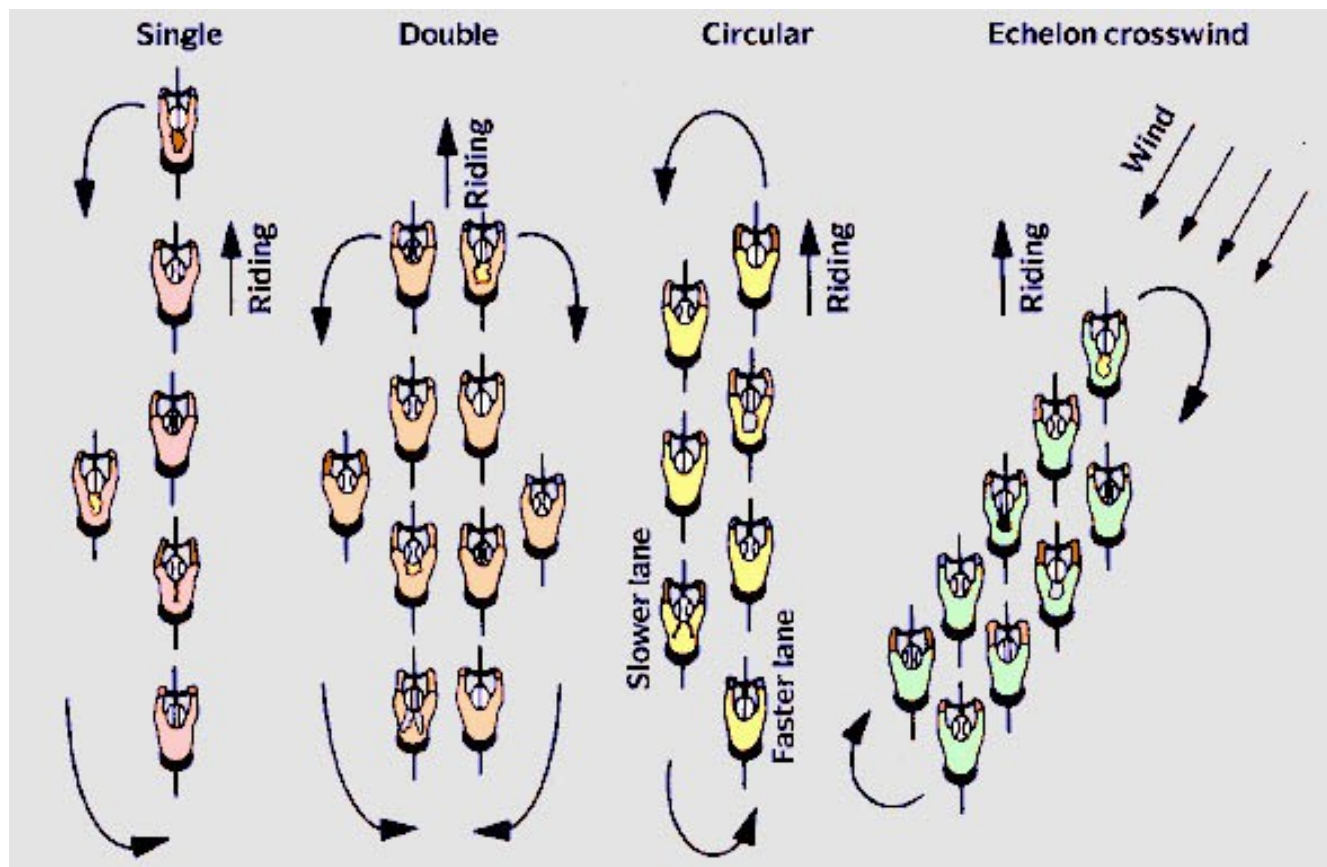


Riding in a Paceline

This diagram shows different types of pacelines. On most recreational rides, you'll encounter the single paceline, or perhaps the double paceline. The last two are more difficult and require more skill and coordination.



Tips for the Lead Rider in a Paceline

1. Ride straight and smoothly at an even speed. On flat road your speed should be constant. If there is an incline in the road, your speed should decline slightly to keep the overall effort constant. Conversely, if there is a decline in the road, your speed should accelerate slightly. When riding down hill, the lead rider should NEVER stop pedaling.

Start by learning to ride like you're on a rail. Practice by holding your line during solo rides. Put your wheel on the road's white edge line and keep it there. Relax your upper body, keep a light grip on the handlebar, and fix your peripheral vision on the line. Keep your actual focus 20 or 30 feet in front of the bike. Remember, the bike will go where your eyes go.

2. Avoid braking at the front of a paceline! If you must brake, use your rear brake to smoothly slow yourself. If you find yourself approaching a pothole or other obstacle that you can't avoid, it is

better to ride through it and risk a flat, than to use your brakes and cause a serious accident further back in the line.

