

## The Commuter Bike Shopper's Checklist

Use the checklist below to comparison shop at your local bike stores or identify the cost options for making your current bike a fully-equipped commuter bike.

<b>Bike Model</b>					
Bike Cost					
Rear light					
Front light					
Fenders					
Rack					
Panniers					
Bell/horn					
Lock					
Rain gear - Top					
Rain gear - Bottom					
Boots/Booties					
<b>TOTAL</b>					

### **The Bike**

Your best choice if buying a brand-new commuter bike is a model with 700c size wheels. These are the same size wheels road racing and touring bikes use. They are faster and lighter than 26 inch mountain bike wheels and better suited to commuter riding. Converting a road bike by swapping the racing style 'drop' bars for riser, or cruiser style handlebars, is another fine option. If you are going to use a mountain bike, replace the off-road knobby tires with 1.5 inch street tires. You'll gain speed, control, and day-to-day puncture-resistance.

### **Rear Light**

By far the most important piece of safety equipment you should have installed on your bike. They are cheap and ubiquitous. Buy a couple. Attach at least one to your bike and keep the other to clip onto clothes or a dead-sexy safety vest.

### **Front Light**

If you're commuting in the city, all you really need is the small, cheap, white LED blinky. Add candlepower depending on your financial tolerance and urge to be seen. An easy-to-use quick release can come in handy.

### **Fenders**

Get the black plastic and steel kind that attach to your frame at three or four points. Unlike the ones that stick out from your seat post, or the motocross style plastic fenders designed for use with front suspension, they actually keep your feet and butt relatively dry. Beware of potential hassles with disc brakes when buying a brand-new bike.

### **Rack**

Look for a nice one? Make sure it will work with your bike and doesn't limit your choice of panniers.

### **Panniers**

Rubberized, roll-top super-waterproof panniers are awesome. Regular panniers with your stuff inside shopping bags will do as good a job unless you regularly ride in typhoons. More importantly, the easier they are to take on and off, the more likely you'll use them.

### **Bell/horn**

You can tinkle, or toot, or yell in a pinch. The bell is our first pick because it's friendly. More than a few commuters have a bell and a horn. Room on the handlebars for both is sometimes an issue.

### **Lock**

Buy the best one you can afford and use it. Always. If you don't know how, get the bike store or a knowledgeable friend to show you how to lock the both the frame and front tire to a bike rack for maximum security.

### **Rain Wear**

If you want to go fast, get the sleek, form-fitting stuff. Booties to go over your regular riding shoes make a very big difference, keeping toes both dryer and warmer. If you don't plan on breaking speed records or a sweat, just use your most waterproof rain coat (or buy one) and rain-pants that you can put on over your regular work clothes. Rubber boots, which are incidentally the latest fashion, are also the best choice for footwear. Take your regular shoes with you, or leave a pair at work.