

BICYCLE

news & notes

Proper-Fitting Helmets

(NAPSA)—This summer, more than 80 million bicyclists will turn America's streets, parks and mountain ranges into their playground. Playing it safe while cycling starts with a bicycle helmet that fits properly.



The most important element of helmet safety is proper fit.

Up to 80 percent of all bicycle-related fatalities are due to head injuries, according to the Johns Hopkins Injury Prevention Center. The good news is that bicycle helmets can help in reducing the risk of head injury by 85 percent, as reported by the National Safe Kids Campaign.

The bad news is that most people don't know how to tell if their helmet fits correctly. In fact, the Bike Helmet Safety Institute found that riders are more concerned about road rash and broken bones than head injury. The institute also reported that more cyclists wear gloves than helmets.

Bell Sports (www.bellsports.com), founding member of the Protective Headgear Manufacturers Association, encourages bicycle riders, inline skaters and other wheel-based sports enthusiasts to perform the "Slip, Shift and Lift" helmet test before they hit the road.

Step 1: SLIP—Slip on the helmet to ensure it's not too big or too small. Because every head is shaped differently, make sure that the helmet isn't creating any uncomfortable pressure points.

Step 2: SHIFT—Shift the helmet forward so the rim is one finger (for adults, 2 fingers for kids) above the eyebrow. When the helmet is in the right position, "lock" the helmet's fit system in place.

Step 3: LIFT—Buckle the chinstrap and then lift the helmet. If it comes off the head even slightly, you need to adjust the fit system and tighten the chin strap. The most important element of helmet safety is proper fit.

Whether cyclists choose to bike once a year or keep the pedals spinning from season to season, ensuring that a helmet fits properly is the best first step for a safe ride.