Fitting Your Bike Helmet

Buy it. Fit it. Wear it. EVERY RIDE!

The Proper Helmet Fit

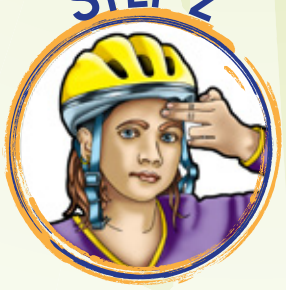
Helmets come in various sizes, just like hats. Size can vary between manufacturers. Follow the steps to fit a helmet properly. It may take time to ensure a proper helmet fit, but your life is worth it. It's usually easier to look in the mirror or have someone else adjust the straps. For the most comprehensive list of helmet sizes according to manufacturers, go the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (BHSI) Web site at: www.bhsi.org/.

STEP 1

Size:

Measure your head to find your size. Try on several helmets in your size until one feels right. Now put the helmet level on your head and adjust the sizing pads or fit ring until the helmet is snug.

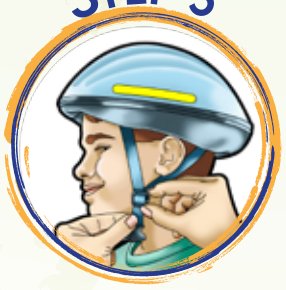
STEP 2



Position:

The helmet should sit level on your head and low on your forehead—one or two finger-widths above your eyebrow.

STEP 3



Side Straps:

Adjust the slider on both straps to form a "V" shape under, and slightly in front of, the ears. Lock the slider if possible.

STEP 4

Buckles:

Center the left buckle under the chin. On most helmets, the straps can be pulled from the back of the helmet to lengthen or shorten the chin straps. This task is easier if you take the helmet off to make these adjustments.

STEP 5

Chin Strap:

Buckle your chin strap. Tighten the strap until it is snug, so that no more than one or two fingers fit under the strap.

STEP 6

Final Fitting:

A. Does your helmet fit right? Open your mouth wide…big yawn! The helmet should pull down on your head. If not, refer back to step 5 and tighten the chin strap.

B. Does your helmet rock back more than two fingers above the eyebrows? If so, unbuckle and shorten the front strap by moving the slider forward. Buckle and retighten the chin strap, and test again.

C. Does your helmet rock forward into your eyes? If so, unbuckle and tighten the back strap by moving the slider back toward the ear. Buckle and retighten the chin strap, and test again.

D. Roll the rubber band down to the buckle. All four straps must go through the rubber band and be close to the buckle to prevent the buckle from slipping.

Replace a Helmet.

Replace your helmet when it has been in a crash; damage is not always visible.

Buy/Fit the Helmet For Now.

Buy a helmet that fits your head now, not a helmet to "grow into."

Ensure Helmet Comfort.

If you buy a helmet that you find comfortable and attractive, you are more likely to wear it. Readjust as necessary to ensure the helmet fits properly each ride.

Cover Your Forehead.

Adjust the helmet fitting based on your helmet first being in the correct position, level on the head and low on your forehead.

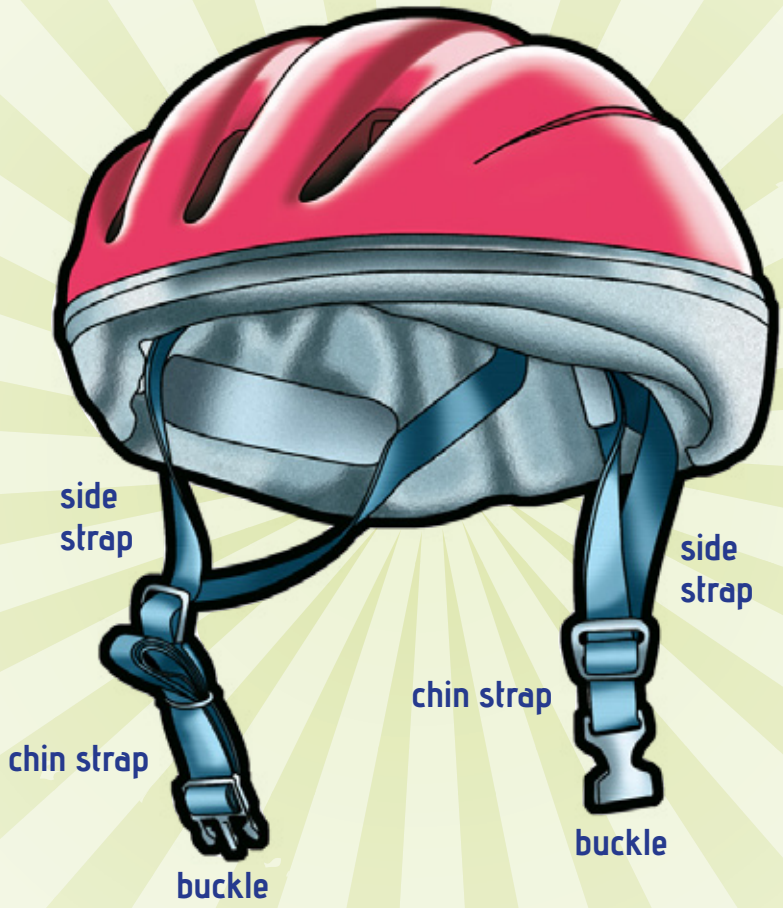
Adjust Straps Until Snug.

Both the side and chin straps need to be snug.

Avoid Helmet Rocking.

Your helmet should not rock forward or backward, or side to side on your head.

If your helmet rocks more than an inch, go back to step 6, and readjust.



Be a "Roll" Model for Safe Behavior

Everyone — adult and child — should wear a bicycle helmet each time they ride. Wearing a helmet each ride can encourage the same smart behavior in others.

Helmet Certification

Bicycle helmets sold in the U.S. must meet the standards issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Look for the certification label inside the helmet.

Helmet Laws

More children ages 5-14 go to emergency rooms for bicycle-related injuries than with any other sport; many are head injuries. As a result, many States and local jurisdictions have child bicycle helmet laws to increase and better ensure the safety of children when bicycling. See: www.helmets.org/mandator.htm.

Like car crashes, bicycle crashes can happen at any time, involving not only children, but adults, many of whom are skilled riders. In fact, middle-age adults represent the average age of bicycle riders killed and injured.

Helmets are the single most effective piece of safety equipment for riders of all ages, if you crash. Everyone should choose to wear a helmet; it just makes sense!

For more information on bicycle safety, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site at:
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/bicycles

ROLL MODEL

NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov

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