rather than batteries.

#### geometry

Geometry is the key technical description of a bicycle frame that helps you understand how the frame will fit and ride. Usually it's provided on a chart with an illustration making it easy to understand which measurement is which. Common geometry measurements include: seat-, top-tube, chainstay and wheelbase lengths; head- and seat-tube angles; fork rake and trail measurements; bottom-bracket height; and often more.

#### Giro d'Italia

In English, the Tour of Italy, this is the country's grand tour and the second most important stage race on the professional calendar after the Tour de France.

#### glueless patches

A type of patch that includes a sticky adhesive so it's unnecessary to apply glue to the tube (required with other patch kits). This speeds the patching process.

#### glutes

The muscles in your rear end. They're all important for cycling.

#### gnarly

Used to describe a technically challenging trail or impressive move on your bike as in, "Gnarly save, Dude; you almost crashed!."

#### granny gear

A small chainring on the inside of a triple crankset. It's called a "granny" because it provides a gear easy enough for Granny to pedal up steep hills.

#### grease

(Say: greece) - A bicycle lubricant that's used for components, which include ball bearings, such as the hubs, bottom bracket, headset and pedals. Grease is the consistency of pudding, so it stays put and lasts a while.

#### grind

A BMX term for sliding along the edge of an object such as a handrail with only the axle pegs in contact.

#### grips

The rubber or vinyl "covers" placed on the ends of upright handlebars. Besides making it more comfortable to hold onto the bars, they cover the ends, which prevents puncture wounds should you fall and land on the bar end.

#### grom

Short for "grommet," and used in other sports too, a "grom" is any young, up-and-coming rider, usually under 15 years-old, who may already possess considerable skill.

#### group

1. Or "the group," this is used to refer to the main group of riders sticking together in an event or race. 2. Sometimes called "groupo," this is a complete set of bicycle components. A group usually includes: hubs, crankset, bottom bracket, derailleurs, shift levers, brakes, headset and sometimes the seatpost. Wheels are sold separately.

#### group ride

Rides with more than one person, usually a lot more. Before joining an established group ride find out what type it is so you go on one that you'll like. Some are conversational and fun, others are hard-core training rides designed to simulate tough, race conditions.

#### gyro

An ingenious inline brake-cable device, usually installed on the headset (steering mechanism) of freestyle BMX bikes, that makes it possible to spin the handlebars and front wheel 360 degrees without tangling the cables.

## H



#### half-wheel

Riding so that about half of your front wheel remains ahead of your friend's. Every time he tries to pull up next to you, you inch slightly ahead again. It's a bad habit that often turns friendly rides into fights or races.

#### hammer

To push the pace, ride hard.

#### hamstrings

The muscles on the backs of the thighs.

#### hand cycle

A bicycle or tricycle that's pedaled by hand, usually with a special crankset/pedal arrangement located in front of the rider.



handlebar-end shifters

Shift levers that attach to the ends of the handlebars.

hanging in

This is what you do when you're tired on a group ride, but keep trying and manage to stick to the back of the group.

hardpack

A hard-packed trail.

hardtail

A mountain bike that has a rigid frame equipped with a front suspension.

head tube

The frame tube that the fork fits into.

headset

The bearing mechanism attached to the head tube and fork that makes it possible to steer. It's comprised of a fork race that's pressed onto the fork crown, two cups that press into the head tube, bearings and a top cone, spacers and a top nut, clamp or stem (the stem locks the adjustment on threadless headsets).

heart-rate monitor

A watch-like device that measures and displays your heart beat. A great tool for measuring and tracking fitness.

helmet hair

Or "helmet head," this is the awesome hair you get after wearing a helmet for a period of time. Usually involves many spikes of hair sticking straight up matching your helmet's vent pattern.

hitch rack

Also called a "receiver rack," this is a rack for carrying bicycles that mounts to a trailer hitch on the vehicle.

holeshot

First used in motorcycling and then BMX, "getting the holeshot," is when you get a great start in a race and are the first person through the first turn. Since BMX races start with riders lined side by side, the first racer to the turn often has to find a hole between other racers in order to do this, which is where "holeshot" comes from.

hooks

The side curved parts of dropped handlebars where you rest your hands to be in an aerodynamic body position while being able to easily reach the levers.

horizontal dropouts

A dropout is the part of the frame that holds the wheel. Horizontal dropouts are rear dropouts long enough and oriented to allow some fore/aft adjustment of the rear wheel.

housing

What the brake and derailleur cables pass through on their way to the brakes and derailleurs.

hub

The centermost part of a wheel. The part the spokes attach to and the part that includes the axle or quick release, which attach the wheel to the bicycle.

hub gears

Also called "hub gearing," or "internally geared hubs" these rear hubs (the centermost part of the wheel) have the gearing system inside. Small "planetary gears" hidden inside the hub change position as you operate the control lever to shift and this makes it easier or harder to pedal. Hub gears are heavier than derailleur shifting systems but are less affected by weather and wear and tear. They are commonly used on commuting and city bicycles.

huck

To attempt a jump with little forethought or concern about the outcome.

hybrid

A type of bicycle that's suited to road and off-road use. The concept behind hybrids is to blend the upright riding position, flat-proof tires, easy pedaling gearing, great brakes and suspension of a true off-road bikes with the lightweight wheels, skinnier tires, slightly higher gearing, and zippy geometry of a road bike. Hybrids are excellent for commuting, touring, fitness riding and exploring fireroads through the woods.

hydrate

To drink. Do it often while riding!

hydration system

A pack or container worn on the back or waist (or attached to the bike) that carries liquid and features a hose that makes sipping easy.

hydraulic brake

A brake system that utilizes liquid instead of cables for actuation.

Hyperglide

Component maker Shimano's name for their cassettes and chainrings that include gates and ramps to improve shifting. It's also used for chains designed for the system.

I

↑

ice pick

A trick where only the back peg is grinding or stalling while the front wheel is in the air.

Illuminite

(Say: ill - oom - in - nite) - A brand name for a highly reflective fabric used in high-tech cycling clothing.

## IMBA

(Say: im - ba) - International Mountain Bicycling Association

## in-mold construction

Found in helmets, this means that the hard-plastic cover (the painted part) is actually molded to the helmet's liner, not simply taped in place. It's a more durable form of helmet construction.

## internally geared hub

Also called "hub gearing" or "hub gears," these rear hubs (the centermost part of the wheel) have the gearing system inside. Small "planetary gears" hidden inside the hub change position as you operate the control lever to shift and this makes it easier or harder to pedal. Hub gears are heavier than derailleur shifting systems but are less affected by weather and wear and tear. They are commonly used on commuting and city bicycles.

## interval training

An intense type of workout excellent for building strength, where you go hard for a set distance, pedal easily to recover, and then repeat the hard/easy efforts a number of times.

