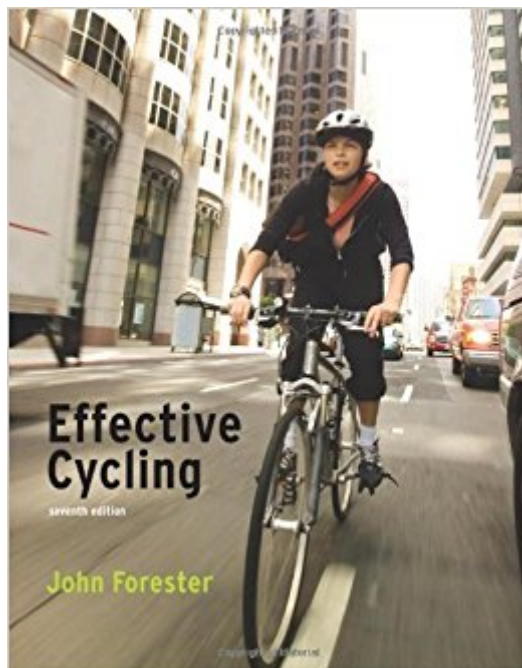


The book was found

Effective Cycling (MIT Press)



Synopsis

Effective Cycling is an essential handbook for cyclists from beginner to expert, whether daily commuters or weekend pleasure trippers. This thoroughly updated seventh edition offers cyclists the information they need for riding a bicycle under all conditions: on congested city streets or winding mountain roads, day or night, rain or shine. It describes the sheer physical joy of cycling and provides the nuts-and-bolts details of how to choose a bicycle, maintain it, and use it in the most efficient manner. Effective Cycling covers the bicycle itself, repairs and maintenance, basic and advanced cycling skills, and how traffic is organized. It describes cycling with friends, bicycle tours, increasing physical endurance, racing, and even finding a cyclist as marriage partner. Throughout, author John Forester emphasizes that cyclists should consider themselves drivers of vehicles in traffic. That means obeying the rules of the road, because when all drivers obey the same rules, they don't have collisions. Forester explains why cyclists should not be afraid to cycle in traffic, and he urges them to resist being shunted off into government-sponsored bike paths as if they were incompetent children. Cyclists fare best, he says, when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles. Effective Cycling will help owners of bicycles dusty from disuse become active cyclists and veteran cyclists improve their techniques and achieve their cycling goals. Each section moves from basic to advanced topics; readers are encouraged get on a bicycle and practice each activity after reading about it.

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Customer Reviews

John Forester's *Effective Cycling* continues and expands his mission to make bicycling easy, enjoyable, rewarding and responsible. He recognizes that most US authorities put cyclists into an inferior status, and therefore into a dilemma, and conveys to them the attitude and the rules with which they can be appreciated and responsible road users. This book should be read by all cyclists, and especially by all 'authorities.' (David Gordon Wilson, MIT Mechanical Engineering; author of *Bicycling Science*) I have used previous editions of *Effective Cycling* as my go-to source for some 35 years. It is comprehensive, based on irrefutable logic and scientific data, and easily understandable. (Bill Hoffman, former Director, League of American Bicyclists) As a lifelong bicyclist, I didn't realize my eyes were wide shut with respect to bicycling matters until I first read *Effective Cycling*, fourth edition, in 1988 at age 30. John Forester's seminal, expansive, and tireless work in educating bicyclists and protecting the rights of bicyclists as drivers of vehicles has been incalculably valuable to me and countless thousands of others who pedal for fun and utility. (Wayne Pein, *Bicycling Matters*)

John Forester is a bicycle transportation engineer and the author of *Bicycle Transportation: A Handbook for Cycling Transportation Engineers* (MIT Press). An experienced cyclist, cycling advocate, and onetime racer, he lives in Lemon Grove, California

This book, in its author's own words, is a reference book. It's not meant to be read from A to Z, but used for consultation on topics of specific interest. That seems to be the most misunderstood aspect of this work. The Kindle version (which I got) has an index that links directly to the pertaining chapter. What I like about this book: Finally we have a major and *very* comprehensive "How To" guide that caters to ALL kinds of cyclists: Pro racers, Tourists, Utility, Leisure, Casual / Weekend riders. (Many books only cater to one specific type, mostly sport). The book is well written, and has been regularly updated- kudos to John Forester for doing that! What I found most useful in this book: The first three parts. Especially relevant to me: Part II, the mechanical aspect. Of special interest: Recipes for lubricants, and how to convert hubs to oil lubrication (eliminating the tedious semi-annual to annual re-packing job). There are more useful tips in this section. All instructions are made for non professional mechanics (who should have at least some experience in working with tools and fixing things, tough!). For those who would like to go deeper into this subject, there are many good books dedicated to bike mechanics available on . Of least interest for me: The endless on and on about legal / safety / bike advocacy aspects. Evidently John Forester is an authority on this. Also evident (and understandable) is his frustration. But again: This is a reference work; and those

chapters can be skipped by the reader. Recommended: The part about how to ride in traffic, especially for folks who live in parts of the country where traffic law enforcement applies to bicyclists.

