

## Cycling clothing recommendations

Cycling is a mostly warm weather sport. But in Quebec, we can't always wait for those perfect days. Here is a discussion on what to wear for most conditions.

### **Apparel**

There are two main reasons that cycling apparel exists: comfort and safety. When designing for comfort and safety, three factors are considered: how it fits, whether it impedes movement, and whether it is sweat-wicking. The truth is, you can ride a bike with absolutely no special apparel at all. But just because you can do something, doesn't mean you should. While you don't necessarily need to spend a bunch of money on the most prestigious brand name of clothing available, the actual quality of the riding gear should generally be of higher quality.

Good quality bike clothes will provide you with the comfort and support that your body needs. This means that the backs and sleeves on cycling shirts and jackets will be longer to ensure that your lower back and wrists don't end up exposed. The fabric used to make cycling gear is also very specific. Because of its lightweight, moisture wicking qualities, lycra keeps you cool in warmer weather because it's lightweight and breathable, and warm in cooler weather because it wicks away moisture. Another advantage to wearing lycra is that it is less likely to bunch up or cause chafing. You never want to want riding clothes that are loose or long enough to get caught up in the bike chain.

### **Buying your riding apparel online?**

Most products available for purchase have a dimensions chart. European brands are usually one size smaller than north American sizes. Chinese brands are sometimes 3 times smaller than north American ones.

Prior to purchasing, make sure you take whatever body measurements necessary to determine your body's needs.

**Note:** Cycling clothing can be expensive if you insist on buying cycling brand names. You can find good choices on the internet (be careful the zippers, they are the first thing to break). A good cycling short/bib with proper fit will last many years, this is an investment in comfort and enjoyment of your ride.

## Warm weather clothing:

Cotton clothes are not optimal for cycling. They will become wet and heavy with sweat and will impede your movements, especially the legs.

### Cycling Jersey

Made of synthetic materials, this is your typical clothing choice for cycling. Cycling jerseys are longer at the back so that they don't ride up when you're cycling. Most will also have in built pockets at the back which is useful for your riding essentials and saves you taking a backpack. Try and find one with a full zipper.

### Cycling Bottoms: Shorts / Bib

Most cycling bottoms are made up of at least one layer of foam, which provides an extra layer of shock absorption between you and the saddle. Cycling bottoms are skintight and made to move smoothly over the bike saddle. They are designed to be worn without underwear. Wearing underwear poses health risks because underwear can trap more sweat and bacteria, making you more prone to chafing (or infections).

**Bib or shorts:** How do I know which one works for me?



Even though bibs may look silly, there are more benefits to wearing bibs. It's worth noting that the biggest complaint about wearing shorts is that the elastic waistband can be a bit too snug or cut into the skin and an overly tight waistband could interfere with your ability to breathe. Getting a looser pair of riding shorts might seem like a logical idea, but then you introduce the hassle of your riding shorts slipping down. Many riders also voice the complaint that the elastic bands soak up sweat, causing chafing and saddle sores. Opting for a bib should eliminate all of the above problems as bibs have no elastic waistband and the shoulder straps help keep the chamois securely in place.

Until recently, bibs weren't as popular among women cyclists because of their design. Not only were the dimensions a bit off, but the design of the bib made it difficult for women to use the bathroom, which made shorts more popular. The cycling apparel industry has started making design changes to better suit women's bodies and needs. A variety of bib types are also popping up on the market, each with innovative features that allows the user to disconnect the straps so that they can remove their bottoms more easily, making going to the bathroom nearly a breeze.

The Chamois is critical to comfortable riding and post-ride comfort, so ensure your bib/shorts are of a good quality.

Anti-chaffing – A product that can be bought at cycling shops that protect those regions that are in contact with the seat – buttocks, inner thighs, genitalia.

### **Socks**

Thin cotton or synthetic socks are the norm. Your feet will sweat, so there is no need to wear athletic socks which are too thick for cycling.