## Ironman

The first and most famous triathlon. Held in Kona, Hawaii in October each year, it's comprised of a 2.4-mile ocean swim, 112-mile bike race and 26.2-mile run. Competitors have 17 hours to finish the race.

## ischial tuberosities

More commonly called the "sit bones," these are the two bony points of the pelvis that rest on the bicycle seat. For maximum comfort you want a seat that is the right width to support and pad your sit bones.

## J

### ↑ jam

To push the pace.

### jersey

A shirt made for cycling. Jerseys are often brightly colored for visibility when riding. And they're made of fabrics that wick moisture away from the skin to keep you dry and comfortable while pedaling. Usually they have rear pockets for carrying energy food, tools and clothing you might need or have removed. And, they often have long zippers, which are great for cooling off on hot days.

### jockey pulley

The topmost small toothed wheel on the rear derailleur. It's responsible for moving the chain during shifting. The bottom pulley is called the "tension pulley." It creates tension on the chain to keep it taut during shifting.

## JRA

Short for Just Riding Along, as in, "I was just riding along when the front wheel locked up and I flew over the bars!" Usually, a total exaggeration; like those fish-that-got-away stories.

## jump

A hard acceleration. Also, for mountain bikers and BMXers, used literally for jumps.

## K



## Keirin

(Say: Kay - rin) - Keirin is a mass-start track race which originated in Japan as a betting event (sort of like horse racing with humans) and is now also an Olympic event. In traditional Keirin lots are drawn to determine starting positions and 6 to 9 sprinters compete after a paced start. The pacer starts at a slow 15 mph and riders are required to remain behind him. The pacer gradually increases speed and leaves the track approximately 600 to 700 meters before the end letting the racers sprint to the line. The first person across wins.

## Kevlar beads

Kevlar is a tough DuPont fabric. Beads are what's on the edges of bicycle tires and clings to the rim and keeps the tire on when it's inflated. Kevlar is used for the beads of most high quality bicycle tires (instead of wire) to save weight, improve ride quality and make it easy to fold the tires for portability. Tires with Kevlar beads are called "folding" tires.

## Kevlar belt

Kevlar is a tough DuPont fabric. It's sometimes used beneath a tire's tread to create a nearly impenetrable Kevlar belt that prevents flat tires.

## kicker

A type of jump that will typically propel you further vertically than horizontally.

## kickstand

A device attached to the bicycle that supports it for parking. It's called a "kickstand" because you put it up and down by kicking it with your foot.

## kitty litter

Small pebbles and loose debris over a hardpack trail.

klunker

Or "clunker," this is a cheap bicycle that's used for errands and around-town riding, not serious cycling. Riding the klunker can be called "klunking."

knee warmers

Sleeves worn over your knees and lower legs to keep the all-important leg muscles, tendons and ligaments warm. Knee warmers are easier to take off and tuck in a jersey pocket than tights are, which is why they're favored by many riders.

knobby tires

Tires with a tread pattern comprised of blocks that provide excellent traction.

L



LAB

(Say: el - ay - bee) - League of American Bicyclists

ladies' frame

A frame with a sloping top tube that makes it easier to mount and dismount.

LBS

(Say: el - bee - s) - Shorthand for Local Bike Shop.

leadout

Helping someone win the sprint at the end of a ride/race by getting in front and working hard until you're close to the finish line, when you move to the side allowing your friend to sprint past for the win.

LeMond, Greg

The first American to win the Tour de France. He won it 3 times: 1986, 1989 and 1990.

lid

Slang for helmet.

line

Or, "the line," "the good line," this is the best path through a technical section. "The line," also means "the finish line."

linear-pull brake

Also called a "direct-pull brake," these are the most powerful type of rim brake. They feature long parallel arms (greater leverage), inflexible brake-pad mounts and short cable paths. They are common on mountain bikes.

lip

The take-off point of a jump and the top edge portion of a halfpipe wall.

loaded tourer

A bicycle made to carry a lot of gear for distance riding. Usually, it includes such features as sturdy racks, a long wheelbase, great stability and strength, robust wheels, additional wheel clearance and wide-range gearing.

loamy

A trail that's not quite muddy and not quite dry, but moss-like.

loop out

When a rider flips over backwards often due to pulling back and/or pedaling too hard while doing a wheelie or a manual.

Lorica

A high quality type of synthetic leather used in some cycling shoes.

lug

Sleeves used to join frame tubes. The tubes fit inside the lugs and are brazed (sometimes bonded) in place. Lugs reinforce joints and also make it relatively easy to disassemble the joint should a tube need replacing after a crash.

Lycra

A fabric made by DuPont that's highly breathable, stretchy and comfortable. It's widely used in cycling clothing because it fits so nicely and moves so well with the body when you're riding. It's also extremely durable.

M



mag trainer

A device for riding indoors comprised of a stand that holds the bicycle upright, which includes a resistance unit that simulates the feel of outdoor riding. It's called a "mag" trainer because the resistance unit uses a magnet to create the drag.

maglia rosa

Italian for "pink jersey," the maglia rosa is the jersey worn by the current race leader in the Giro d'Italia (Tour of Italy), which is the second most important professional stage race after the Tour de France. "Maglia rosa" is also used to refer to the race leader himself. TV commentators might say, "The Maglia Rosa is riding well today." The

jersey's color comes from the Italian sports tabloid and race sponsor, La Gazzetta dello Sport, which is printed on pink paper.

maillot jaune

(Say mayo - june) - French for yellow jersey, what the leader and winner of the Tour de France wears.

manual

Usually a BMX or mountain-biking skill where you lift the front wheel and ride a wheelie to more smoothly and quickly get over obstacles or certain types of terrain like rollers.

mash

Pushing hard on the pedals.

mass start

This describes when a group ride or race commences with everyone leaving the starting line at the same time. Most road and cross-country races have mass starts, and most century, charity and fun rides do too.

mechanic

Bike-repair expert.

Merckx, Eddie

(Say: Eddie Mer - ks) - One of the greatest road racers in cycling history, dubbed the "Cannibal" for how he devoured opponents often riding off the front seemingly effortlessly. "Eddie" as he is commonly called, won the Tour de France 5 times.

messenger bag

A type of pack favored by bicycle messengers (because they can get into it without removing it), that's slung over the head and shoulder bandolier style.

metric century

A 62.5-mile ride. Metric centuries are often offered along with the standard 100-mile century on organized group rides.

mini-pump

A small pump that's easily carried on the bike or in a pack for on-the-road/trail flat-tire repair.

mini-tool

A small all-in-one tool that fits in your pocket or seat bag and includes the essentials for on-the-road/trail repairs, such as Allen wrenches, screwdrivers and a chain tool.

