

RIDING ON THE FRONT

Three rules define the proper way to ride at the front of a group:

1. **Keep the pace**
2. **Keep the group together**
3. **Know where you are and where you are going**

In order to accomplish the above, **your cycle computer (aka “cyclometer”)** should become your **best friend on the road**. The computer can be very basic, as long as it displays speed and distance.



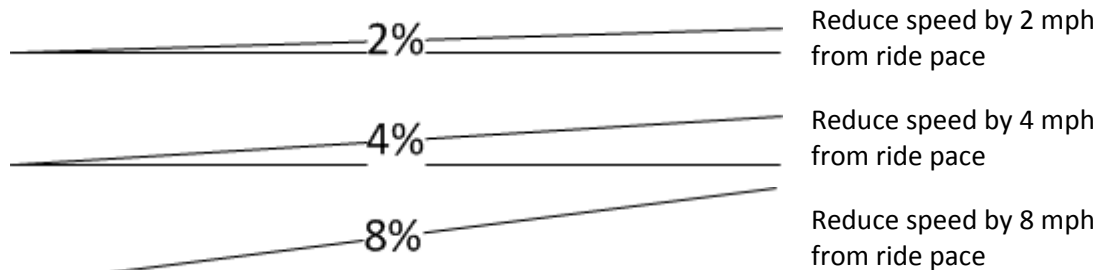
Refer to it regularly throughout the ride, just as you would your speedometer when driving a car.

NOTE: For those with fancy GPS units, be sure that your display is set to include speed and distance on the screen you will utilize as your default view.

RULE 1: KEEP THE PACE

Use your bike computer to maintain the ride’s designated pace.

- The “advertised” pace is the speed maintained on flat roads
- The speed should be adjusted up or down for the terrain
 - As a general rule, reduce speed by 1 mph for each 1-degree of incline, even on the slightest grades



- On declines, the speed may increase as long as it is safe to do so
- Speed changes should be gradual
 - Increase gradually, a few mph at a time
 - When decreasing speed, do so gently
 - Lightly tap the breaks when on flats or downhill

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- When on uphills, decrease speed by a few mph at a time until you reach your target speed – there is a good chance the incline will do this for you and you will not need to use your breaks
- When coming off of a descent, onto a flat road or into an uphill, bleed off your speed naturally, without using the breaks if it is safe to do so
 - The riders behind you should not be forced to break on the downhill unless required for safety reasons
 - This will allow others to enjoy the downhill, too, and take advantage of any gained momentum if immediately tackling an ascent

RULE 2: KEEP THE GROUP TOGETHER

The leader must always remember that there is a line of riders behind him / her, and all actions should take that into account when on the road.

- When crossing intersections / turning left across oncoming traffic, try to ensure that traffic allows for others in the group to cross, as well
 - This may not be possible on busy roads. In those cases, notify the riders that they should go through, in turn, when it is safe to do so. After crossing through the intersection, maintain a slow pace (1/2 target speed) until receiving word that all have made it safely through the intersection
- At intersections controlled by stop lights, utilize crosswalk pedestrian signals to gauge how much time remains before a stoplight turns red

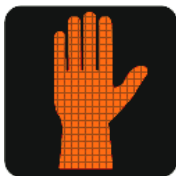


“Walk” = good chance entire group will get through



“Flashing Don't Walk” = time is running out, continue through but be prepared to hear “Off the back!” and react accordingly

The crosswalk signals with countdown timers are especially useful in this situation to judge whether your entire group will make it through before the light turns red



“Steady Don't Walk” = STOP! Light will turn red very soon. The steady signal usually corresponds to the traffic signal for cars turning yellow

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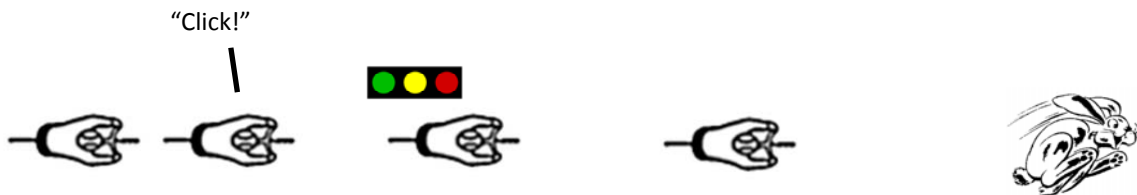
- Periodically check whether the group is still together and riding as a cohesive unit
 - A great time to do this is when making turns or riding along a curve; simply glance over your shoulder and find your “sweep”

