

## **GET THE COMPLETE LEARN-TO-RIDE EXPERIENCE**

When balance and steering are mastered, transitioning to a bicycle with pedals or a motorcycle is easy.

A child needs to experience the feel of leaning and how steering affects the balance of the bike.

Congratulations on taking the first step toward teaching your child to ride! Welcome to Team Strider! You are one of the many adopters who are changing how kids learn to ride and are establishing the standard for how young children explore the world on two wheels. We're so happy to take this journey with you and your child. If your child is still working on their balancing skills, we suggest using our **Learn To Ride – Stride Guide** before beginning to transition to a pedal bike.

Once the 14x pedal kit is attached, the narrow pedals allow your child to stride around the outside of the pedals to gain the momentum needed to begin pedaling. Skip the banged-up shins and frustrations that come with learning to ride on a typical pedal bike.

Strider Bikes encourage the development of spatial awareness, balance and basic motor skills as early as possible so all children can reach their maximum riding potential. To ensure your child's bike riding success, we have developed this simple guide to help you along the way.



**TEACH YOUR CHILD TO PEDAL**

Follow these 4 simple steps to pedaling success!

**STEP 1** **Balance is Essential**

Start by sizing the bike to fit your child. There are tips on seat height as well as handlebar and helmet adjustments in this guide. Watch closely for balance proficiency. Attaching the 14x pedal kit too soon can be very overwhelming and discouraging.

How do you know your child is ready to transition to the 14x Sport and pedaling? If your child is proficient in the following steps, they're ready to pedal:

1. Can support all their weight on the seat.
2. Can gain momentum by running with the bike.
3. Can find and use the footrests while riding.
4. Can stop safely using only their feet.

Most importantly, your child should want to attach the pedal kit.

**STEP 2** **Ignore the Pedals**

The Strider 14x has unique narrow "stride-around" pedals that allow children to continue their balance bike skills even after the pedals are attached.

When children gain momentum while striding on their pedal bike, it develops confidence. We suggest simply having children find the pedals with their feet and use them as footrests when they are riding and practice with the pedal bike the same as they would on a balance bike before even attempting to pedal. If your 14x came equipped with handlebar brakes, try to ignore them for now. The child needs to learn how to balance and completely stop with their feet to feel confident and in control.

**STEP 3** **Encourage Pedaling**

Once your child has become proficient with striding and gliding with the pedal kit attached, it's time to introduce them to pedaling. It's important throughout this entire process to let the child go at their own pace with as little physical interaction as possible. Practice and positive reinforcement go a long way! Children learn through example, pull out your bike and show them how you pedal!

**STEP 4** **Learn to Stop Safely**

Once the child learns how to pedal, they need to learn how to brake.

In the last step we will make sure your child can stop safely, explain what safety precautions they should take as a "big kid" on a pedal bike and give some tips for success.

**PROPER FIT IS ESSENTIAL**

Riding a bike that doesn't fit well is no fun and makes learning a challenge. For your child's success and safety please take some time and go over the sizing steps on the next few pages to ensure you have the proper seat height, handlebar reach, and helmet fit before starting this learn-to-pedal process.

**EXPERT TIP**

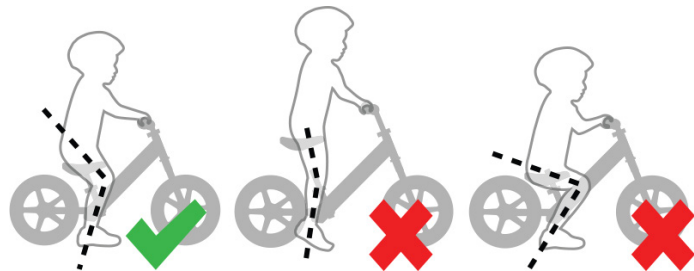
*To tighten a quick release clamp, you should press down firmly with the palm of your hand to close.*

**SEAT HEIGHT:**

Start by having your child stand next to the bike and adjust the seat so that it sits slightly lower than the top of their inseam.

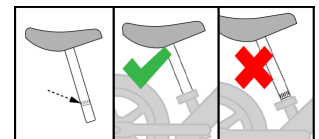
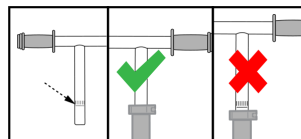
To open the quick release clamp on the seatpost, open the lever with one hand, and slide the seat to the appropriate position with the other.