### **Shoes**

Choosing cycling shoes can almost seem as complicated as the bike itself. Firstly, you have the option of clip-in shoes that attach to your pedals, these make pedaling more efficient. If you prefer, you can use non-clip cycling shoes with regular pedals, these have a stiffer sole than a running shoe so are still more efficient when cycling. There are other shoe-pedal options available. Contact your bike store (consult more than one) to ensure you are aware of your options and purchase what you feel is appropriate for you and your comfort zone. Do not let other cyclists influence your choice so that you look like a “Pro”.

Hint: many people mention fear of falling while clipping out of the pedals. Spoiler: you will fall, sooner or later.

### **Gloves**

Gloves might not seem like much of an essential, but when you take your first spill and put your hands down, those gloves will be the only thing protecting the delicate skin on your palms (we all fall). Wearing gloves makes riding itself safer and more comfortable. Gloves absorb hand sweat, making it easier to maintain a solid grip on your handlebars without sweat-induced slipping and sliding, which could result in a crash. Decent bicycling gloves will have palm padding, which helps cushion the hands during riding and absorbs some of the vibrations that pass through the bike and into the handlebars.

### **Safety gear**

Helmets and gloves are the two most obvious pieces of safety gear, but eyewear and reflective accessories can prove to be just as important.

### **Helmet**

A helmet is always worth spending top dollar on. Aside from the fact that it protects one of the most important parts of your body, an ill-fitting helmet can make for a miserable ride, which is why you should make an effort to pick a helmet that will meet your needs. You should try on multiple helmets (and don't forget to wear sunglasses/eyewear during your fitting!) before settling on one so that you know how various fits and styles compare.

The question of cost is a big one when it comes to helmets, but the differences between helmets on opposite ends of the spectrum is quite noticeable! One of the most noticeable differences, is that of ventilation: the expensive ones offer lots of it, allowing for heat to escape from your head and for cooler air to flow through, and the cheaper ones don't.

Remember, broken bones can heal, but a serious head injury has lasting impacts. A good quality helmet and properly fitted is a must.

## **Eyewear**

Glasses are not just for protection from the sun. They also protect your eyes from dust and bugs, which are painful and can lead to an accident. Make sure your glasses protect you from both UVA and UVB rays. Sports sunglasses are usually made from especially resilient materials and are contoured in a way to better hug your face, reducing the likelihood of them falling off. Make sure you wear your glasses under your helmet, not on top; the sides of your helmet should sit comfortably on top of the arms of your sunglasses. Many glasses offer changeable lenses for a variety of light conditions.

Note: be careful to avoid wearing glass lenses, as they break differently than plastic lenses.

## **Reflective gear and lights**

Reflective gear and lights are essential and legally required in Quebec. Most bikes are not equipped with safety reflector features, like reflectors on pedals and bike wheel spokes. Adding additional reflectors to your bike, clothes, and helmet is a good idea. There are many battery operated and rechargeable lights on the market, some of which have a variety of blinking and brightness settings. Try to keep front and back lights on the bike, for additional visibility during the day and in case you ride in darker light conditions. Some cyclists opt to turn on their lights day or night. This makes you more visible at all times.

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Bicycle-Reflectors-and-Lights>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Reflecteurs-et-feux-declairage-pour-velo>

## Cold weather clothing

The secret to all-year-round cycle clothing success, both on or off road, is layering. It might be tempting to go and buy an expensive cycling jacket but that alone won't provide enough performance to keep you truly comfortable in all weathers. What every cyclist needs to do is dress in a way that can deal with changing external conditions and even changing levels of personal exertion.

### Base layers

The first garment, which will sit next to your skin: the base layer. Funnily enough, buying a really good base layer at just a fraction of the price of that expensive multi-seasonal jacket may actually provide more benefit. Base layers are made from man-made fibers or merino wool and wick sweat away from your skin while also keeping you warm. So a good base layer will help you stay cool and dry in summer, but warm and insulated in colder temperatures. Short or long-sleeve versions are available — we'd suggest having at least one of each type, and wear whichever suits the prevailing temperature best.

