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**Bonanza for Beginning Biking**  
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This spring has been challenging in many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a huge public health crisis, job losses and economic uncertainty. But some good things have come from it. For one, there’s less traffic on the roads and more people walking and biking.

Large cities around the world are closing certain streets to motor vehicle traffic to allow more room for pedestrians or cyclists. Seattle announced that 20 miles of city streets will be converted to bikes and pedestrians only. This is a good time to ride a bike for fun, exercise or to meet the bus for longer trips. Currently, bus routes are at a minimum, so some people would benefit from a short bike ride to meet the bus. Two or three bikes fit on each bus bike rack. Remember to bring a face mask to ride the bus.

My favorite rides on Whidbey are nearly flat so you can relax and enjoy the ride while you build strength and gain confidence. Here are four easy rides that could be done individually, or as a household, even if you’re a beginner or someone that rides infrequently, like me.

1. **Maxwelton Road, South Whidbey**  
This ride offers a wide, paved shoulder that runs from Langley almost eight miles to Maxwelton Beach at Dave Mackie Park. To shorten your ride or take a break, stop at the Outdoor Classroom. Sit by the creek and eat a snack before you head back. It’s a very gradual slope down to the beach and slightly uphill back toward Langley. Use the crosswalk and light at the
highway. You also could [put your bike on the Route 1 bus](#) to this intersection and ride south from there.

2. **Crocket Lake, Coupeville**
   A great ride to build your bicycle stamina is the three-mile loop around Crockett Lake. [Put your bike on the Route 1 bus](#) and get off the bus at the ferry terminal where restrooms are available. Time your ride so you miss the ferry traffic on that side of the lake. The scenery is spectacular. Add four miles to your ride by starting at the Coupeville Park and Ride, making your round trip 11 miles. If you build an appetite, get some take-out at Callen’s across from the ferry terminal, visit the Red Apple or enjoy any number of restaurants in downtown Coupeville.

3. **Waterfront Trail, Oak Harbor**
   This is a busy trail with lots of pedestrians and dog walkers, but a good place to ride for beginners. Try going early in the morning or after dinner. It’s light until 9:00 PM now. The trailhead on the west end starts on Scenic Heights Road where there’s a beautiful little park. From there, the trail is gravel and winds through a natural area until it gets to Beeksma Drive and changes to a paved pedestrian path along the beach. You can [take the Route 1 bus and get off at Harbor Station](#) across the street from Flintstone Park. Then ride your bike west for just over a mile to the Scenic Heights trailhead and back again.

4. **Swanton Road, Oak Harbor**
   Take a three-and-one-half mile ride from Walmart out Swanton Road to Joseph Whidbey State Park. There’s a picnic shelter with great views of the water. Round trip is about seven miles back to the bus stop at Walmart. [Ride your bike to catch the Route 1 bus and get off at the Walmart parking lot](#) to start your ride.

First, take the bike out of the shed, pump up the tires, oil the chain and check the brakes. Bike shops are “essential businesses” so if you need a tune up, you can take it to a local professional. Ride your bike around the block a few times. Make sure your helmet fits, your bike light works and you’re wearing bright colors that will make you visible from a good distance when that occasional car comes along.

Wherever you go, wear a helmet and dress bright. Ride in single file, give each other plenty of space and enjoy the ride.