Forester is an interesting character. He wrote two massive books on this subject and reused a majority of the material in each so if you have read one of them you end up re-reading it all over again when you read the second book (Bicycle Transportation). Parts of these books deal with and are colored by his personal problems fitting in the industry. Forester believes bicycles should be treated like cars and have the exact same rights (which to some extent they do by law), privileges, and restrictions as cars. He is also antigovernment regulations on safety items (reflectors, lights, etc) and blames the government's requirements for safety items, or more like "lack of", as the root of most cyclist related accidents. His premises basely that since the government says only reflectors are required (and poor versions besides) then most bicyclists are convinced that they do not need headlights, taillights, or better reflectors, and as such, ride without them, ending up in accidents that they wouldn't have had they had better safety items (reflectors, lights, etc). One of his points about bicycle mobility seems very straightforward - if bicyclists try to get treated differently than motorists they will, but only for the worse not better. A good example is bike lanes and paths. Where bicyclists fight for bike lanes and paths and get them it is usually at the loss of being able to freely travel on the roadways. Personally I am in complete agreement with him in this area. The problems with bike lanes and paths are many, but my main issue is that they quickly become multipurpose: pedestrian and rider. These multipurpose routes are just plain dangerous. Pedestrians have no concept of "right of way" or consideration for moving vehicles (bicycles) on these routes. If adult bicyclists learned to drive the "drive your bike like a car on the roadway" methodology Forester describes, all bicyclists would have a better safer environment because car drivers would get used to bicycles being on the roadways. The government also needs to require that motorists learn that bicycles have the same rights to use the roadway as cars. My personal belief is that if you are the type that would rather ride on a car free path, taking your time, riding slowly while smelling the flowers, so be it, enjoy yourself riding and watching out for pedestrians and dogs and other uncontrollable distractions, but, do so at your own loss and not at mine. Don't fight for your right while removing mine to freely ride my bicycle on the roadways, with the cars, at the pace, and speed I want to travel. I got the impression that Forester seems to think that other pro-bicycle writers and lobbyists are sellouts; especially ones who champion bike lanes on the roadways. These roadway bike lanes are another route that is extremely dangerous for bicyclists. They are usually along the side of a

roadway forcing bicyclists to make all their left turns thru moving traffic, or they are behind the right side of the road parked cars making each and every intersection a danger zone. Forester sat on a few committees and was involved in some of the early states-created bicycle laws and programs, and as such is probably one of the first pro-bicycle people responsible for the government's review of bicycle usability in US cities. Most readers will find a great deal to learn reading his books, and probably just as much to criticize as well. If you are a firm believer that the only way to safely travel on a bicycle is to be on a separate route than cars travel on then Forester is not for you, but, you should try reading him because you will probably learn a thing a[or to that might possibly change your mind.

This review is written narrowly for those who already have either the previous "Big Blue" or "Fat Yellow" MIT editions and are wondering whether it's worth it to spring for this new edition. Although listed as the "seventh edition," there are really three major versions of Effective Cycling. The 1975 mimeograph book, which was tweaked around and reissued several times, a 1984 MIT edition ("Big Blue") and a 1993 MIT Edition ("Fat Yellow"). How is this new version different? By the time "Fat Yellow" was published, it suffered from three problems: 1) its technology was out of date (for example, it hardly mentioned mountain bikes); 2) too much of the book was made up of screeds, old-time war stories, and personal axe-grinding; and 3) its riding advice was closed and totalistic--as Orwell once put it in another context "everything that's not required is prohibited." All three have improved a little around the edges, almost always by cutting away, less often by adding, never by changing. The impression one gets is that they were grudging changes. The format of the book is smaller, so the text is shorter. Most of the reduction seems to have come from the mechanical section. The discussion of derailleurs, for example, never even mentions brake-lever shifters. So much of the technical discussion in Big Blue and Fat Yellow had become obsolete that it appears the solution chosen was just cut it out. Forester is famous for his complaint that when he sat down to write the 1975 edition he couldn't find an American book that properly discussed how to fix a flat in detail. Well, that's just about all that this new edition DOES discuss in detail. (And as to that complaint, well, see Jeff Mapes's book Pedaling Revolution.) As far as the screeds and other silliness, it is clear that an editor or editors have been at work. Some of the worst passages, such as "its a war, not a contract negotiation" are gone. But his personal take on a Roswell UFO, the so-called "cycling inferiority complex" is now actually given a purported cross reference to the DSM-V manual. (In fact, it and "wages of sin is death" logic upon which it is based were plagiarized from comments made by Hon. Ernest Maples, M.P. in a paper "The Future of the

Bicycle in a Modern Society" in the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Mfgs. and Commerce Journal, Jan. 1968). The "Cycling with Love" chapter (aka "How to Use Your Bike to Pick up Chicks") section is still there. It still opens with Forester's assertion that his wife's disapproval of his cycling was largely responsible for trashing their marriage, even though I interviewed his son Geoffrey in 2010 for my biography of Forester, and Geoffrey told me that he never detected any hostility on behalf of his mother to either his or his father's cycling. Forester's rogue's gallery is getting pretty gray-haired: Bill Wilkinson is retired and Fred DeLong (along with Jim Konski and Hal Munn, one of the true inventors of vehicular cycling) is dead. However, Andy Clarke is still hammering away and John Pucher has dedicated his emeritus-status years to working on his pro-EuroStyle philosophy (he will have an edited book by MIT out this fall). It is interesting that there are no names added. This reinforces my suspicion that new edition is mostly "Fat Yellow" edited over by a group of "friends of John" who were primarily interested in smoothing over its roughest spots and excising its technically out-of-date material. In this they succeeded. However, little new has been added, and certainly nothing has been reconsidered, nothing reevaluated. It's still 1938 and George Herbert is due around the bend at any moment . . .

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