

PELOTONIA®

# Safety & Training Handbook

Ride Weekend and Gravel Day



## CYCLING SAFETY GUIDELINES

FOR ROAD RIDING, GRAVEL CYCLING, AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

### RULES OF THE ROAD

Pelotonia events are Rules of the Road rides. You will ride on open roadways where vehicular traffic is present, alongside other Riders and everyday motorists. Reviewing this handbook helps ensure a safe, positive experience for everyone involved.

- Pelotonia is not a race.
- The Ride is conducted on open roads where vehicle traffic will be present.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Ride as far to the right of the road as is safely possible, except when passing.
- Never ride more than two across and single up when traffic conditions require it.
- Always pass on the left side.
- Helmets must be worn at all times while riding.
- Headphones and speakers are not permitted while riding.
- Endangering the safety of your fellow Riders is strictly prohibited.
- Ride defensively and in control of your bike at all times (*i.e. be able to stop within a reasonable distance*).
- Communicate with your fellow Riders using proper cycling calls like “On your left,” “Car back,” and “Slowing.”
- Use proper hand signals when turning.
- Make left turns from center of road or left turn lane when available.
- Cross railroad tracks at right angles to avoid dropping wheels into space between the rails and road.
- Do not cross the yellow centerline regardless of passing zone.
- Obey instructions from Pelotonia staff, law enforcement, and Volunteers and pay attention to signage.
- If you see something unsafe, speak up! And if someone raises a concern with you, thank them for looking out for the group.

Remember, following the Rules of the Road helps keep you, your fellow Riders, Volunteers, and motorists safe. Please ride courteously and look out for one another throughout the event.

### SAFETY VIDEO

Our Rules of the Road Video demonstrates basic rules of the road and also provides some tips for safe group riding. An understanding of these concepts will make you more adept at riding and will enhance your ability to anticipate potentially dangerous situations and react to them accordingly.

FIND THE VIDEO AT  
[pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources](https://pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources)



## RIDER SAFETY AND TRAINING TIPS FOR ROAD RIDING, GRAVEL CYCLING, AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

### BE AWARE

Stay aware of other Riders, vehicles, and changing traffic patterns around you.

Help keep your fellow Riders informed by saying “car back” when rounding curves, on narrow roads, or when riding double, and “car up” to warn of traffic approaching from the front.

The lead Rider will say “slowing” or “stopping” to alert those behind to change in speed when necessary. When passing through an intersection, some cyclists say “clear” if there is no cross traffic, but each cyclist should confirm before proceeding.

When riding in a group, most of the cyclists do not have a good view of the road surface ahead, so it is important to announce holes, glass, sand, grates, and other hazards. The leader should indicate hazards by pointing down to the left or right, and by shouting “hole,” “bump,” etc. where required for safety.

Don't wear headphones, use a speaker, or talk on a cell phone while riding.

### BE PREPARED

Have a spare tube and multitool to repair a flat, a charged phone to call for assistance, and water and nutrition to power you through your ride and keep you hydrated.

Check your bike thoroughly before every ride.

### BE VISIBLE

Wear reflective gear or bright colors to stay visible to drivers and other cyclists.

Use bicycle lights to draw extra attention to your presence on the road.

### RIDE SAFE

Wear a helmet and leave space between yourself, other Riders, and vehicles.

When riding up hills or on narrow roads where you are impeding faster traffic, leave a gap for cars between every three or four bikes to allow a motorist to move around the group.

Whenever stopping, move well off the road so you do not interfere with traffic. When you start up again, each cyclist should look for, and yield to, traffic.

Ride single file or two abreast as appropriate to the roadway, traffic conditions, and where allowed by law. Be sure to single up when cars are trying to pass you.

### BE PREDICTABLE

Follow Ohio traffic laws and use clear hand signals and verbal clues so others know what to expect of you.

Other Riders expect you to continue straight ahead at a constant speed unless you indicate differently.

Warn cyclists behind you well in advance of changes in your direction or speed using verbal cues (“left turn” or “right turn”) in addition to giving a hand signal (universal hand signals can be viewed here: [bikeleague.org/videos/signaling-and-scanning](https://bikeleague.org/videos/signaling-and-scanning)).