Miss and Out

An elimination-style track race where the last rider across the line after each, or certain laps, is knocked out of the race. When the remaining riders reaches a certain number, they sprint for the finish to decide the winner. This race is also called "Devil Take the Hindmost."

mixte frame

(Say: mix - tee - frame) - A women's frame that features two small-diameter sloping top tubes. These make mounting and dismounting easier. And, because there are two tubes, lateral frame stiffness is not compromised the way it is with basic ladies' frames, which feature single down tubes.

Moab

As in Moab, Utah, a mountain biking mecca, famous the world over for wonderful trails. Also, home of the Slickrock trail.

monocoque

(Say: mon - oh - kok) - A structure on which the "skin" provides the support. Carbon-monocoque frames are hollow but plenty strong.

moto

1. A single heat in a BMX race. 2. Slang for off-road riding.

motorpace

A training technique involving riding behind a car or motorcycle to develop the ability to ride at higher speeds. Note: Don't try this behind the family car. For safety, special roller devices are used on the backs of real motorpacing vehicles.

mountain bike

A bike designed for off-road use. Common features include: knobby tires, sturdy wheels, low gearing, great brakes, upright riding position with easily reached controls and suspension.

musette

Also called a musette bag, this pouch with shoulder strap is stuffed with food and handed to racers as they pass through the feed zone.

N



neutral support



At a ride or race, neutral support means if you have a mechanical there is assistance on the course available to all riders (versus in racing where team riders receive support from their own mechanics who will not help other riders).

#### neutral zone

Usually reserved for racing, a neutral zone is a section of the course where you're not allowed to race and have to remain behind the lead vehicle(s). For example there might be a neutral zone for a few miles to allow the race vehicles and competitors to get across a strip of highway before getting onto the official racecourse. Once on the course, the lead vehicles will typically signal the field to start racing and then speed up the road.

#### nipple

Also called a "spoke nipple," this is an oddly shaped nut that attaches to the end of the spoke, usually found at the rim. You turn nipples with a spoke wrench to true the wheel.

#### no-foot can-can

A trick where the rider removes one foot from the pedal, extends it over the top tube and then takes the other foot off the pedal too and kicks both feet together out to the side before returning the feet to the pedals and landing.

#### noodle

1. The small tube the cable runs through right beside the brake arm on some linear-pull brakes. 2. To ride really easily, to just "noodle along."

#### NORBA

(Say: nor - ba) - National Off Road Bicycle Association

#### nose case

Misjudging the landing of a jump and coming up short so that the front wheel of the bike tags the top or front of the landing. This often leads to the rider needing to bail out from the bike.

#### nothing

A trick where you remove both hands and feet from the bike simultaneously while in the air over an obstacle so that for a short moment no part of your body is in contact with the bicycle.

#### O



#### off-the-back

Falling off the pace so much that a gap opens up between you and the group. A quick way to end up riding home alone because the group travels more quickly than the individual.

off-the-front

Rolling away from the group on a training ride or race. Considered rude if it's an easy day or friendly spin and apt to turn any group ride into a race. It also means being well ahead of the pack in a race. So, if you attacked and no one stayed with you, you'd be off the front.

Omnium

A track racing event in which riders compete against each other in five different disciplines including the 200-meter flying-start time trial, the 5-kilometer scratch race, the 3-kilometer individual pursuit, the 15-kilometer points race and the 1-kilometer time trial.

organ donor

Cycling slang for one who rides without a helmet.

OTB

1. Short for, "over the bars," as in crashing in such a way that you go flying over the handlebars Superman-style. 2. And, also short for, "off the back," which means being dropped by the group.

Overend, Ned

One of America's best-known and most decorated mountain-bike racers.

overgeared

When you don't have easy enough gears for the course you're trying to ride.

overlap wheels

The dangerous practice of positioning yourself on a group ride so that your front wheel overlaps someone's rear wheel. Problem is, if that person swerves, their wheel will tag yours, probably knocking you off your bike.

P

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paceline

A line of riders (all it takes is two, yet the more there are, the better it works) traveling closely together and taking turns in the lead in order to save energy, share the work and travel more quickly than possible riding alone. There are many types of pacelines, such as single and double ones, but the goal is always the same, to cover the distance more

efficiently by riding closely together, sharing the work of riding in front and breaking the wind, while your riding partners rest and get ready for their "pull" at the front when the time comes. In racing, there are paceline tactics that come into play too.

pack

Or "the pack," this is used to refer to the main group of riders sticking together in an event or race.

pack fodder

Negative term used by more aggressive riders about those riding with the group who never take a pull at the front.

panniers

(Say: pan - ee - ers) - Also called "saddlebags," these are bags that mount to front and/or rear racks for carrying gear. They're great for touring.

Paris-Brest-Paris

Or "PBP," Paris-Brest-Paris is an historic, and today the most important randonneuring event. It travels from Paris to Brest and back to Paris, a distance of 745 miles (1,200 kilometers) that must be completed in 90 hours. While food and rest stops are allowed, riders must be self-supported carrying the spares and all equipment needed such as lighting, fenders, rain gear, etc. PBP goes back to 1891 and takes place every four years in August. To qualify you must complete a series of rides called "brevets," 200, 300, 400 and 600K in length. Riders who manage to qualify and finish PBP within the time limit get their names entered in the official records of the Audax Club Parisien, and have the satisfaction of knowing they conquered one of the toughest events in all of cycling.

patch kit

A kit for repairing flat tubes. It usually comes in a small plastic box and includes patches, glue and sandpaper.

PBP

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pea gravel

Pea-size rocks all over the trail or road making it very hard to ride over/through.

pedicab

(Say: ped - ee - cab) - A pedal-powered taxi.

pegs

Found on some BMX bikes, pegs (or axle pegs) are heavy-duty, short tubular extensions that screw onto the axles making it possible to do tricks like grinding.

peloton

(say: pell - o - ton) - The main body or group of riders. Also called the "pack," "field" and "group."

pendulum

A trick where you do a no-foot can-can in both directions before returning your feet to the pedals.

pin

Or "pin it," this is to tackle a tough section of trail fast and clean. As in, "I pinned it down that rock garden!"

pinch flat

A flat tire caused by riding over a rock or pothole and bottoming out the tire and pinching and puncturing the tube against the rim. Also called a "snakebite" because it causes side-by-side cuts in the tube that resemble a snakebite. A common cause is riding with too little air pressure.

plain-gauge tubing

Frame tubing that has a constant wall thickness. Usually on the heavy side.

platform damping

A feature found on many mountain bike shocks and some suspension forks. Platform damping stiffens the suspension for efficient pedaling, while allowing the shock to stay active to absorb larger bumps on the trail.

pogo

Taken from the action of a pogo stick, this describes how a poorly adjusted suspension bounces up and down (usually due to insufficient damping). This leads to loss of control and should be adjusted.

portage

To carry your bike.

poser

Someone who's not what he wants you to think he is.

pound

As in "pound the pedals," it means to ride hard.

preload

(Say: pree - load) - A suspension adjustment that's needed before your first ride to ensure that the suspension is set correctly for your weight. Because suspension designs vary, you should follow the directions in your owner's manual. Usually, preload is accomplished by setting the shock air pressure or spring tension or by replacing its elastomers with stiffer or softer ones.

