

Beginner's Guide to Buying a Bicycle

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I'm going to start you off by giving you a fair warning; **Cycling is not a cheap sport**. A brand new entry level bike will cost you easily \$500, plus 1 set of cycling clothes \$100, and yearly maintenance on the bike \$150 (low end). This cost is nothing, if you think of Cycling as an investment. An investment towards a healthier lifestyle, new friends, a cleaner and cheaper mode of transportation, and countless windows of opportunity (I've been all over the US and Italy because of cycling).

Before you go and purchase a new bike, here are a few things you should know. First, **It's not about the bike**. I've ridden across Florida (170miles) on a 40 pound fat tire walmart bike (crappiest of all bikes). You don't need the best bike out there to ride bicycles. Secondly, there are two major types of cycling: Road Biking and Mountain Biking. Road Biking consists of a bikes designed for riding on the road with skinny tires, and drop down handlebars. Mountain biking are bikes designed for riding off-road on dirt trails, they have fat tires with knobby thread. Third, every part of your bike is made by a different company that specializes in making that part, and competing companies have similar products. Key parts of your bike that will be different include: bike frame, bike components (gears) and wheels. All parts of the bikes are interchangeable and upgradeable to make your bike the fastest and lightest bike out there. Finally, **make sure your bike fits!** If the bike doesn't fit you will be uncomfortable and won't get your maximum power output.

Your bike components are the most vital and noticeable difference in your biking. Here is a quick run down of the two most popular component companies, Shimano and Sram, and the different levels of components from in order of most expensive/best. Sram has been increasing more popular because its similar levels tend to be cheaper and lighter than Shimano's.

Road Bicycle Components:

Shimano	Sram
Dura-Ace (best/most expensive)	Red (best/most expensive)
Ultegra	Force
105	Rival
Tiagra	Apex
Sora (worst/least expensive)	- (worst/least expensive)

Mountain Bicycle Components:

Shimano	Sram
XTR (best/most expensive)	X.0 (best/most expensive)
Saint	X.9
Decore XT	X.7
SLX (worst/least expensive)	X.5(worst/least expensive)

Where to buy bicycles in Tallahassee:

Bike Shops - You find brand new bicycles ranging in prices from \$500 - \$5000+. Buying a bike from a bike shop comes with help from experience bike mechanics along with free shop tune ups and a bicycle warranty in case of defects or crashes. Bicycle Shops in Tallahassee:

- **The Great Bicycle Shop** – FSU Cycling Sponsor Shop – Giants, Iynskey
- **Sunshine Bicycles** – FSU Cycling Sponsor Shop – Treks, Gary Fisher
- Higher Ground – Specialized, Cannondale – Service and Products tend to be expensive
- Joe's Bicycle Shop – Jamis, Raleigh
- Bicycle House – Jamis
- University Cycles – overpriced Walmart type bikes, not really worth a visit unless you're working with vintage bikes

Craigslist – Best place to find used bikes. Used bikes are good because you get more bang (bike) for your buck. Most of the stuff you'll find on Craigslist are Walmart type bikes, but occasionally you'll find a good deal. Another way to find used bikes is by word of mouth. You can occasionally find out about a bike for sale on the Tallahassee Cycling E-mail list called Tal-Rides. You can join it by going to www.cccyclists.org

Lower end/Commuter Bicycles – If you just want to ride bicycles for fun, like around campus, this is probably the best places to go:

- **Krank it Up** – open community bike shop. For a small donation you can actually build up your own bicycle.
- **Green Bicycle Project** - <http://thegreenbicycleproject.org/> These guys rebuild bicycles and sell back to you for cheap!