Effective Cycling: 6th Edition

John Forester

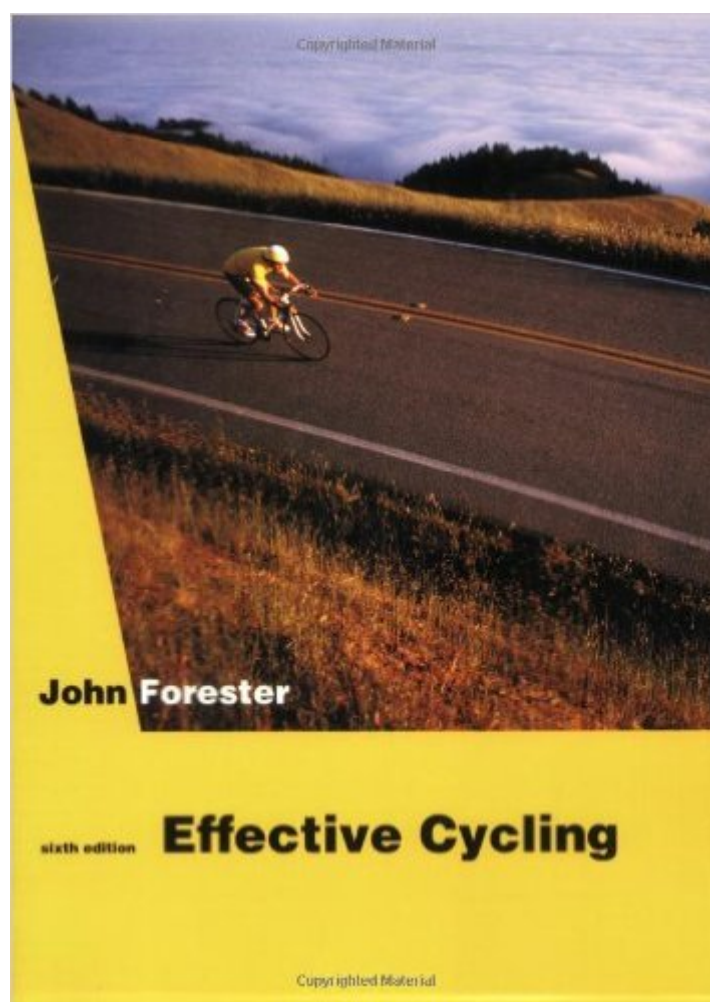sixth edition **Effective Cycling**

Synopsis

The core of John Forester's concept of Effective Cycling is that bicyclists fare best when they act, and are treated in return, as drivers of vehicles, with the same rights and responsibilities that motorists have.In this new edition of his classic introductory work, Forester reasserts this idea in terms of practice and education as well as theory while also addressing--among much else--the two major forces that have shaped bicycling since the early 1980s: the proliferation of high-quality equipment and the seriously insufficient progress on the social, political, and psychological fronts.The book is filled with details, strategies, and tips that will be useful both to occasional cyclists and to those who enjoy cycling as a way of life--all drawn from the author's many years of experience as a cyclist, a Cycling Transportation Engineer, and the founder of the Effective Cycling Program.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be nothing short of a godsend. With over 30 years of cycling experience, I felt comfortable and competent cycling in traffic, at least in most circumstances. But this book was recommended so many times, I decided to read it anyway. At first, it didn't seem like a big deal. It all made sense, and seemed to describe how I already rode, perhaps with a few subtle differences.But as I began to incorporate these subtle changes in my own riding the results were amazing. My relationship with car drivers completely changed. Instead of interacting with them once in a while --