When your child is comfortably seated on the bike with their shoes on, there should be a slight bend in the knees (see the photos below).

**HANDLEBAR HEIGHT AND REACH:**

The second most critical adjustment is handlebar height and reach. The best starting point for handlebar height is to set it with respect to the seat. If the seat is at its lowest setting, set the handlebar to also be at its lowest setting, etc. Try multiple adjustments to find out what makes your child feel the most confident.

The Strider 14x allows for handlebar adjustment reach as well as height. When your child is sitting comfortably on the bike their reach should be a distance where there is only a slight bend to the elbows.

**EXPERT TIP**

*Does your child have the tendency to hit the frame of the Strider Bike while running? Try lowering the seat to allow more leg clearance. If necessary, you can also remove the footrests on the 14x Sport.*

On both the seatpost and the handlebar of the 14x there are minimum insertion marks. For your child's safety, insert the posts into the frame far enough so the dashed lines don't show (see diagram above).

**SAFETY GEAR**

Adjust the crown of the helmet so it doesn't move while the child rides. The helmet should be worn low in front, slightly above the eyebrows to protect the forehead. The helmet should fit snugly, but not uncomfortably tight. The chin strap should be worn well back against the throat, not on the point of the chin. If a child opens their mouth wide the helmet should pull down on their head.

To check the basic fit, hold the helmet with both hands and twist it gently to the left and to the right. If the helmet fits properly, the skin on the forehead will move as the helmet moves. To check the strap tension, hold the helmet with both hands and try to remove it by rolling the helmet forward and backward.



Don't forget shoes! Children should always wear closed-toe shoes while riding.

**STEP 1** → **BALANCE IS ESSENTIAL****Why is balance so important?**

Balance is key to almost every physical sport and activity. Kids need to be active on a daily basis. Balance plays a big role in the development of our children. People of all ages and abilities can benefit from working on their balance and from being active. Learning to ride the 14x Sport as a balance bike first is the most important part of the transition to pedaling. If your child started on a Strider 12, they'll be proficient at striding and gliding. However, it's still a good idea to have them practice balancing and striding with the 14x. The weight and feel of the 14x are going to be slightly different than the bike they're transitioning from.

Strider Balance Bikes are the best method to prepare your child to ride a pedal bike. So how do you know exactly when your child is ready to transition to the next step?

Look for the signs below before installing the pedal kit onto your child's Strider 14x Balance Bike:

**“While riding his/her Strider Bike my child...” :**

1. can support all their weight on the seat.
2. is able to gain momentum by running with the bike.
3. balances with feet up for extended periods.
4. is able to avoid obstacles in his/her path.
5. can lean through turns with feet off the ground.
6. is able to find and use the footrests while riding.
7. can control their speed.
8. is able to stop safely with only their feet.

After you transition your child's Strider 14x to a pedal bike do not be discouraged if they aren't ready and want to go back to balance-bike mode.

It's more important to have your child gain the confidence and skills necessary to evolve into pedals at their own pace than to advance too quickly.

This process should be fun. Not stressful. You are your child's best supporter. Keep up the positive reinforcement for any progress they make.

**STEP 2** → **IGNORE THE PEDALS**

Keep the seat height the same as it was when your child was using the 14x as a balance bike. This is where your child is comfortable, and it will help them maintain control and stability while learning the pedaling process. Avoid the urge to hold the bike up for the child. They can do that on their own now.

The Strider 14x has narrow “stride-around” pedals so your child can get used to the feel of a pedal bike without having to pedal at all. Let your child gain momentum and balance the same way they did when using the 14x as a balance bike and have them use the pedals as footrests. If you tell your child to ignore the pedals and stride like they already know how—it will make the pedaling process easy in the next step!

Is your child having trouble getting on and off the bike on their own? Try having them step over the frame of the bike while it is lying on the ground and then lift it between their legs by grabbing onto the handlebar and pulling it upward.

**The Rocket Game**

The rocket game is a super fun way to encourage your child to continue their skills and practice gliding with their feet up through imagination and play.

