



Thanks for being part of Tandem Trekkers!

We thought it might be useful to give you a few **take away points**. Hopefully, we will see you soon on a ride with our cycling club.

And don't worry (if you are), with time & practise, your tandemming confidence will grow!

Balance

Keeping your balance as a pilot is very important and when you start also the tricky bit!

- Keep your hands on the handle bar when cycling. For example, if you want to drink from your bottle, you will need to stop.
- Ask your stoker to indicate or sign to alert other traffic users or other tandem riders, so you can keep your hands on the handle bar.
- When getting on or off the bike, make sure you, as the pilot, are on the bike before your stoker so you can stabilise the bike.
- When getting on or off the bike, use the drag brake to secure the bike (so it's not rolling forward or backwards).
- Remember that the slower you go, the more challenging balance becomes - so when setting off, give yourself and the bike the space to push off (think about your pedal position and provide enough forward momentum).
- If you're new to tandemming, having your saddle slightly lower than you would on a solo bike is (absolutely) OK, especially if it helps you set off, stop, and feel more in control overall.

Anticipation

Tandemming requires more anticipation than solo cycling.

- Anticipate junctions, corners, traffic lights, and other hazards. You must slow down sooner than on a solo bike and let your stoker know so you both pedal less hard.
- Stopping distances are longer on a tandem, so keep this in mind. This is particularly important when riding on wet surfaces or on more muddy terrain like a greenway where your stopping distance is even longer!
- If you see an incline ahead, change (into lighter) gears in anticipation before you actually hit the incline.
- Keep a healthy distance from other tandems (particularly setting off or stopping). You might even want to increase the gap with other tandems when traffic behind you wants to overtake—allow them (other road users) a large gap.



Communication

Volunteering isn't solely about cycling; for many stokers (not all), being part of the club is also about their social wellness and the chat (describing your surroundings to your stoker is a good way to chat).

Besides this, you **NEED** to communicate with your stoker, clearly and at times loudly (as traffic noise or wind can hamper) about what you are doing, such as when;

- Slowing down and stopping.
- Corners, junctions, or hazards are coming up.
- Changing gear (so they know to ease off slightly with their pedal power).
- Measuring the saddle height or needing to guide a visually impaired person, **ALWAYS** ask for permission to touch someone (to guide or measure).
- Ask if the speed of pedalling (cadence) suits your stoker and adjust your gears to a pace that works for you both; find the happy medium.

Safety check of your stoker

Before getting on the bike, check your stoker is safe to ride; and help them where needed to make any needed adjustments - note ask permission if touch is involved.

- Shoe laces - make sure they're tucked in.
- Helmets - make sure their (and your own) helmets are on correctly. At the front, the top rim of the helmet should be 2 horizontal fingers above the eyebrow. The helmet should be secure enough so when shaking the head, it doesn't move.
- Scarves, toggles, rucksack straps, wide trouser legs, etc. - check that nothing could interfere with the bike's cogs (cassette), chain or wheel.
- When getting on or off the bike make sure your stoker is on the side of the pavement, not the road.

Group rides on the road

After your induction, you will, at some stage, be riding on the road in tandem, and with that comes the responsibility of keeping everyone safe, both as a club and for you, individually, as a pilot.

Group riding

To make sure our rides are safe, we will have a **ride leader** and a **backmarker** per group, and depending on how many tandems are planned to ride in total, we might split into 2 or 3 groups.

Groups must be smaller than five tandems per group; if groups are larger than this, they become a hazard for other road users, and there is also a risk of individual tandems being too close together. Groups should have sufficient distance between them to avoid ending up like a caravan of tandems taking up long stretches of the road; it's unsafe.

No-Drop

We are a **"NO-DROP"** group; this means a group rides are at the speed of what is doable for the slowest tandem in their group.

Safety kit

It will be either the leader or backmarker that carries the first aid kit and bike repair/mechanics kit.



Ride leader

The **responsibility of a ride leader** is to keep everyone safe by:

- Navigating the ride, indicating crossings, junctions and turns.
- Letting other pilots know when a hazard is coming up and what is expected. Examples of this:
 - A junction that requires to cross the road dismounted from the tandems.
 - Gates on greenways that are too narrow to pass through safely, and you need to dismount.
 - Needing the group to stop to let traffic pass.
 - When to spread out to let other traffic be able to overtake.
 - Indicating on, e.g. narrow bendy roads of oncoming traffic by shouting “Car Front”, which means tandems should tuck in safely and be in single file.
 - Potholes, water or other hazards on the road.
- Deciding when to stop (drink, break, bike issue, regroup, etc).
- Ensuring the group stays together and we abide by our no-drop policy - we can't lose pairs of cyclists or them getting lost.
- They decide the speed based on what is doable for the slowest tandem in their group.
- Deciding to shorten the ride due to adverse weather or mechanical issues.

Backmarker

The **backmarker** is the final cyclist or tandem pair, making sure everyone is accounted for; it's essential if you are the backmarker to make sure you are the final cyclist. They are often also the person who will indicate traffic behind the group, e.g. shouting “Car Back”, meaning we have a vehicle that wishes to overtake, allowing pilots to take appropriate action, tucking in, increasing distance from the tandem in front of them if there is space for the vehicle to overtake, if not the ride leader will either decide to carry on riding or stop where it is safe to do so to let traffic pass.

Responsibility of pilots

- Staying behind your ride leader and with the group; not doing so means it is difficult for the ride leader to establish where you and your stoker are, and the ride leader can no longer ensure your safety and, importantly, that of your stoker.
- Following the safety instructions of the ride leader when it comes to junctions, crossings, and traffic hazards.
- Letting the ride leader or backmarker know of any issue you or your stoker are experiencing.
- If, for some reason, you discover you have broken away from your group, wait (somewhere safe - not stop on busy road) to catch up with your group or contact your ride leader if you can't.
- If you have been asked to be a backmarker to remain in that position (the final cyclist) and not overtake any other tandems in your group.

About

Tandem Trekkers is a cycling club for visually impaired cyclists and registered charity in England & Wales - no: 1175326, tandemtrekkers.org.uk/blog.

To make a donation visit: gofundme.com/tandems-need-your-help-to-keep-going