

How to adapt a bike for hills

Introduction

If you are not an experienced cyclist, then we suggest that you check you have the right gearing on your road bike to help you get up some of the steeper hills.

The best way to make sure your bike is set up correctly for any tough hills, whether that's in the UK or in Europe, is to pop into your friendly local bike shop with your road bike, tell them where you are going and ask their opinion. However, if you want to go in with at least some knowledge here is a brief summary.

Technical Setup

Steep gradients need 'low' gears. That means a small chain ring (the sprocket that is fixed to your pedals) on the front and a large 'cassette' (the group of sprockets on your back wheel) on the back. This means you will be pedalling more quickly, with less resistance, at lower speeds and it's therefore easier to ride uphill.

Most bikes will have two chain rings on the front by your pedals. If you have 3 chain rings, you have no need to worry - your gears are already optimised for the challenge ahead.

If you have 2 chain rings, you need to check if they are a 'Compact' set. This means they have about 50 teeth on the bigger ring and 34 teeth on the smaller ring. This is a suitable set up for climbing. Other semi compact ratios are available – e.g. 52/36

Your biggest cassette ring on the back should have at least 26 teeth and preferably 27 or 28. Then it will be EASY (er).

