

Bicycle Touring

Bill Hughes
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Bill Hughes bio

- Hometowns: Northern Illinois and Warren, Michigan
- Certificated Airframe and Powerplant Technician
- 35 year pro currently teaching aviation maintenance at Michigan Aviation and Technology, Canton, MI
- 6 years PALM Ride
- Usually bicycles 4000 miles per year



Bicycle Touring

- Using a bicycle for extended travel
 - 50 miles or more per day
 - Several days to several months



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Types of touring

- Supported rides
 - Organized
 - SAG vehicles (Support and Gear)
 - Gear carried in trucks
 - Pedal Across Lower Michigan (PALM)
 - There is an organized day ride somewhere in Michigan every weekend throughout the summer
 - Lists available at bike shops





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Types of touring

- Credit card touring
 - Minimal gear
 - Hotels
 - Credit cards
- Youth hostel / light camping touring
 - No cooking gear, tent & sleeping bag only

Loaded Touring

- You carry it all
- Primitive camping and cooking



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Type of Bike

- Look for a bike capable of mounting racks and fenders
- Avoid racing bikes, suspensions, exotic materials like carbon fiber



Buy it at a reputable bike shop

– Proper fit

– Quality

- You will need to spend \$600 to a \$1000 for a good quality bike
- Used bikes can be found for a lot less but you must be knowledgeable

Traditional touring bike



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www.RenaissanceBicycles.com



Traditional mountain bike



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Recumbent



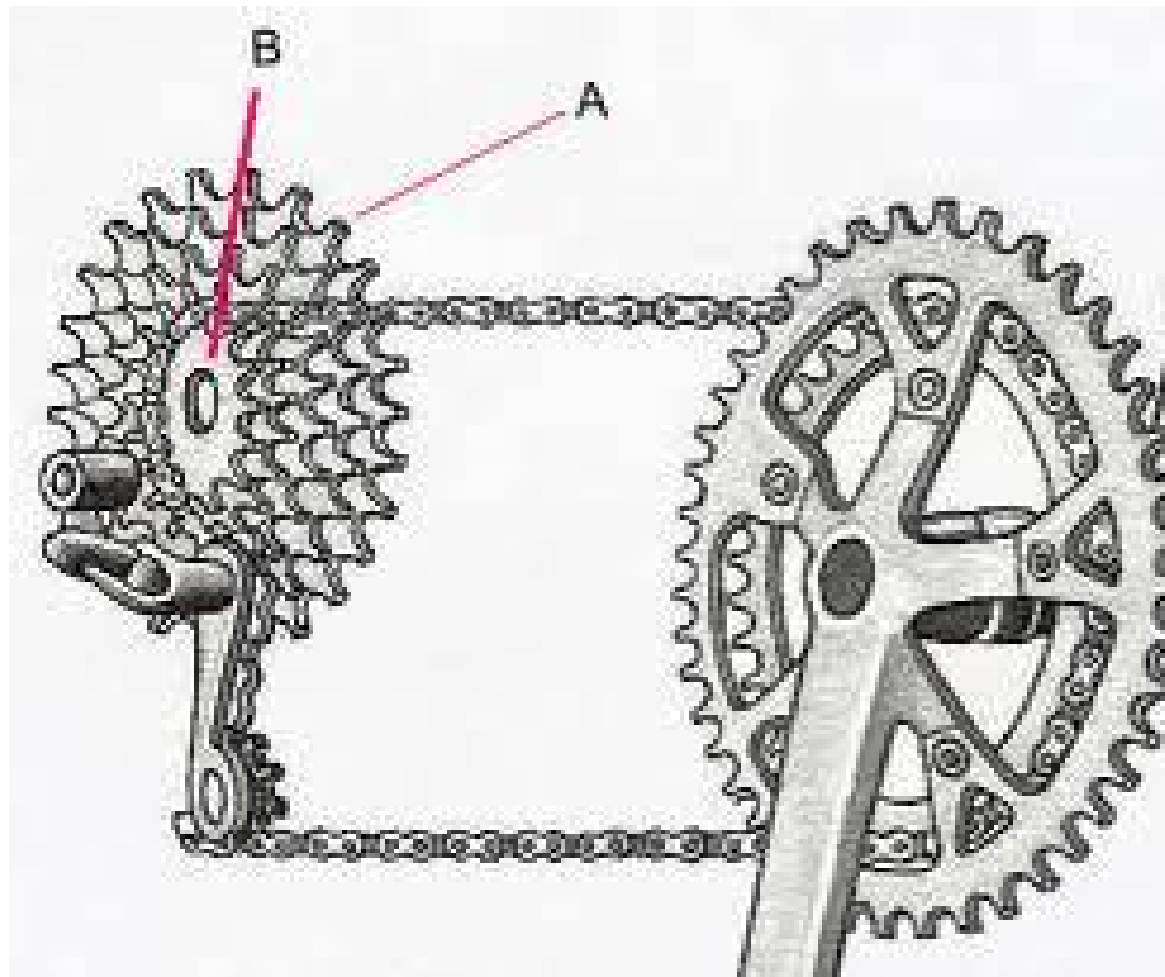
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Gears

