

TECHNICAL/LEGAL/HEALTH
YOUR QUESTIONS
OUR ANSWERS

Q&A

MEET THE EXPERTS



CHRIS JUDEN
*CTC Technical Officer
and qualified engineer*



**DR MATT
BROOKS**
Cycling GP



PAUL KITSON
*Partner at CTC's solicitors,
Russell, Jones & Walker*



Joggers sometimes run along cycle lanes as well as roads. If a jogger causes an accident, it is not always easy to claim against them

[LEGAL] JOGGERS IN CYCLE LANES

Q What is the legal position when approaching joggers using on-road cycle lanes? They seem to insist on running with their backs to the traffic, ignoring the pavement only inches from them. They move slowly and unpredictably and are definitely a hazard. Please advise.
ALAN FOGG

A Rule 1 of the Highway Code states that pedestrians should

use pavements if they have been provided. Rule 2 states that if there is no pavement, then pedestrians should keep to the right-hand side of the road so they can see oncoming traffic.

Cycle lanes are intended to improve road safety but as John Franklin points out in his book, *Cyclecraft*, the presence of cycle lanes can increase the risks for cyclists. There is no obligation on cyclists to use cycle lanes; they should only be used when it is safer to do so.

I can sympathise with Mr Fogg's comments about joggers using cycle lanes. In my view, this is a dangerous practice that only increases the risk to cyclists. As Mr Fogg points out, joggers may not always run in a straight line. This means that an overtaking cyclist can be forced to swerve into the main highway, particularly if another cyclist in front swerves around the jogger at the last moment.

In theory, a pedestrian or jogger who uses a cycle lane when there is a pavement available could be prosecuted for an offence of obstructing traffic. In practice, this would be unlikely. However, if an accident were to occur and a cyclist suffered injury as a consequence of the actions of the pedestrian/jogger, then there could be civil liability.

A court is unlikely to find a jogger/pedestrian negligent, and

thus liable to compensate the cyclist, if he or she was running in a straight line and was there to be seen. If the jogger was running along a cycle lane on a road with significant traffic flow and numerous cyclists and was responsible for causing a collision, it is likely that a court would make a finding of negligence.

One of the difficulties of pursuing claims against pedestrians is their ability to meet a judgment. Claims against negligent motorists are satisfied by their insurers (or, if they are uninsured, the Motor Insurers Bureau). Pedestrians are often uninsured for their negligence when crossing the highway and this may therefore cause difficulties with enforcing any judgement obtained against them, particularly if they are impecunious.

PAUL KITSON

[TECHNICAL] THE RIGHT SADDLE

Q There seems to have been a lot written about the hazards to one's manhood from riding on the wrong saddle. I use a Specialized Tri-cross with the factory-fitted Riva road saddle for a short daily commute and weekly fitness rides on road. I find the saddle comfortable for the first 20 miles then the pressure on the sit bones seems to increase. I don't feel pressure anywhere more sensitive. Should I be considering

Photo: iStockphoto.com

CONTACT
THE
EXPERTS

Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p86). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, tel: **0844 736 8450**, cycling@ctc.org.uk (general enquiries) or Chris Juden, technical@ctc.org.uk (technical enquiries). You can also write to: CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, tel: 0844 736 8452.



**[TECHNICAL]
 NEED FOR 10-SPEED?**

Q I have a 9-speed Tiagra groupset on my Sepcialized Allez with a triple crank. I'm looking to upgrade to a full 10S set-up, 10-speed rather than 9, and am confused about what ratios I'll need. I ride flat roads in Norfolk and I'd like a bigger top gear. But I'd like to do some touring on the Allez too, so would like to be able to get over a hill – should I ever see one. Triple, double or compact? Any tips would be great.
HUDSON1984, VIA THE CTC FORUM

A Concentrate on spinning faster in lower gears and save your money. You do not need 10-speed. Nobody *needs* 10-speed. Keep the triple. When your pedalling matures to a more rapid and efficient cadence (with less knee-damaging force!) you'll find much more use for the middle ring – even in Norfolk. The inner ring weighs little and can be ignored for now, but when you eventually venture somewhere with more interesting terrain you'll be ever so glad you kept it. And if you should find you need an even smaller inner, you will be even gladder you kept the old Tiagra triple, because anything down to 24 teeth can be swapped onto that design, whereas none of the current 10-speed triples accept other than the stock 30 inner.

If you change to a compact double you will at first be delighted with an outer ring

that is even better-sized for riding in all of the time, like you do now, in Norfolk. But once your cadence improves, you'll find your ideal gears to be split between the outer and inner, requiring lots of double-shifts on terrain which is merely rolling (e.g. Suffolk and some parts of Norfolk) and that is a lot less convenient than leaving it mostly in middle.

Save your money until you have found the sort of cycling you want to do a lot more of. Then you can buy a new bike that exactly suits whatever sort of cycling that is. Maybe it'll be a carbon-framed road bike with 10S 10-speed – or maybe something else entirely.