Have your little Strider rider run with their bike to gain some speed, when you say “3...2...1... Blast Off!” Encourage them to pick up their feet to build their balance and coordination by coasting.

**Gaining Momentum**

Once your child can confidently stride and gain momentum on the bike, ease their way into using the pedals. Try encouraging them to take several big steps before they explore the pedals. Counting their big steps with them while they ride may provide encouragement to gain the momentum to get some good balancing and allow them to put their feet on the pedals like they did with the footrests on their balance bike.



### STEP 3 ENCOURAGE PEDALING

This is probably the first time your child has ever attempted pedaling. Walking and running are the natural means of propulsion to a child, so using a circular motion to propel the bike with the pedals is a new concept. Usually letting the child experiment with the pedals on their own is enough to allow them to figure things out with time.

#### Demonstrate



If you want to show them how the pedals turn in circles try having your child get off the bike, lift the seat with one hand and with your other hand turn the pedal slowly to show them how it makes the wheel turn.

Get your bike out and let your child watch you pedal.

#### Pretend



If your child is still not quite getting the hang of the pedaling motion, try laying on your back with your child with your feet facing each other. Bend your knees and have your child place their feet on yours. Together, you can pretend you're pedaling in the air.

Keep practicing by trying out different speeds and by starting and stopping.

#### Practice makes perfect...

In the "Learn-to-Stride Guide" we stressed the importance of letting your child set the pace. This is still the case. They have the perfect tool for the job they are trying to accomplish. Avoid the urge to hold the bike up for the child. Positive reinforcement is a must and they will eventually get the hang of it. Ignore occasional struggles and focus on fun.

Some kids need a little reminder to watch where they are going, especially with the distraction of the added pedals.

#### Ride the Line

1. Get out the sidewalk chalk and make your own road or racecourse in your driveway.
2. Make turns, loops, stop signs... anything!
3. Try drawing obstacles like bridges that go over a raging river, or a tight rope that spans across an enormous canyon.

**Pocket Full of Pennies**

1. Set up a course with cones or obstacles in your garage.
2. Along the course set up several empty cans or cups and have riders carry the same amount of pennies in their pockets.
3. Challenge riders to stop and drop a penny in the cans.
4. This is a great exercise for practicing starting and stopping.

**STEP 4** **LEARN TO STOP SAFELY**

Your child will instinctively stop by using his or her feet while they are first learning to ride because that is what they are accustomed to with their balance bike. Stopping with their feet is fine at first. The seat is still low enough that they can easily put both feet on the ground at any time.

Braking will work differently depending on which 14x Sport you've purchased.

If your 14x didn't come equipped with handlebar brakes, try the cues "push back with your heel" (you may need to show them where their heel is), or even show them using your hand to pedal like you did previously. Cues like "pedal backwards" can be confusing and counterproductive.

If your 14x Sport comes with handlebar brakes, try having your child walk for a few steps and squeeze the brake handles. Try walking, squeezing and stopping. This will give your child a feel for how the brakes affect the bike, as well as introduce a new mechanic with their hands.

Do not raise the seat until the child can stop safely using the brakes.

**Practice Skid Marks**

Sounds too easy, right? But really this is the tried and true, best and most fun way to practice braking.

Long, short, straight or curly... Your child could probably practice skid marks for hours and it will never get old. It takes a lot of black sidewalk to wear out the tires, so don't sweat it. Let them practice and become proficient in the essential skill of braking.



### A Reminder for Parents

Don't rush pedaling. Even if children appear to be striding like a pro, moving to a pedal bike too soon can delay progress. Let them continue to practice and perfect their balance and bike-handling skills. Be confident that the time spent on their Strider Bike in balance bike mode will help them easily transition to pedaling when the time comes and with the improved skills they gained it will be a safer and more enjoyable ride.

### Safety Checklist

- Make sure the seat, handlebars, and wheels are secure.
- Check the tires to make sure they have the right amount of pressure.
- Regularly check and oil the chain.
- Check the brakes to be sure they work well.
- It's important for kids to know that a bicycle is a big responsibility.
- Don't forget the helmet and shoes!



We love to see pictures of kids on Strider Bikes. Submit your photos at [www.StriderBikes.com/photocontest](http://www.StriderBikes.com/photocontest).