- Make for easier riding
 - Hills
 - Flats
 - Wind



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Gearing

- A touring bike should have a triple chain ring in front (pedal drive end) and 7 to 9 sprockets on back wheel
- Mountain bike gearing, not racing (small cluster in back)
- You want a very low (granny) gear to climb hills, especially if carrying gear:
 - Small chain ring in front, large sprocket in back

Pedal Cadence

- Gears allow for optimum pedaling cadence and effort under variable riding conditions
- Cadence – pedal rotations per minute
 - 80 to 100 is best

Wheels and Tires

- Wheels
 - Avoid low spoke count racing wheels
 - 32 to 36 spoke aluminum wheels are good
- Tires
 - Fat tires are good, especially for heavy loads
 - 700c 28mm to 38mm
 - 26 inch 1.5 to 1.75
 - Use knobby tire for off road only – smooth tread is best for low rolling resistance and noise

Comfort

- Comfort depends on
 - Proper bike fit
 - Seat height
 - Handlebar height
 - Handlebar positions
 - Drop handlebars are best – have the most hand positions



- Remember that comfort is a relative concept.

Other Essentials

- Helmet
 - ANSI Approved
 - \$20 to \$200
 - Protection is the same



- Gloves
 - Protect hands in a fall
 - Better grip



Other Essentials

- Bike Shorts
 - Help prevent chafing and saddle sores
 - A must for long distance riding
 - Cotton underwear will be killing you after 4 hours
 - Skin creams are also recommended
 - Padded briefs are also available if you want to wear regular shorts



Shoes

- Any type of shoe is OK if it has good support and protection
 - Leather topped walking shoes are good
- Clipless biking shoes
 - Special cleats on shoe lock into specially made pedals
- Tennis shoes are OK for recreational riding but not recommended for long tours – stiff sole on bike shoes helps transfer power to pedals

Cycling mirror

- Allows you to clear traffic behind without the de-stabilizing effect of turning to look back



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Racks and bags

- Necessary to carry your stuff



Other Essentials

- Water bottle(s)
- Tool Kit
- Spare inner tubes
- Tire patch kit
- Tire pump or inflator bottles



Places to buy a bike

- Local bike shop for proper fitting
 - D&D Bicycles, Berkley
 - KLM Bike & Fitness
 - American Cycle and Fitness
 - REI
 - Many others
- Avoid stores that sell but do not support
 - Big box stores
 - Sporting goods stores
- Internet and mail order stores OK for accessories and parts but little support for bike purchases

Resources

- League of Michigan Bicyclists
 - <http://lmb.org/>
- League of American Bicyclists
 - <http://www.bikeleague.org/>
- American Youth Hostels Bike Trips
 - <http://bikingtrips.org/>
- Cyclists Touring Club (Britain)
 - <http://www.ctc.org/>

PALM

- Pedal Across Lower Michigan
- 6 day supported bike tour
- Starts at Lake Michigan
- Ends at Lake Huron, Lake Erie, or Lake St Clair
- 700 plus riders
- 40 to 60 miles per day
- Tent camping at overnight stops (usually high schools)
- High school facilities available for showers and meals
- Cost is about \$230 per rider



PALM Pictures



Quiet roads and recumbents; most drivers are polite

Tent city for overnights



Parade on last day of PALM Ride



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Country roads, take me home...



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