only when necessary -- I became an integrated participant with the rest of traffic.It is impossible to explain in words how just subtle lane positioning changes, and a new attitude, can make such a radical difference in one's cycling experience in traffic. But consider what Forester conveys in this simple statement: "Between intersections, position yourself according to speed; at intersections, position yourself according to destination". You may think you do this already, but based on the fact that I almost never see any cyclists do this consistently, I can almost assure you that you don't. And I'm not talking about kids and "recreational cyclists". I'm talking about experienced commuters, and experienced club riders and racers. Only a very small percentages of cyclists actually behave like a (slow) vehicle driver consistently. Much of the time on the road is spent in space "left over" by motorists, riding too far to the right, not positioning at intersections according to destination (THINK about what that means), etc. etc."Cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles" - John ForesterThis book is for you if any of the following is true:* You want to learn to LOVE to ride your bike in traffic, not just tolerate it.* You're tired of motorists passing you and then cutting you off when they turn in front of you, or motorists coming from the other direction cutting you off when they turn in front of you (believe it or not, if you read this book you will learn how to stop them from ever doing this to you again!).* You are comfortable riding in bike lanes passing stopped or slow car traffic on their right.* You think that you should assume that you're invisible to motorists, and ride accordingly.* You don't think you should position yourself away from the edge of the road, often in the path of motorists coming from behind, in order to be more visible and predictable.* You don't feel safe riding in traffic.* Your greatest fear is that you will be hit from the rear.* You don't know that almost all bike-car collisions are caused by, or could have been prevented, by the cyclist.* You feel safer riding on shoulders and in bike lanes than "out" in the regular traffic lanes.* You're rusty on what the laws are regarding cycling.* You believe the best thing that can be done for cycling is building more bike lanes and bike paths.* You've never taken any courses on cycling in traffic (like LAB's Road 1 course - see bikeleague.org).* You don't believe cyclists have the same rights on the road as do motor vehicle drivers.* You ride on the side of the road opposing traffic (like a pedestrian should walk).* You ride on sidewalks.* You value your life and want to ride your bike accordingly.This is not the perfect book. Forester does tend to ramble, and some of the advice I don't agree with (like you don't really need a rear light at night, just a rear red reflector and a good front light). Also, some of the material, like on equipment and racing, is dated. But the chapters on riding in traffic are timeless and priceless, and so TRANSFORMATIONAL that they alone make this a 5-star book.

I used to think I knew how to bicycle. Right. After reading this book (over 8 years ago) my eyes were truly opened as to how a truly competent cyclist should operate. Even fifteen years of regular cycling for transportation and fun did not teach my half what a single reading of Effective Cycling did about using my bicycle effectively as part of traffic flow. This book cuts through the preconceptions and misconceptions about bicycle riding. After understanding and practicing the techniques Forester gives in the book, your experience of riding will be totally transformed in a way you cannot imagine. You will feel confident about handling just about any situation on a bike--rotaries, making left turns on multilane divided roads, passing through major intersections--not because you are being foolhardy but because for the first time you truly understand how to negotiate them properly and more safely than you ever did in the past, using the same traffic principles that govern the behavior of all other vehicles on the road. I can't think of many traffic situations I didn't feel confident riding in in the 8 years since I read and began applying Effective Cycling to my riding. I can't recommend this book highly enough.

Effective Cycling contains a lot of very valuable information. Unfortunately, half of the book is mostly repetitive axe-grinding and random opinions. I would have given the book a higher rating if these necessary half were not thoroughly interwoven with the unnecessary half.It bothers me that Forester complains about others using unsubstantiated, anecdotal evidence, because he uses plenty himself. For one example, his brief discussion of recumbent bicycles is so absurd that it should have been left out. His double-standards regarding fact vs. opinion and logic vs. emotion greatly undermine his arguments.That said, a reader with a critical eye and a tolerance for hot air can separate the wheat from the chaff.

This book is unique in its focus on the technique of sharing the road with motor vehicles. His accounts of run-ins with various government bodies are also enlightening, even though I grew impatient around the third or fourth time he recounted his experiences modifying the Uniform Vehicle Code.His advice about equipment, diet, and the other mechanics of bicycling needs to be taken somewhat lightly. Even though this is a "second edition", much of the material in the book is considerably older. On the other hand, the fundamentals of safety (visibility, lighting, traction, lane placement, risk factors) are invariant over time.Mr. Forester has a definite axe to grind, and this book does it quite effectively. He adds a definite splash of common sense to the fine technique of road riding: don't let other vehicles take your lane away from you, don't surprise them, safety always first, slower traffic keeps right. The safest way to bicycle on the road is not necessarily the one that

educators, legislators, or law enforcement officers think it is.This book is a must-read for any cyclist who ever shares the road with a motor vehicle.

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