

Keep on riding this winter

With the weather set to get colder, here are some tips to ensure cyclists don't have to abandon their bikes or change their travel plans.

WITH the frosty mornings and darker nights, these helpful hints will keep you safe on two wheels.

Dress it up

Whether it's a daily commute or leisure ride, having the right clothing is important with our ever-changeable weather. Try a lightweight, waterproof jacket and make sure it's windproof and can reduce the chill factor. Hands and feet can get cold and wet quickly,

so it's worth investing in some decent gloves and socks. It is also a good idea to have an extra layer of clothing in case you get caught in a downpour, and a waterproof bag is a useful addition to keep any spare clothing dry. As well as staying warm and dry, consider wearing something that will help you be seen, such as high visibility vests and jackets - some even have lights built in.

Ride for the road

The change in weather means a change in



riding conditions. Be aware of things like ice patches and wet roads. The capital's roads are regularly gritted during cold nights, but if you do cycle over an ice patch, take your time and don't make any sudden moves to avoid skidding.

If the roads are wet then take care when riding over road markings and manhole covers, especially when turning. Also, avoid the gutters as wet leaves can collect here and make the road slippery.

Check your bike

It is important to maintain your bike regularly, especially in winter. Pay particular attention to the brakes and

gears as they can get clogged up and dirty with the build-up of grit and muck on the roads.

It is also worth regularly checking your tyres. In cold conditions it is better to ride with a slightly lower tyre pressure as this will help give a better grip on the road.

If you are using a Santander Cycles bike, always check it before you take it out. If there is a

problem, press the fault button on the docking station within ten seconds and turn the saddle around to let other users know.

Routes to ride

There are a number of Cycle Superhighways running through outer and central London, providing safer

and more direct journeys into the city, with sections that are segregated from traffic.

Cyclists can also enjoy a network of Quietways - a series of routes through the capital along backstreets, through parks, and along waterways and tree-lined streets. These are ideal for people who want to avoid traffic and travel at a gentler pace.

■ For more information on cycling in London, visit tfl.gov.uk/cycling

Lighting the way

Blaze Laserlights, which are fitted to all Santander Cycles, display a bicycle symbol on the road six metres in front of the rider (pictured left). It means drivers and pedestrians know when a bike is approaching.

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