### Bottoms

Over the base layer sit the bottom, with many options available: shorts/bib, 3/4 pants (below knee), full length pants/bib or a combination of shorts/bib with tights or leg warmers. Bibs offer a far more comfortable fit than waist garments, which can dig in uncomfortably around your midriff.

Bib pants are great at keeping legs warm but might feel a bit too much on a mild day. So layering is an option: Shorts/bibs with leg warmers.

Female specific: It's especially important to go for a ladies'-specific set of shorts with padding and fit to address the difference between men & women. (<https://www.cyclinguk.org/saddlepain>).



### Cycling jersey

The final garment in the first stage of our layering system is the cycling jersey. You may well have a collection of short-sleeve jerseys from summer. Remember that cotton garments absorb sweat, become heavy and stay wet against your skin. Lycra cycling jerseys have pockets, do not absorb moisture as much as cotton. These can certainly be worn in cold weather as part of your layering system, although if it is looking like a very cold day ahead, a long-sleeve jersey is also an option.

## Arm and leg warmers

Now we come to our first clothing decision. You've decided to wear shorts/bibs and a short-sleeve jersey because the weather forecast promises warmer temperatures later on, but right now as you set out it's pretty nippy. What do you do? The answer is to use arm warmers and leg warmers. These are simple tubes of insulating Lycra material that can be worn on the arms and legs but which are easily removed when the sun appears. Arm and leg warmers are inexpensive, they can be easily rolled up and carried in a jersey pocket and are a very handy option for changeable temperatures.



In very cold and poor weather, though, we'll need other layers on top of our jersey and base layer.

## **Gilet**

The first option is a gilet. Gilets are effectively jackets without arms which keep the torso warm and protect it particularly from wind chill. They are often made from windproof material and can be easily rolled and stored in a jersey pocket when not needed. In situations where you aren't worried about arm warmth or complete waterproofing, gilets offer a very convenient added layer.

## **Soft shell jacket**

For more warmth, a soft-shell jacket or jersey is an even better option. With wind-stopping material to protect the front, a good selection of rear pockets, and often some element of rain-resistance, a good soft shell is often your first line of defense against cold riding elements. Don't forget high-visibility and reflectivity, not only for riding at night but also for times when you might be cycling under trees or in heavily overcast conditions. And if you're planning full-on training rides where you'll be sweating profusely, make sure your soft shell is made from advanced breathable fabric as well.

Remember that cycling generates wind-resistance, so choose a more tight-fitting jacket rather than something loose that will increase wind-resistance.



## **Hands and feet**

Make sure your extremities are protected. On the hands, swap fingerless gloves for full-finger gloves, preferably with sticky silicone grip sections for secure contact with the bike's controls. Then, on the feet, use overshoes or oversocks to help keep toes warm. They have holes at the bottom for the shoe-clips. Thermal-type socks are also good for those cold, windy days.



## Hat or skull cap

Don't forget your head. Road helmets these days are perfect studies in air cooling, which is great in summer but no help in winter. Use a skull cap — some even have ear sections or cheek / chin covering, to keep your face a little warmer. You can use anything that gives you added protection from the cold. Remember that you will sweat from the head... even in the cold.



## Neck warmer

Finally, we reach the very last area where a chill can seep in and leave you uncomfortable: the neck. A good neck warmer will mean only your face is exposed to the elements. In fact, a stretchy, lightweight thermal snood can help protect your face, too, and can be turned into a scarf, lower face mask, balaclava, headband, beanie hat or bandana.



<https://www.cyclinguk.org/cycle/wear-cycling-winter-cold>

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/womens-cycling-kit-what-should-i-wear-while-out-my-bike>

<https://velosurance.com/blog/womens-gear-what-really-need-necessary/>

#### Couche de base

Souvent négligée, la couche de base est pourtant très utile, car elle vous tient au chaud et au sec. On en retrouve différents types, plus chauds ou plus frais, qui conviennent aux diverses saisons. En plus d'être très confortable, l'utilisation d'une couche de base garde le maillot sec.