CHRIS JUDEN

Don't feel obliged to upgrade. There's nothing wrong with a 9-speed triple setup



**a new saddle? If so, which?
 BRIAN SMITH, TEWKESBURY**

A The simple answer is: there are no simple answers. In *Three Men on the Bummel* (by Jerome K Jerome), in which the three plan a cycling tour of Germany, Harris believes that the right saddle is to be found. Our narrator replies that: 'this is an imperfect world of joy and sorrow mingled. There may be a better land, where bicycle saddles are made out of rainbow stuffed with cloud; in this world the simplest thing is to get used to something hard!'

I cannot improve upon Jerome's analysis. Be glad that your existing saddle, whilst 'constructed upon anatomical principles' at least does not 'nip like an irritable lobster' or press hard upon any

Finding the right saddle is a matter of trial and error, as all cyclists (and posteriors!) are different

parts of the anatomy unintended to receive such pressure. We are all made differently and a better one for you may yet exist; however, there is no cheap or easy way to find it.

One dealer used to have a mail-order 'saddle library' that you could borrow for a fee refundable against the saddle picked, but the length of time for which each customer needed the library gave an unprofitable ratio of stock to sales. Some dealers do something similar on an ad hoc basis; and if you have a good relationship with a local dealer it could be worth asking if he has any alternative saddles you might try.

CHRIS JUDEN





Photo: iStockphoto.com

[HEALTH] HAND & WRIST PAIN

Q My right hand and wrist have been painful for six months, compromising my ability to apply the front brake on my Brompton due to a loss of gripping strength. I was initially told by my GP that the cause of the pain, stiffness and swelling was seronegative arthritis, and was advised to take paracetamol. No further treatment has been offered and I have been told that the medical staff 'don't know what the cause is' with the unspoken conclusion that I'll just have to get on with it.

JOHN MASON

A It should be possible to diagnose the cause of your wrist and hand pain within the NHS. A diagnosis can often be made within the primary care setting using investigations such as blood tests and x-rays where necessary. However, where there is diagnostic uncertainty, or your symptoms are not adequately controlled, then a referral might be required.

Most wrist and hand pain will fall under the remit of either a rheumatologist or an orthopaedic surgeon specialising in this area. From the information you have given, I assume that you have not

yet been referred to a specialist, though in my experience it would be unusual to be given a presumed diagnosis of seronegative arthritis without having been referred to a rheumatologist. Seronegative arthritis refers to a group of inflammatory joint problems (including psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis) which share certain features. It does not include the more common osteoarthritis (wear and tear).

The majority of long-term wrist pain is attributable either to arthritis (including osteoarthritis and inflammatory arthritis) or to soft tissue causes (like tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome). The likelihood of osteoarthritis increases with age.

Treatment depends on the cause. Painkillers and anti-inflammatories, splints, injections, physiotherapy and occasionally surgery all feature. Of all the painkillers, paracetamol is one of the safer ones if it is taken correctly.

A correct diagnosis is important since some conditions like rheumatoid arthritis can be treated with specific disease-modifying drugs to limit their progression. A review with your GP would be sensible to discuss the problem further. There are many good

Inflammatory joint problems are not always due to osteoarthritis, which becomes more common with age

Sram's PC850 is the replacement for the old PC48, and is just as durable as the shinier PC870 and PC890



rheumatologists and orthopaedic specialists working within the NHS, and if a referral is required then your GP will know what is available.

DR MATT BROOKS

[TECHNICAL] PLASTIC BRAKE BREAK

Q Recently, my wife applied her front brake on approaching a T-junction, whereupon the brake lever clamp broke, so she couldn't stop! Fortunately there was no traffic. I would like to warn readers to avoid plastic brake levers and use metal ones.

GRAHAM ROBERTS

A If (that's a big 'if') designed with due regard to the properties of the material, a plastic lever shouldn't be any more likely to fail. And I have also seen broken metal ones, but rarely except after a crash. It's hard to be sure that some bump or scrape hasn't weakened this safety-critical component (e.g. someone could carelessly park their bike against yours and wrench your lever when disentangling the bikes). So whatever they're made from, give both levers a hard squeeze before setting out on a ride.

CHRIS JUDEN

[TECHNICAL] WHICH CHAIN?

Q I still run 6-speed, but my stock of SRAM PC48 chains is now used up and this model appears not to be available any more. Can you recommend an alternative that does not fall into the fancy chain category?

BRIAN BOSTOCK

A PC850 is the current name for PC48 and the cheapest 8-speed chain from Sram with chrome-hardened pins, which is a good as it gets for durability (870 and 890 are merely more shiny-looking). But KMC chains seem to be more widely stocked these days, also come with an easy joining link, and their model X8.93 is equivalent.

For the benefit of other readers: 8-speed chains are also good for 7-, 6- and 5-speed. And all Sram 9- and 10-speed chains are chrome hardened, so there's no material benefit in trading up from PC951 and 1031 respectively.

CHRIS JUDEN