Presta valve

Also called a "needle" or "French" valve, Prestas are the narrower of the two valve types (Schrader is the other valve type and it's the same as a car tire valve). Prestas also have a threaded tip that must be unscrewed before you can add or release air from the valve.

pretzled wheel

A badly bent wheel.

pull

"Taking a pull," is riding at the front of a group or paceline and breaking the wind to give the riders behind you a rest. Riders will say, "take a pull," or "that was a great pull."

pull through

Riding to the front of the pack on a group ride. You might hear a rider behind you say, "pull through," which means he wants you to keep going all the way to the front so he can follow you up there. "Pulling through" can also mean pulling off and letting someone else lead. For example, when a lead rider is tiring, it slows down the entire group. Then riders behind feel fresh and want him to pull through and get off the front so they can go to the front and pick the pace back up.

pulleys

The small toothed wheels on the rear derailleur that carry the chain. The top one is called the "jockey pulley." It's responsible for moving the chain during shifting. The bottom pulley is called the "tension pulley." It creates tension on the chain to keep it taut during shifting.

pump

An inflator used to add air to bicycle tires. Also, what you do to inflate a tire.

pump head

Also called a "chuck," this is the part of the pump that fits on the tube's valve for inflation.

pursuit

A track cycling event where riders start on opposite sides of the track and race over a set distance (4K for men, 3K for women). The racer who finishes the distance the quickest wins. It's an exciting event to watch as you can see who is ahead and a rider might even catch his opponent.

## Q

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quadriceps

(Say: quad - ri - ceps) - The large muscles on the front of the thighs.

quick release

A clamping mechanism used to hold on wheels and sometimes used to secure seatposts in the frame. Quick releases make it easy to remove wheels for storage or flat-tire repair. You'll also find quick releases on seatposts and sometimes other parts such as handlebars on some folding bicycles.

quick-release skewer

The part of the quick-release mechanism that passes through the part it secures. Also called the quick-release "rod."

## R

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race of truth

Used to refer to time trials where it's the cyclist against the clock, no drafting allowed.

races

Also called "ball races," this is where the ball bearings rest inside bicycle components that contain bearings, such as the hubs, headset, pedals and bottom bracket. There are two ball races, one on either side of the component.

rack trunk

A bag for carrying your gear that fits on top of a rear rack. Easy access.

radial spoking

This is a spoke pattern on which the spokes run directly from the hub to the rim without crossing other spokes.

rail bike

A special bicycle that's designed to be ridden on abandoned railroad tracks.

rails

The rods beneath the seat that make up its frame and support the top. Also, the parts of the seat held by the seatpost clamp.

rainbow jersey

The jersey earned and worn by the world road-race champion. It sports the rainbow stripes (green, yellow, black, red and blue).

rainbow stripes

Symbol of the world road-race champion and often used to decorate components and clothing associated with the title. The stripes are green, yellow, black, red and blue.

rake

Rake is also called "fork rake" and "fork offset." It's the distance the wheel axle is ahead of the steering axis of the bicycle. With this measurement, you can calculate front-end geometry to determine a bicycle's handling characteristics.

rally

1. To go fast. 2. A meeting or start time, as in, "Let's rally at 10 and ride!"

randonneur

A cyclist who does long-distance endurance riding with no outside support, typically not for competition but to complete the course within a certain time limit. According to Randonneurs USA "friendly camaraderie, not competition, is the hallmark of randonneuring." Randonneuring goes back to the beginnings of cycling. The most famous event is Paris-Brest-Paris, a 746-mile test that has to be completed within 90 hours. Begun in 1891, it is still held every four years in August.

ratchet

To rotate your crankset halfway to avoid striking your pedal on a rock, log, etc.

rear triangle

That part of a bicycle frame comprised of the seat tube, chainstays and seatstays. It's called a "rear triangle" because it's behind the frame's "main triangle," which is made up of the seat tube, top tube, down tube and head tube.

rebound

The part of suspension travel during which the shock returns to its starting position.

receiver rack

Also called a "hitch rack," this is a rack for carrying bicycles that mounts to a trailer hitch on the vehicle.

recovery bar

An energy food that's eaten after rides to recover more quickly.

recovery drink

An energy drink for after rides to recover more quickly.

recumbent

Bicycles designed around a reclined instead of an upright body position. On recumbents you sit in a seat that resembles a lawn chair (complete with backrest) and pedal with your

legs out in front of your body. These unique bicycles come in a variety of configurations but all offer great comfort because they support more body weight and eliminate pressure on the hands, arms, neck, etc.

repair stand

Also called a "workstand," this is a support that holds your bicycle in the air to make maintenance and repair easy (and save your lower back).

retro

From the past.

retro-grouch

Someone who disdains new equipment and innovation in favor of time-tested designs.

rhythm section

A back-to-back series of jumps or rollers on a dirt track or trail.

rigid bike

A bike without suspension.

rim

The outermost part of the wheel. The tire mounts to the rim. On bicycles with caliper hand brakes (not disc brakes), the rim is part of the braking system.

rim cement

Also called "glue", this is the adhesive that's applied to rims to mount sew-up (also called "tubular") tires.

rim strip

The cloth or rubber strip inside a wheel that keeps the spoke holes/nipples from poking holes in the tube.

riser handlebars

Also called simply "risers," these handlebars are higher at the grips than in the center to provide a more upright riding position. They're popular with downhill mountain bikers because they provide additional control.

road rash

Also called a "raspberry" or "strawberry," this is the painful scrape(s) suffered from crashing and sliding down the road.

roadie

Someone who favors road riding.

rock garden

A section of trail with so many large, immovable rocks, it takes skill to ride through it without putting your foot down or walking.

rollers

1. A series of small hills on a track or trail that are typically rolled (coasted) or manualed over (extended wheelie), not jumped. 2. An indoor training device comprised of a frame holding 3 or 4 rollers on which you place your bike to pedal in place. The rollers let you pedal in place and steer as you would riding outdoors. Unlike on stationary trainers, you must balance to ride rollers (unless yours are equipped with a bicycle support).



roof rack

A rack for carrying bicycles that mounts to the roof of your car. Watch those low overhangs!

rotor

1. The "disc" part of disc brakes, rotors are the thin, flat circular metal plates that attach to the hubs. They're what the brake calipers grip to slow and stop you when you squeeze the brake levers. 2. A component found on the front end of many BMX bikes and some freestyle mountain bikes that prevents the rear brake cable from tangling so that you can do easy barspins and tailwhips (spinning the bars or bike 360 degrees). The rotor (also called a "detangler") splits the brake cable into two segments, which are joined at a rotor installed above, or attached to, the bike's head tube. As the bars rotate, the top segment spins while the bottom stays stationary and full braking power is available at every point of the rotation.

route sheet

Sometimes called a "turn sheet," this is a type of map handed out at the beginning of organized rides that simply lists every turn on the course and the distance to it. Much easier to follow while riding than using a map.