#### Maillot à manches courtes et longues

Le maillot de vélo est généralement la deuxième couche. Un maillot régulier fera l'affaire, et lorsqu'il fait plus froid, on peut porter des manches d'appoint pour couvrir les bras. En-dessous de 12 degrés, on suggère un maillot à manche longue en plus. Le maillot à manche longues est un manteau mince que l'on porte par dessus le maillot régulier. Il est moins contraignant qu'un manteau régulier, car son tissu souple vous permet une grande liberté de mouvement. Comme le maillot à manches longues n'a généralement pas de protection coupe-vent, il est judicieux de porter une veste coupe-vent lorsque le vent est fort.

#### Veste coupe-vent Gilet

La veste coupe-vent est un vêtement des plus utiles, autant en début de saison qu'en plein été, lors des matins frais ou des jours de pluie. Souples et très légères, ces vestes se rangent facilement dans vos poches de maillot et elles fournissent une bonne protection du vent, tout en vous laissant bouger librement.

#### Manteau

Lorsque la température est plus froide, ou si vous préférez utiliser moins de couches, le manteau est une alternative intéressante. On retrouve plusieurs types de manteaux adaptés aux différentes températures, qui conviendront à vos préférences et au moment de l'année où vous voulez rouler. Le

manteau est parfait pour les sorties froides, venteuses et à intensité basses/moyenne. Sachez cependant qu'il peut être encombrant lors des sorties à plus haute intensité et lorsque l'on est à l'abri du vent, car il est plus lourd, plus chaud et il limite vos mouvements.

#### Cuissard long ou pantalons

Lorsqu'il fait plus froid (définition vague qui dépend de chacun), un cuissard long ou des collants par-dessus votre cuissard seront utiles pour demeurer confortable. Si la température se réchauffe, on peut opter pour des genouillères de vélos, qui maintiennent l'articulation au chaud et qui peuvent s'enlever facilement.

#### Couvre-chaussures et Bas

Les couvre-chaussures servent à vous garder au chaud lors des premières sorties de la saison. Certains modèles couvre-pieds, se prêtent mieux aux sorties venteuses, tandis que des modèles plus minces sont parfaits pour la pluie l'été et pour les conditions sales du printemps.

Une bonne paire de bas chauds peut faire la différence lors des premières sorties de l'année. La laine de mérinos évacue l'humidité, ce qui permet de garder le pied au chaud et au sec alors que les températures sont encore fraîches. On réduit ainsi les chances de geler des pieds. De novembre à avril, c'est le type de bas à privilégier.

#### Gants, tuque, cache-cou

En début de saison, les tuques, casquettes, cache-cou et gants sont essentiels afin d'être au chaud lors des premières sorties à vélo. De bons gants permettent de conserver confortablement le contrôle de votre vélo et de vos vitesses. Certains gants sont pratiquement des mitaines d'hiver, alors que d'autres sont plus légers et minces, tout dépendant de vos besoins.

[https://www.primeauvelo.com/fr\\_ca/blog/post/comment-habiller-a-velo-pour-debut-de-saison](https://www.primeauvelo.com/fr_ca/blog/post/comment-habiller-a-velo-pour-debut-de-saison)

Montreal rules

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Categories>

### **Security & Traffic rules**

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Regles-de-circulation-pour-cyclistes>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Traffic-Rules-for-Cyclists>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Securite-des-cyclistes>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Cyclist-Safety>

### **Earphones**

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Ecouteurs-a-velo>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Cycling-with-Earphones>

### **Passing a cyclist**

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Depasser-un-cycliste->

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Passing-a-cyclist>

### **Fixed-gear bikes**

<https://spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Details/Velo-a-pignon-fixe>

<https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Fiches/Details/Fixedgear-bicycles>

Bike fit

<https://www.velo.qc.ca/boites-a-outils/pratique-cycliste/choisir-et-ajuster-son-velo/>

CAA

<https://www.caaquebec.com/fr/sur-la-route/services/assistance-velo/>