Always pass others on their left. Say “on your left” to warn the cyclist(s) ahead of you that you are passing.



## GRAVEL DAY RIDER SAFETY AND TRAINING TIPS

### GRAVEL DAY SAFETY FOR GRAVEL CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

On gravel routes, ride within the existing tracks, and ride no wider than 2 bikes across.

Be conscious of downhill speed, as it can be harder to slow down/stop on gravel with less traction.

Keep your eyes up and scan ahead.

Be alert for wildlife, other cyclists, and/or vehicles on gravel roadways. Don't wear headphones, use a speaker, or talk on a cell phone while riding.



### MOUNTAIN BIKING SAFETY

Maintain a speed that allows you to stop within your line of sight.

Do not pass on blind corners.

If unsure about a feature, either avoid it or dismount and walk.

Ride single file, passing only when safe, and making space for faster Riders to pass you if approached.

### MOUNTAIN BIKING ETIQUETTE

Mountain bikers yield to hikers and runners.

Slow down when approaching other trail users.

Move off the riding line when stopping.

Ride, don't slide. Natural surface trails are maintained by volunteers. Please don't cause unnecessary damage to the trail.

Stay on course: do not cut switchbacks or leave the marked course, riding only on designated trails.

Be aware of rocks, roots, mud, loose gravel, creek crossings, bridges, and changing traction.

When the trail approaches a road, slow and look for other riders or cars before proceeding.

### TRAINING & PREPARATION

Natural surface riding requires greater effort and technical awareness than pavement. Train accordingly and ride within your ability.

Be sure you are equipped with the right type of bike: A gravel-specific bike with minimum tire width of 35mm for gravel cycling routes and a mountain bike with either a front or full suspension for mountain biking routes.



## GRAVEL DAY RUNNER/HIKER SAFETY AND TRAINING TIPS

### SAFETY

Wear comfortable, broken-in trail running shoes with good tread.

Be mindful of others around you, especially at the start where the course will be more congested.

Call out when you are passing someone on the course, especially on narrower sections, using “on your left.”

Run and hike in single file on the single track sections of the course that take place within the Baileys Trail System.

Do not cut switchbacks or leave the marked course at any time.

Don't wear headphones, use a speaker, or be on the phone while on the course.

Be alert for wildlife, including snakes. If you see a snake, simply go around it or wait for it to pass.

During the trail run, be mindful of obstacles on the trail including rocks, roots, and other forest debris.

Be aware and scan the ground in front of you to avoid tripping or stubbing your toe.

Be aware that your pace may be very different than your normal road running pace due to the technicality and difficulty of the trail. Take your time and enjoy the adventure!

Consider walking or hiking up hills to conserve energy, especially if you're hoping to complete multiple laps.