RPM

For Revolutions Per Minute, this is how you calculate your "cadence," or pedaling speed. Simply count the number of complete pedal revolutions (one side) you do in 15 seconds and multiply by 4 to determine how fast you're spinning. A good target for fitness riders is to maintain 70 to 90 RPM.

S

↑  
650c

(Say: six - fifty - see) - A designation for the wheel size found on many triathlon bicycles. 650c wheels are slightly smaller diameter than 700c wheels. Tires and tubes are not interchangeable.

700c

(Say: seven - hundred - see) - A designation for the wheel size found on most road bicycles.

saddle

Also called a "seat," this all-important device supports you and has a lot to do with how comfortable you are when riding.

sag wagon

Also called "SAG," this is the vehicle that follows riders on a group ride and carries supplies and food. If you crash or run out of energy, you can sometimes get a ride back to the start in the sag wagon.

#### Schrader valve

(Say: shray - der valve) - This is a type of valve found on bicycle tubes that's identical to those found on car tires.

#### schwag

(Say: sh - wag) - Also, sometimes called "swag," it's free bicycle goodies, such as posters, caps, bottles, stickers etc. you pick up at cycling events, races, shops.

#### scratch race

A track racing term for a race over a given distance or a race in which all riders start on equal terms (from scratch).

#### scream

To ride really fast.

#### scuffing

Using your feet on the tires to scrub speed, maintain speed, or lockup the tire to cause the bike to stall.

#### sealant

A usually latex-based liquid with some type of small particle mixed in, that's put inside tubes and tubeless tires to fix flats before they can happen. The sealant particles seal the hole almost immediately so you can keep right on riding.

#### sealed bearings

This type of bicycle bearing is protected from water, sand and dirt with some type of shield, which means the bearing runs longer and requires maintenance less often. Many high quality bicycle bottom brackets, headsets and hubs feature sealed bearings.

#### seat

This is a term used when installing bicycle tires (car tires too). To "seat" a tire, or "seating" tires means getting the tire beads (the edges of the tire) sitting just right on the rim. When you spin the wheel and watch the bead lines on both sides, they should sit just above the rim all around the wheel. If they dip or bulge anywhere, let the air out of the tire and try again or the tire might come off.

#### seat bag

Also called a "seat pack," this is a bag that attaches beneath the seat for carrying essentials.

seat tube

The frame tube that the seatpost fits into.

seatpost

The component that the saddle attaches to.

seatstays

The twin small-diameter frame tubes that straddle the rear wheel and run from the seat tube to the rear axle.

semi-slick tire

An off-road tire with such a low-profile tread pattern, it appears almost bald. Popular with cross-country racers with great bike handling skills.

sew-up glue

The adhesive applied to the rim and tire to mount a sew-up tire (also called a "tubular tire").

sew-up tire

Also called a "tubular tire," (because the tire is shaped like a tube), this is a type of tire that's glued onto the rim and features a casing that's sewn around the tube. Professional road racers favor tubulars because the tires are extremely lightweight and have a round cross-section, which improves ride quality.

Shimano

The Japanese company that's the worldwide leading manufacturer of bicycle components. Founded by Shozaburo Shimano in 1922.

shimmy

Also called "speed wobble," this is a dangerous side-to-side front-end oscillation while riding caused by a damaged or in-need-of-repair bicycle, or road/trail conditions. It starts off slowly and gets worse and can easily lead to losing control and crashing. To stop a shimmy, clamp your knees against the top tube and slow down. If it happens often have your bicycle checked for problems.

shock fork

Another name for a suspension fork.

shock pump

A special inflator for air shocks. These are needed because air shocks often require more pressure than standard bicycle pumps can supply.

sidepull brake

A lightweight brake design that's found on most road bikes. It's called a "sidepull" because the cable path runs down the side of the brake.

sidewalls

The sides of tires. Look closely. Sometimes the recommended pressure is written on the sidewall.

singlespeed

An off-road bike with one gear. Some races have singlespeed cross-country events. Singlespeeders like the simplicity of the bikes and the demands of racing without gears (if a hill's too steep, they walk).

singletrack

Eden for mountain bikers, singletrack trails are just wide enough for one bike and usually traverse glorious terrain with whoop-de-dooos, scenic overlooks and challenging technical sections.

sit bones

Also called the "sitz bones" and "ischial tuberosities," these are the two bony points of the pelvis that rest on the bicycle seat. For maximum comfort you want a seat that is the right width to support and pad your sit bones.

sit in

Riding at the back of a group of cyclists to stick with them without doing any work so you can rest.

skewer

Short for quick-release skewer, the clamping device that allows you to remove and install wheels without tools. To be technically accurate, the quick release is the entire clamping device and a skewer is the rod-like part of the quick release that passes through the wheel's axle.

skid-lid

Slang for helmet.

skipping

This is a symptom of a worn drivetrain. When a cog (or chainring) gets worn enough, it can't carry the chain properly. So, if you pedal hard when the chain is on that cog, you may experience a sudden and disconcerting lurch in the pedal stroke accompanied by a strange popping sound. What's you're experiencing is the chain riding up and over the teeth on the cog and slamming back down again. Skipping can also be caused by a stiff link that binds when it reaches the derailleur or doesn't seat on the cog. Either way, it's something to have repaired ASAP.

slickrock

1. Large smooth swaths of rock, usually sandstone and great for mountain biking due to the excellent traction. 2. Slickrock is also the name of a famous trail in the riding mecca of Moab, Utah.

slicks

Tires with so little tread that they appear bald. Very fast and grippy.

Slime

A brand name for a popular type of tire sealant. It's a liquid that's squeezed into bicycle tubes to prevent flats. When you run over something that pokes a hole in the tube, escaping air forces the sealant into the hole, closing it and repairing the puncture.

smith

A trick where the front peg on the bike is grinding/stalling while the back tire is on top of the obstacle.

snakebite

Also called a "pinch flat," this is a flat tire caused by riding over a pothole or rock, which pinches the tube between the tire and rim creating side-by-side cuts in the tube that resemble a snakebite. The most common cause is riding with insufficient tire pressure.

snap

The ability to rev the pedals to accelerate quickly. Strong sprinters are said to have excellent snap.

soft pedal

To pedal easily. Often to let a ride partner catch up.

softtail

A full-suspension bicycle.

solvent

Also called "degreaser," this is a spray or drip liquid that penetrates and cuts built-up grime and grease. It's great for cleaning drivetrain components

SPD

(Say: S - P - D or spud) - Shimano's brand of clipless pedals. They're so popular that some cyclists refer to all clipless pedals as "SPDs," or "spuds."

specs

Short for specifications and used to refer to the list of bicycle components or features found in catalogs and online.

speed wobble

Also called "shimmy," this is a dangerous side-to-side front-end oscillation while riding caused by a damaged or in-need-of-repair bicycle, or road/trail conditions. It starts off slowly and gets worse and can easily lead to losing control and crashing. To stop a speed wobble, clamp your knees against the top tube and slow down. If it happens often have your bicycle checked for problems.

spider

The part of the right crankarm to which the chainrings are attached. Some spiders are integral and others can be removed.

spin

To pedal quickly, fluidly and seemingly effortlessly.

spindle

Another term for axle.

spine ramp

An obstacle made up of two symmetrical lips placed back-to-back or coping-to-coping.

