

BRAKE BASICS

1. Brake types

- Road bikes have center-mount, side pull brakes
- Mountain, touring, cyclocross and hybrid bikes have cantilever mount brakes
- Linear, side pull cantilevers or vee brakes are the most common on new bikes

2. Noises

- Squeals and scrapes are the most common noises which can be fixed
- Brakes squeal from pads hitting the rim flat; toe in brake pads to stop noises
- Scraping means you need to either sand the metal out of the pads or replace them

3. Pad wear

- Brake pads should be replaced when you get down to about ¼" of pad left
- Properly toed in brakes wear at a slight angle; too much and they will wear faster
- Front brake pads last longer because the front brake is stronger

4. Lever adjustment

- Your brakes will hit sooner if you unscrew the barrel adjusters around the housing
- You can shorten the reach with a screw that points toward the other brake lever
- Your first lever adjustment should start with the barrel adjusters all the way in

5. Maintenance

- Find out how to use the brake cable quick release at the lever; this will aid in cleaning
- Inspect brake pads for wear or metal shards; sand pads to remove metal
- Sand pads to improve braking; heat from braking will glaze pads and reduce power

-- *League of American Bicyclists*