Bicyclists ride for numerous reasons, but whether it's to get an adrenaline rush, travel to nearby destinations, take in the scenery, or stay active and healthy, there are many benefits that everyone can enjoy.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly, the nonprofit weight-loss support organization, offers these tips for riding sensibly and explains its benefits.

Choosing a Bike

Before selecting a bike, it's important to determine how you'll be using it: on a paved road, off-road, or both? This will dictate the type of bike you'll need.

• Mountain Bike — Mountain bikes have a robust frame and wide, knobby tires to withstand dirt, rocky trails and other off-road terrain.

• Road Bike — Road bikes are generally lighter in weight with a thin frame and tires to support speed on pavement.

• Hybrid — Hybrid bikes offer the best of both worlds, combining aspects from both mountain and road bikes to accommodate light off-road riding and faster cycling on paved paths.

Choosing a Size

When choosing a bike, make sure the frame is appropriate. To find the right fit, straddle the bike and stand flatfooted. There should be at least one inch of clearance between your groin and the top tube on road and hybrid bikes, and two inches on a mountain bike.

It’s also essential to consider the seat height. Your knee should be slightly bent when the pedal is at the bottom of its rotation. To check the distance between the seat and the handlebars, ask someone to hold the bike steady while you sit on the seat with your hands on the handlebars. You should feel comfortable and relaxed.

Tips for Bike Riding

• Always wear a helmet that has a snug fit, sits level and covers as much of your head as possible, especially the forehead.

• Start slowly. Begin with short rides, adding miles, increasing intensity, and taking on hillier terrain gradually and as your cardiovascular ability increases.

• Establish varied routes. Diverse courses keep your interest piqued, giving you different scenery to enjoy and offering new challenges.

• Improve your technique. The better your technique, the more efficient you'll be. While pedaling, many beginners only push down with one foot, relying on the opposing foot to carry through the swing. Instead, while pushing down with one foot, pull up with the other to make a circular motion.

• Take a "brake." Do not squeeze the brakes too hard, and never clutch the front brake first. Remember to brake before a turn, not during, and pedal through for more control. While making a sharp turn, stop pedaling with the foot at the top of the swing to avoid scraping the pedal on the pavement.

• Get in gear. To climb a hill, shift up a few gears and stay seated as long as possible to keep your core engaged.

The Benefits

• Weight Loss — The amount of calories burned during a bike ride depends on a person's weight and the ride's intensity. For example, if a rider weighs 200 pounds and cycles at a rate of eight miles per hour, he or she will burn about 190 calories in 30 minutes.

• Low-Impact Exercise — Biking puts less stress on your joints compared to running.

• Heart Health — Thirty minutes of biking each day can cut the risk of heart disease in half.

• Stress Reducer — Cycling can be an escape. You choose your speed and route and have the opportunity to clear your head and enjoy your surroundings.

• Camaraderie — Join a bike club or find a friend to ride with to keep you motivated and make it more enjoyable.

• Efficiency – Biking is a great way to get to and from work, run errands, and travel to other nearby places. Opt for a bike ride rather than a car ride to save money on gas and burn calories.

TOPS Club Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) is the only nonprofit, noncommercial weight-loss organization of its kind.