Spinning

A brand name for a type of indoor cycling offered by some gyms and clubs. These strenuous sessions are led by instructors who ensure a quality workout.

spoke wrench

A small tool used for loosening and tightening spokes to true wheels. Not to be used carelessly!

spokes

The usually metal rods that run between the wheel hubs and rims. Spokes come in different shapes, materials, thicknesses and lengths.

sports tourer

A type of bicycle with a lively ride and load-carrying capacity. Sports tourers are ideal for "credit card touring" (traveling at a good clip with a light load and spending nights in hotels). They often include wide-range gears for easy hill climbing, too.

sprint

1. An all-out sharp burst of speed (usually covering no more than about 200 yards) at the end of a race to go for the win. 2. In track cycling, a sprint is a type of race in which two riders compete one-on-one. Unlike pursuits, the riders start next to each other in a sprint race.

sprocket

The parts that the chain rests on. There are front and rear sprockets, called respectively "chainrings" and "cogs."

spuds

Slang for Shimano's SPD brand of clipless pedals. They're so popular that some cyclists refer to all clipless pedals as "spuds," or SPDs.

squirrel

Slang for a dangerous cyclist; a rider who doesn't ride a straight line, doesn't point out obstacles and does just about everything wrong. It's a good idea to educate or steer clear of squirrels on group rides because they often cause crashes.

stage

One of the individual daily races that make up a stage race. For example, the most famous stage race, the Tour de France, is usually made up of about 21 days of racing, each one a separate stage.

stage race

Any race comprised of multiple races (stages). Usually won by the person who completes the entire event in the least amount of time. The Tour de France is the most famous stage race.

stainless steel

A type of high-grade metal widely used for quality bicycle spokes because it's strong and won't rust.

stem

The part that holds the handlebars. Sometimes called a "gooseneck," or "tiller."

STI

Shimano's name for its road-bike shifting brake levers. It stands for Shimano Total Integration.

stick it

Or "stick," this is to land a jump or drop-off: stick the landing.

stiction

(Say: stick - shun) - A term that describes friction in a suspension that prevents it from operating smoothly. Ideally, suspension should be stiction free.

stiff link

A chain link that binds and stops flexing as it should. Stiff links are usually caused by corrosion due to insufficient lubrication. Repair stiff links immediately because they compromise shifting, pedaling and can cause a nasty accident if they slip, jam or break when you're pedaling hard. To fix, pedal backwards to spot the bad link (it'll hang up as it passes over the rear derailleur pulleys), then grab the chain at the stiff link and flex it laterally to free it. If that doesn't work, replace the chain and make the old one into bicycle jewelry.

stoked

(Say: st - oh - ked) - To be excited about something; probably that great ride or new carbon frame.

stoker

The rear cyclist on a tandem.

straight block

Also known as a "corncob," this is a cassette or freewheel on which every cog is one tooth larger than the preceding one (as you shift up the cassette to larger sprockets).

straights

A track term for the longer straightaway sections on either side of the velodrome that lead into the corners. This is where riders enter and leave the track.

suicide no-hander

A trick where the rider pinches the seat/frame with their legs and pulls back their upper body and throws back their arms releasing the handlebars and allowing the front end of the bike to drop away slightly mid-flight. A rather committing trick.

Superman

Slang for crashing in such a way that you go flying over the handlebars Superman-style.

survival mode

When you're so tired, you have to settle into a slow, determined pace to make it home.

suspension

A device that insulates the rider from rough terrain by absorbing impacts. Bicycle tires provide a degree of suspension because they're full of air, which cushions bumps. Many bicycles today include mechanical suspensions that provide incredible insulation from impacts and bumps and add great control.

swag

(Say: sh - wag) - Also called "schwag," it's free bicycle goodies, such as posters, caps, bottles, stickers etc. you pick up at cycling events, races, shops.

swingarm

On a suspension bicycle, this is the part of the frame connected to the shock. It moves up and down when you hit bumps.

switch

Riding with your non-dominant foot forward or trying a trick in the opposite direction. Example: If you spin a switch three, you are spinning a 360 in the direction that does not come most naturally to you.

T

↑  
29er

An off-road bicycle with 29-inch wheels.

table top

1. A jump that is flat from the lip to the landing. 2. A BMX or mountain bike jumping trick where you flatten the bike out horizontally, like a table top, while you're flying through the air.



taco'd

A term used to describe a seriously damaged wheel that appears folded over like a taco.

tailwhip

A trick where you balance on the handlebars, hold the front end stationary and then quickly whip the backend of the bicycle around (and around again, for the rare double tailwhip), before putting your feet back on the pedals.

taking a pull

Going to the front of the group and staying there for a while to give followers a rest.

tandem

A bicycle built for two.

tapered steerer

A modern fork design where the base of the fork steerer tube is larger diameter than the top. This stiffens the front end without adding weight and improves handling and sprinting. Typically, tapered steerers measure 1 1/8 inch at the top and 1 1/2 at the bottom, but other sizes are available.

Taylor, Major

Marshall Taylor (nicknamed "Major"), was the second internationally famous African American professional athlete and arguably the best American cyclist, ever. Though he was regularly bullied by racist competitors who ganged up to defeat him; restricted by race promoters who allowed only white racers; and even harassed by death threats, Taylor excelled becoming world and American champion in 1899, setting many world records and receiving a \$10,000-a-year salary.

team time trial

Also called "TTT," a team time trial is a race where all the rules of the individual time trial apply, yet instead of riding alone, racers compete as teams. To optimize speed, teams ride as units, trading positions at the front of their small group so no one rider has to break the wind by himself for very long.

technical

Something challenging to ride. In mountain biking, it's a trail that's full of roots, rocks, turns, varying angles and/or other obstacles. On the road it could be a twisty descent with off-camber turns and/or rough, potholed pavement.

techno-weenie

Someone interested in technical innovation to the point that they may not even care if it works.

tempo

1. A steady, hard, but not too hard pace, set at the front of a group of riders. Sometimes a faster tempo will be set for the peloton to make up time. 2. A cycling workout

effort level, tempo is below time-trial effort, but above aerobic pace. It's often the pace you can hold for an hour or so. 3. Tempo is also a type of track race where two points are awarded to the first person to cross the line each lap, and one point to the second-place rider. The rider with the most points at the end of the race wins.