3. It is the responsibility of the lead rider to steer the paceline clear of, and call out, any oncoming obstacles. This is especially important in a paceline where the riders in the back may not be able to see what is coming. The lead rider needs to be looking well ahead on the road so that they have time to react to oncoming obstacles.

4. When assuming the front of a paceline, keep your speed smooth until the rider pulling off is able to get back in the line. If you are able to accelerate, do so smoothly and gradually so as not to cause a break in the line. Be aware of wind direction. If there is a cross wind from the left, you should move as far to the left as you safely can to allow the riders behind you to ride on the right.

5. Be careful when standing up on the pedals. When standing up on the pedals, give it a couple of hard strokes as you stand up. Most riders don't realize that when you raise out of the saddle (on a hill, for example) you slow down a bit before you pick up your pace. When this happens, your rear wheel can go backwards, hitting the front wheel of the rider behind.

6. Stay at the front only as long as you are comfortably able to maintain the pace. It is better to take a short pull and get off before bogging down the whole line. Keep the pace steady! DO NOT over exert yourself at the front!! Stronger riders should pull longer, weaker riders should pull shorter. Do not be embarrassed to simply pull through immediately. DO NOT rush to the front and pour on the full power until you are exhausted or blow. Save enough energy to regroup with the end of the paceline and recover.

7. When you are finished with your pull and ready to get off the front you should first look over your shoulder to see if it is safe to move over. If it is clear, wiggle your arm to signal to the next rider that you are pulling off. The arm you wiggle signals the side that you want the other riders to pass you on. Keep pedaling as you move off the front. Move over gradually, and do not swerve quickly. Don't slow your cadence until the following rider has begun to pull through. Careful not to slow down too much, otherwise you will have to accelerate hard to maintain contact with the group or miss the group all together.

Tips for All Riders in a Paceline

1. Ride smoothly and keep the gap in front of you constant. Avoid any sudden moves.

2. Try not to use your brakes. Try sitting up or moving out of the draft slightly to let the air resistance slow you. If you must brake, feather your rear brake to smoothly slow yourself. Jerky braking creates chain reaction problems for riders behind you.

3. The distance that you keep between your front wheel, and the rear wheel of the rider in front of you, will depend on your experience and comfort level with the other riders. Very experienced riders who have ridden together a lot may keep this gap as small as a few inches. If you have less experience, or are riding behind riders that you are not familiar with, you should increase this gap to 1-2 feet or more.

4. Keep your front wheel slightly offset from the rear wheel of the rider in front of you. Look past the rider in front of you and up the road as much as possible. Avoid staring at the rear wheel in front of you as you will not be able to see oncoming situations. If you touch wheels, the rider

behind should smoothly and calmly slow down. The rider in front should maintain his line and pedaling.

5. If a gap opens, don't make things worse by accelerating too hard, overrunning the wheel in front, then grabbing the brakes. Instead, ease back up to the rider in front. If you don't become proficient at following a wheel, you can waste more energy than you save by constant yo-yoing.

6. Move around gradually within the group. If you need to move to the left or right in order to avoid an obstacle in the road or to pass another rider, do it slowly and gradually, giving others time to react.

7. Be careful when standing up on the pedals. When standing up on the pedals, give it a couple of hard stokes as you stand up. Most riders don't realize that when you raise out of the saddle (on a hill, for example) you slow down a bit before you pick up your pace. When this happens, your rear wheel can go backwards, hitting the front wheel of the rider behind.

8. When it's your turn to pull through, maintain the same speed as the rider you replaced. If you want to pick up the speed, wait until the person who just pulled off has a chance to get back on, and then raise the speed gradually. You don't want to get too tired and get dropped when you try to return to the rear of the pace-line, so get off before your legs blow. The only time you should use your aero bars when riding with a group is when you are pulling. If you come up behind another pace-line, call out "on your wheel" so they know you are there. It is also considered polite to ask if you may draft in the back if the group is unknown to you.

9. When re-entering the paceline after pulling off the front, begin pedaling about 2-3 riders from the back to increase your speed and move smoothly back into the line. If you wait until you are at the back before you accelerate, you will have to jump to catch the back of the line.

10. Move to the right or left before you brake for a slowing rider or road hazard. Your following riders may not be able to react as fast as you. It goes without saying you should have your hands close to the brake levers for a short response time whenever you ride in a paceline. The rule is that if you hit a rider from behind, shame on you!

11. Be considerate of the rider behind and never spit or blow your nose in the middle of a paceline. Instead, wait until you are the last rider in the line to take care of these needs.

12. DO NOT sit on the back the entire time only to "attack" or accelerate at the next big hill or win the sprint at the end of the ride. In other words, if you are not pulling through to do your share of the work, there probably should be a good reason (ie. You are in pain!) Other riders will remember this for a long time!!