Try Bike Commuting

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When I started my college career at Minneapolis Technical and Community College, I did not have much money. My funds would go towards gas or money for a bus pass (which was still hard for me to afford). So my husband put together a bike out of parts he found in dumpsters—he has been known to find free bikes on the side of the road or cheap parts on Craigslist.

On my Frankenstein bike I commuted to school for spring and summer semesters. I saved about $100 on a bus pass per semester and worked out every day. Since then I have upgraded to a newer nicer bike, gotten better bike lights, and become savvy on where to find bike paths.

If you are considering taking up bike commuting this summer, please consider the following tips:

* **Wear a helmet—**According to The American Association of Neurological Surgeons, 85,389 cycling accidents resulted in concussions or brain damage in 2009. If you fall, a helmet will protect you.
* **Light up the streets—**Bike lights and reflectors are a must. It is best to have a bright white headlight for the front and a red light for the back. I normally find red reflective bike lights at events like Open Streets and random art fairs; Metro Transit typically gives them out at events for free.
* **Follow the laws—**Riding a bike is much like driving a car. It is important to signal for turns, ride in the correct lanes, and obey traffic signs and lights. Read more here: bikemn.org/education/minnesota-bicycle-laws.
* **Look up directions—**Sometimes GPS won’t always take you the safest route. Try to have a bike map handy.
* **Plan ahead and consider not riding in bad weather—**It is wise to have a light rain jacket in case of light rain, but if heavy storms are in the forecast, driving or taking the bus is safer.

Biking is a great way to commute, exercise, and build community. You can even receive discounts at places like Mississippi Market and Summit Brewery through Bicycle Benefits. You can find more information at their website: bicyclebenefits.org. If you don’t own a bike and would like to try cycle commuting, try out a Nice Ride; learn more at: niceridemn.org.

Have fun, get active and have a great summer biking.