#### tension pulley

The bottom small toothed wheel on the rear derailleur. It creates tension on the chain to keep it taut during shifting. The top pulley is called the "jockey pulley," and it's responsible for moving the chain during shifting.

#### thorn-proof tube

Also called a or thorn-resistant tube, this tire inner tube is built extra thick on top to prevent thorns and other sharp objects from popping it.

#### thrash

1) To beat on your bike or equipment by slamming it around and riding hard. 2) Sloppy or poor riding skills.

#### threadless headset

A type of steering mechanism (called a "headset") that's compatible with a fork that has a steerer (the topmost tube) that's unthreaded. These are common on most mountain and road bikes.

#### thumb shifters

Shift levers that attach to the handlebars and are operated by pushing with your thumbs.

#### time limit

Also called "time cut," this is a way to eliminate or penalize the slowest riders in a race or event. After every stage in a stage race, a time cut is established by taking the winner's time and adding 10 to 20%. Riders who finish in excess of this buffer zone are not allowed to start the next day. Time limits are common in road stage races, randonneuring and sometimes in other rides like centuries, usually as a way to ensure safety.

#### time trial

Also called a "TT," time trials are special events where riders cover a set course alone. Every cyclist's time is recorded and then compared to determine who went the fastest. Time trials are often held by cycling clubs since they're safe and easy to organize and run. They also are held in all the grand tour races and often play a major role in determining the overall race winner because the strongest riders go the fastest and gain time on those who can't go so fast when riding alone without their teammates to ride behind (see drafting).

#### tire levers

Tools (they usually come in a set of 3) used to pry tires off rims to make repairs or replacements.

tire liner

A protective plastic strip that's placed between the tire and tube to stop glass, thorns and debris from popping the tube.

tire sealant

A usually latex-based liquid with some type of small particle mixed in, that's put inside tubes and tubeless tires to fix flats before they can happen. The sealant particles seal the hole almost immediately so you can keep right on riding.

titanium

(Say: tie - tayne - ee - um) - An exotic and expensive metal frame material that's super light, lively riding and ultra durable.

toe clips and straps

These devices bolt to the pedals to prevent your feet from slipping off and to hold your feet in the correct position for riding (the balls of the feet should rest over the centers of the pedals).

top tube

The topmost bicycle frame tube.

Tour de France

Held since 1903, this is the most important road race in cycling. It covers approximately 3,000-miles (mostly in France) in 3 weeks (the route changes yearly) and is considered one of toughest contests in sport.

tourist

A cyclist who rides to enjoy the outdoors and see the sights versus hammering for time or competition.

track

Also called a "velodrome," this is an indoor or outdoor oval track for bicycle racing.

track bike

A bicycle made for track (also called "velodrome") racing. These bikes resemble road-racing models but have only one gear and no brakes. The gear is "fixed," which means you can't coast. You control speed by holding back on the pedals.

trackstand

Balancing in place. Highly useful at stoplights.

trail

Also called "fork trail," this is a measurement of the distance the front wheel's contact patch is behind the intersection of the steering axis with the ground. Framebuilders use trail to optimize handling. If you think of how a grocery cart's front casters work (they

always swing in the direction you aim the cart because the wheels are well behind the steering axis), you can get an idea how trail effects stability and handling.

trailer bike

A device (basically, the back half of a bike) that attaches behind a regular bicycle to allow a child to ride along while the adult steers and controls the pace.

trailhead

The start of the trail. Common meeting point for ride starts.

training wheels

Devices for children's bikes that keep the bicycle upright so Junior can learn to ride safely.

transition

1. The point at which the lip/landing of a jump changes from a vertical to a horizontal surface. 2. In the sports of triathlon and duathlon, the transition comes between each racing leg, such as after the swim and before the bike leg. How quickly you "transition" (changing into your cycling clothes and mounting your bike and/or getting into your running gear) affects your time and result.

transverse cable

Also called a "crossover cable," this is the cable on cantilever brakes that runs over the top of the tire.

trials

An amazing type of extremely technical off-road riding where gravity-defying daredevils "ride" over natural and man-made obstacles such as log piles and automobiles, all the while trying not to touch the ground with their feet (called a "dab").

triathlon

A race comprised of a swimming, cycling and running leg.

trick

1) A bicycle stunt. 2) Something high-tech or custom as in, "That wheelset is trick!"

triple

1. Short for triple chainring. 2. A bicycle built for 3 people, also called a "triplet."

truck driver

A trick involving a regular 360 while simultaneously spinning the handlebars 360 degrees. A "double truck driver" would be spinning the bars 720 degrees.

truing stand

An apparatus that holds a wheel and features indicators that make it easy for a mechanic to remove wheel wobbles and hops. It's also used for truing and tensioning new wheels.

trunk rack

A rack for carrying bicycles that mounts to the trunk of your vehicle.

TT

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## TTT

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## tubeless tire

A new type of off-road tire that doesn't require an inner tube. This allows riding super-low tire pressures with no risk of puncturing (because there's no tube). And softer tires provide more traction and comfort.

## tubular glue

The adhesive applied to the rim and tire to mount a tubular tire (also called a "sew-up tire").

## tubular tire

Also called a "sew-up," (because the tire is actually sewn together around the tube), this is a type of tire that's glued onto the rim. Professional road racers favor tubulars because these tires are extremely lightweight and have a round cross-section, which improves ride quality.

## tuck

Also "full tuck," this is getting as low as possible over the handlebars to reduce wind resistance as much as possible. Usually used on long hills to leave friends behind.

## tuck no-hander

A trick where you spin the handlebars into your lap/waist while tucking your upper body forward and simultaneously throwing your hands off to the sides.

## turndown

Where a rider turns the handlebars and his body down toward the ground while the rest of the bike stays facing straight up.

## tweak

To adjust, fine-tune something.

## twist shifter

These shifters are twisted (like you twist a motorcycle throttle) to change gears.

## U



### UCI

Union Cycliste Internationale: A European group that oversees professional cycling.

### U-lock

A popular bicycle-security device that's named after its shape. In some parts of the world, it's called a "D-lock." Used correctly (you must lock the frame and wheels to an immovable object), U-locks provide excellent protection.

### unicrown

A type of fork on which the blades are attached to the steerer. They differ from other forks in that there's no fork crown.

### unicycle

(Say: yoo - na - cycle) - A one-wheeler. Surprisingly, they can be ridden on and off road, for short and long distance.