Don't be a jackass rabbit

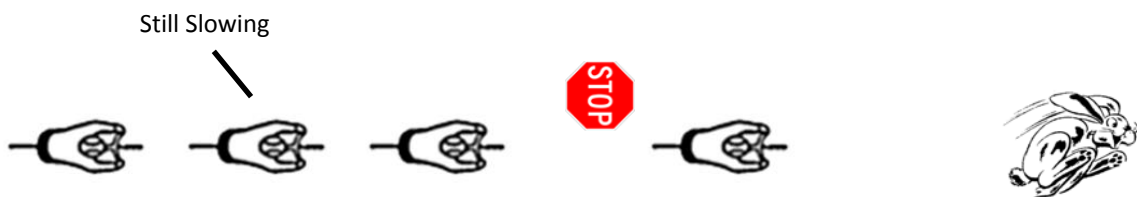
When starting from a stop, or when accelerating after slowing down, you must do so **S-L-O-W-L-Y**

- When the leader puts full power into a start / acceleration, it is known as a “jackrabbit” start. Do not be a jackrabbit!
- Accelerate much more slowly than is natural, gaining speed at only a few mph at a time. For example, when starting from a stop light, the leader should only be at 5mph by the end of the intersection
 - The line of riders moves much like a train led by an engine. The engine starts rolling, and it takes time for the momentum to reach the individual cars behind.
 - In a similar manner, while the leader and first riders are gaining speed, the riders behind are still clicking into their pedals or slowing down to proceed through a stop sign.
 - Utilize your cycle computer and watch your acceleration speed when:

- Starting from a full stop

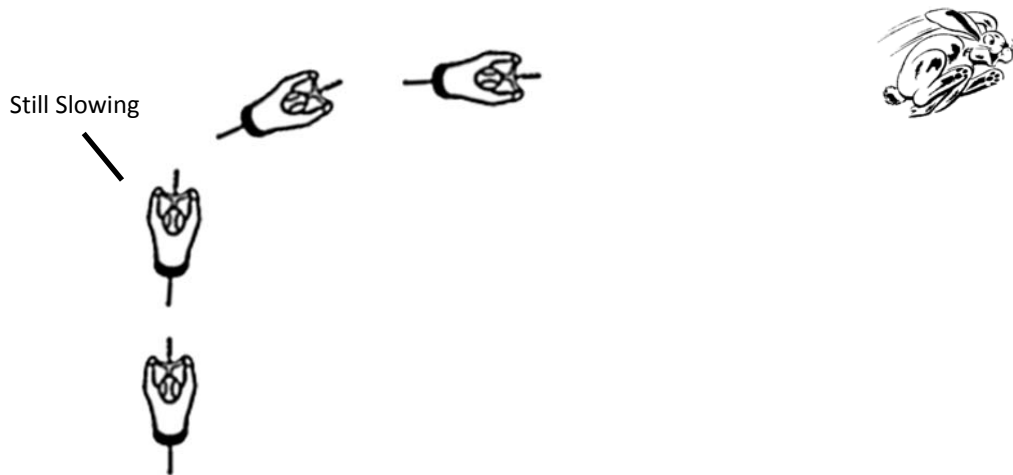


- Going through a stop sign

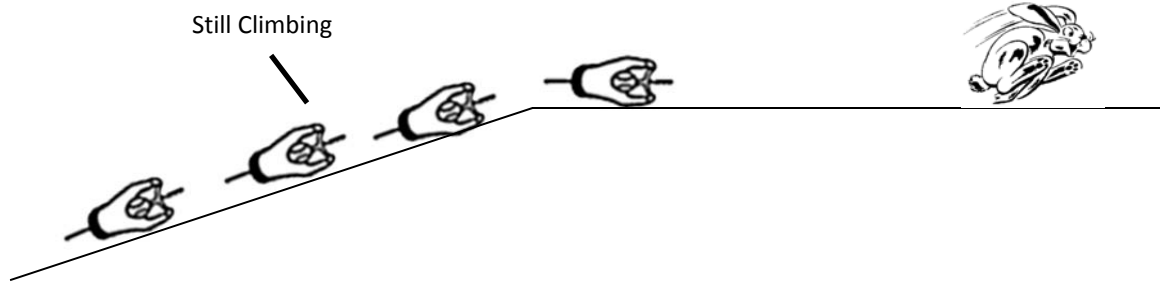


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- Turning a corner



- At the top of hills



Useful techniques to ensure measured acceleration:

- Stay seated in your saddle. This will limit the amount of power you put in your pedals.
- Shift into one gear easier on your cassette. This will decrease the distance moved for each revolution of your pedals.

