

Clothing for Mountain Biking

Researched and Written by Women's Only Mountain Biking Inc.

The following are some suggestions when considering clothing for mountain biking. As someone who is just starting out in the sport there is no need or expectation that you spend money on "bike clothes". Search your closets and choose items that you already have that are comfortable and allow you to move freely.

Shoes

Ensure that they are not your best runners, as they will get dirty. Hard soled are much better than a runner or soft canvass shoe. Hard soled shoes (e.g. Cross Trainers) keep your foot from rounding over the pedal or getting stuck because of so many ridges.

Socks

Do not wear your best socks, especially the ones you are playing Tennis in the next day or plan to wear with your new walking shoes. Find your partner's old black work socks and put them in your mountain bike drawer or designate a pair of socks you're prepared to get dirty as your mountain biking socks.

Shorts

Not mandatory; you can wear pants just be sure they are not too wide, so that they don't get caught in the chain etc. Whatever creates confidence for you and is comfortable. Biking shorts with the chamois are designed not to take the "pain" away, but to whisk away moisture. The pain will only subside if you get on your bike at least 3 times per week. To ensure less pain, eliminate seams in the area you will be sitting on (i.e. do not wear underwear especially thong underwear and check that your lycra pants or shorts do not have seams

Bra

Avoid wearing under wire bras for safety reasons. Sports bra tops are great for flexibility and movement.

Shirt

Layers are excellent. Start with a short sleeve top, then a long sleeve over top. Jerseys are designed and worn for the following reasons:

- Whisk away moisture
- Breath
- Stretch and be comfortable
- Look great

Once again, do not wear your best white or light coloured shirt as mud comes up.

Jacket

For the weather in the lower mainland, a nylon type jacket is great. It does not have to be fancy, just one that helps to protect you from the wind and rain. If you don't need it you can roll it up and put in a waist pouch or tie it around your waist.

Gloves

There are short fingered and long fingered gloves made of many different types of materials. Each person will have their own preference. However, wearing gloves is important for many reasons:

- They help protect from the cold.
- They help protect from calluses.
- They help protect from the vibration.
- They help with gripping the handlebars for better control.
- They keep your hands clean when changing tires.

Eye Wear

If prescription eyeglasses are necessary wear only plastic frames and lenses if possible to help protect you from injury.

Sunglasses are okay in open areas, but they are not good for trails with very little light.

Clear or slightly tinted lenses are great to protect your eyes from bugs, cobwebs and branches.

Water bottle or camel back

Mandatory. You must hydrate your body while exercising regardless of the weather conditions.

If you forget water make sure you let your friends know and share with them.

Arm and Leg Protectors/Armour

This is a personal preference. They help minimize the scrapes and bruises as well as keep you warm on cool rides. However, you should be proud of your wounds as they allow for great stories at the office!