### unobtanium

A humorous word for a bicycle frame material so light, lively, efficient and compliant it doesn't even exist yet, and might even be impossible to create. As in, "Your new carbon dream bike is really nice, but when I get my new SpeedKing with its unobtanium frame and ultralight wheels I'm going to ride like the wind."

### uppers

The top parts of shoes. Where you find the straps/laces and toe.

### upshift

This is a term that describes shifting, however, some riders use it to describe shifting into harder-to-pedal gears, while others use it to describe the opposite (shifting "up" the cassette onto larger cogs). We'll let you make up your own mind.

## V



### valgus

Outward angulation of the foot, similar to supination. One of the things fitters look for in cycling shoes and cleat fine tuning.

### valve cap

Plastic screw-on caps that fit on top of valve stems.

### valve core

The mechanism inside the valve stem that lets air in and keeps it from leaking out. All Schrader valves, but only some Prestas, have replaceable cores.

### valve nut

The knurled ring or nut that comes on fully-threaded valve stems.

valve stem

The part of the tube used for putting air in and letting it out.

varus

Inward angulation of the foot, similar to pronation. One of the things fitters look for in cycling shoes and cleat fine tuning.

V-brake

Shimano's brand name for "linear-pull" (also called a "direct-pull") brakes. This is the most powerful type of rim brake thanks to long arms (greater leverage), inflexible brake-pad mounts and short cable paths.

velo

Slang for bicycle from the early French term "velocipede."

velodrome

An indoor or outdoor oval track for bicycle racing.

VeloNews

An American cycling magazine focused on on- and off-road bicycle racing.

vertical dropouts

A dropout is the part of the frame that holds the wheel. Vertical dropouts are rear dropouts designed for easy wheel removal and installation because they face downward and offer usually one wheel position (for easy alignment).

visor

A protrusion attached to the front of a helmet to protect the eyes from debris and glare. Usually adjustable. Often removable.

VO2 Max

A measurement long used to determine a cyclist's maximum potential, VO2 Max measures the maximum amount of oxygen uptake during exercise per kilogram of body weight. An average healthy, untrained male will uptake approximately 3.5 liters/minute or 45 ml/kg/min. An average healthy, untrained female will uptake approximately 2.0 liters/minute or 38 ml/kg/min. Tour de France winning cyclists have some of the highest VO2 Max scores on record with Greg LeMond scoring a reported 92.5 ml/kg/min and Lance Armstrong scoring a reported 83.8 ml/kg/min.

Vuelta a España

In English, the Tour of Spain, this is the country's grand tour, and one of the most important stage races on the professional calendar after the Tour de France and Giro d'Italia.

W

↑

wall

1. A climb so steep it's wall-like. 2. The point in a tough event where you quit, as in "I hit the wall and had to call for a ride home."

wallride

A gravity-defying trick involving jumping up to a vertical or almost vertical wall, maybe riding a little, and then jumping back off.

wannabe

Someone who wants to be a great cyclist but doesn't have what it takes.

wash out

When your tires hit loose dirt or gravel and slide out from under you. No fun if you're not ready for it.

washboard

A section of road or trail with closely spaced bumps that, if you ride over at speed, about jars the fillings in your teeth loose.

wax lube

A chain lube designed for dry conditions, which includes paraffin as one of its main ingredients.

weight-weenie

A cyclist who's fanatical about having the lightest bicycle.

wheelbase

The distance from the front to rear axle.

wheelie

Balancing on one wheel.

wheel-retention device

Nubs or recesses on forks that keep the wheel from falling out should the quick release or axle nuts come loose.

wheelset

A pair of wheels.

wheelsucker

That guy that tucks in behind you on a ride and never comes to the front to help break the wind. Also, that guy who beats you in the sprint.

whitewall

Usually a "balloon" tire (wide 26- or 24-inch size) that has white sidewalls. Somewhat common on beach cruiser bicycles.

wick

Or "wicking," this is a feature of all good bicycle clothing. The fabric absorbs moisture and moves it away from the skin keeping you dry and comfortable.

wind trainer

A device for riding indoors comprised of a stand that holds the bicycle upright, which includes a resistance unit that simulates the feel of outdoor riding. It's called a "wind" trainer because the resistance unit uses a fan to create the drag.



wire beads

Bicycle beads that have wire inside. Wire is used because it's reliable, holds the tire on securely and doesn't cost very much, which keeps the tire price down. Wire-bead tires are heavier than folding tires (which feature Kevlar beads) and can't be folded as small (it's possible to fold wire-bead tires, but not fully.)

WOMBATS

Women's Mountain Bike And Tea Society. This is a cycling club for new women riders founded by mountain-bike champion and cycling writer Jacquie Phelan.

wonky

Slang for when your bike's not working right.

working together

An important tactic in cycling, working together means riding with at least one other person and sharing turns in front blocking the wind so you can both rest regularly and maintain a better speed than you could riding alone.

workstand

Also called a "repair stand," this is a support that holds your bicycle in the air to make maintenance and repair easy.

wrench

1. Slang for bicycle mechanic. 2. To work on your bike.

X

↑  
XC

Short for cross country.

x-country

Short for cross country.

X-Games

The "Olympics" of alternative and extreme sports, this festival of fearlessness features phenomenal bicycle freeriding and ramp riding that has to be seen to be believed.

X-Up

A trick involving rotating the handlebars halfway around while airborne.

Y

↑  
Y wrench

A small Y-shaped bicycle tool usually with 8, 9 and 10mm sockets or 4, 5 and 6mm Allen wrenches.

yellow jersey

What the leader and winner of the Tour de France wears. Also, The Yellow Jersey is a great novel about the Tour by Ralph Hurne.

yellow line rule

In many cycling races and events this safety rule is intended to keep riders from crossing the yellow centerline on the road. Punishment for breaking this rule may include a time penalty, being relegated to the back of the pack or even disqualification.

Z



Zabriskie, Dave

Professional cyclist from Utah, Dave Zabriskie is widely regarded as one of the top time trialists in the peloton and is the only American to have won stages at all three grand tours (the Tour, Giro and Vuelta). He also held the Maillot Jaune as leader of the Tour de France for three stages in 2005.

Zap

Debuting in 1994, and invented and produced by Mavic, Zap was the first mass-produced electronic rear derailleur shifting system. Microprocessor-controlled and powered by a small 6-volt battery, Zap was for 7- and 8-speed drivetrains. Though still seen on some vintage bicycles, it's been discontinued by Mavic.

Zimmerman, Arthur

One of the first great American bicycle racers. In 1893, Zimmerman, who was dubbed "The Flying Yankee" and "The King of Speed" rode 41mph, won over 100 races, was the World Champion and earned over \$20,000 in prize money.

zip tie

An inexpensive plastic type of clamp that wraps around things and cinches in place without tools, and holds fast. Excellent for attaching race numbers, holding cables in place and all kinds of other applications.

Source: Information obtained from <http://www.bicyclewarehouse.com/articles> website.