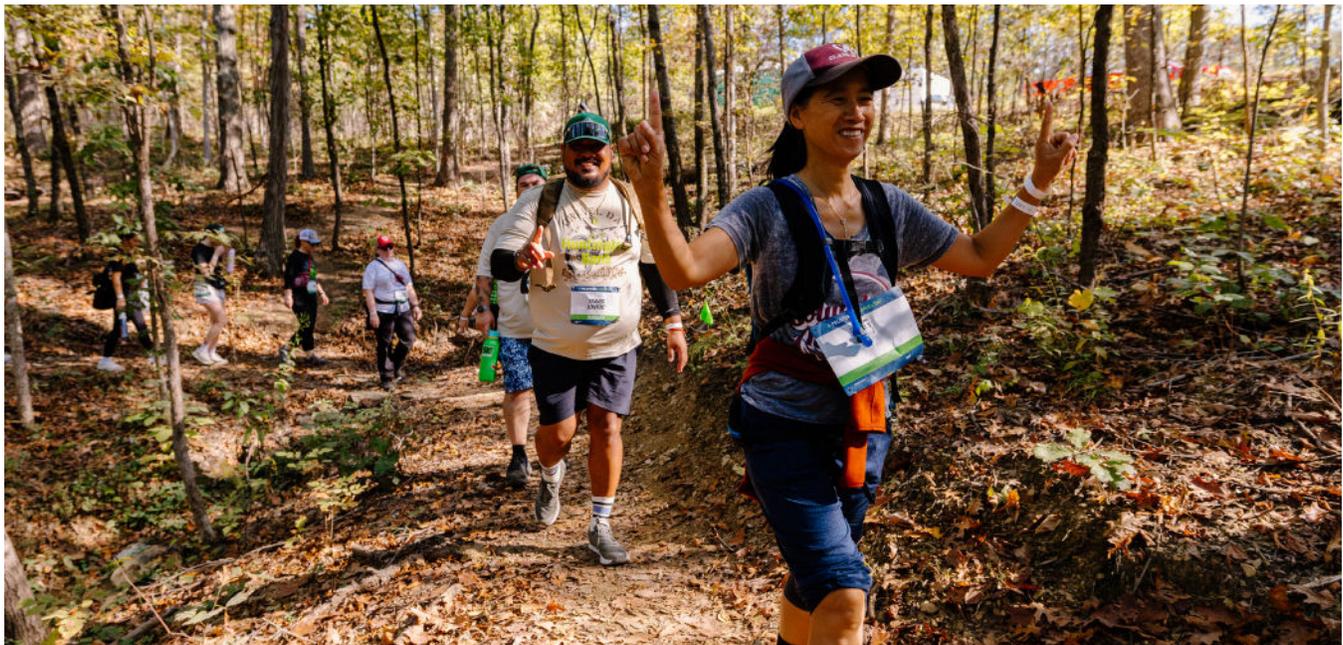
A general pacing method is to focus on the stretch of trail in front of you (the next quarter mile, for example), if 3.5 miles feels overwhelming!

### TRAINING

Practice trail running or hiking on off-road surfaces at a local park or gravel paths.

Break in your trail running shoes at least a few times before the event!

Remember that the event will happen rain or shine, so consider doing that training run even if it's raining or muddy!



## TRAINING

An important part of preparing for Ride Weekend or Gravel Day is training appropriately and ensuring you have the proper approaches to hydration and nutrition. Great resources are included both below and at [pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources](https://pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources).

### HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

Please remember to keep yourself well hydrated before, during, and after the event (regardless of the weather). It is critically important to avoid dehydration by drinking water and sports drinks on a schedule (roughly one liter per hour, starting with water and switching to sports drinks after the first hour or two). Do not rely on thirst—thirst only kicks in when you are already becoming dehydrated. It is also important, however, not to over-consume water. Over-hydration with straight water lacking the sodium found in sports drinks may result in hyponatremia, sometimes referred to as water toxicity. This is a dangerous and potentially deadly condition that can be avoided by switching to primarily drinking sports drinks that contain at least 100 mg of sodium after the first 1–2 hours of riding. Be sure to read your fluid labels as many “sports beverages” contain far less than this minimum recommended amount of sodium.

Carbohydrate loading helps athletes participating in events such as Pelotonia maximize energy storage to improve endurance and delay the onset of fatigue. Snacking on fruits that are potassium rich and pretzels that contain sodium will also help replenish nutrients the body loses during the event.

### SAMPLE TRAINING PLANS

For all Ride Weekend distances, our friends with the Ohio State Sports Medicine Endurance Medicine Team have developed sample training plans to ensure you’re getting the miles needed in prior to Ride Weekend! View these plans at [pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources](https://pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources).

Additional resources for Gravel Day training are also included at [pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources](https://pelotonia.org/safety-training-resources), as well!

### TRAINING RIDES AND RUNS

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits offers weekly training rides. Group leaders provide safe routes and welcoming sessions for new Riders. Check out the schedule and register for training rides at [outdoor-pursuits.org/weekly-training-rides](https://outdoor-pursuits.org/weekly-training-rides).

Ohio Gravel Grinders is a great resource for gravel ride training at all levels. Check out their race series and all ride resources at [ohiogravelgrinders.com](https://ohiogravelgrinders.com).



For Runners and Hikers looking to train before Gravel Day, our friends at Fleet Feet have recommended several training groups and opportunities. More details can be found about each at the links below.

- [ORBC Run Club](#)
- [Fleet Feet Hiking Club](#)
- [Fleet Feet Trail Crew](#)