

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.

Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

Comfy Bikes for Older Riders

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200828

Dear Savvy Senior,

I saw your Today Show segment last month on popular bicycles for baby boomers and wanted to find out where I can find the list of bikes you talked about. Also, what makes a good bike for baby boomers?

Easy Rider

Dear Easy,

Fun, fitness and easy on the joints are the reasons more and more baby boomers are turning to cycling than ever before. But what makes a good bike for boomers? While there are lots of hard-core, 50-plus cyclists out there, most older riders are more interested in a leisurely ride on the comfy side. Here's what you should know.

Comfort Bikes

Ask many bike owners why their bicycle is gathering dust in the garage and they'll tell you it's uncomfortable to ride. Who wouldn't be turned off by a contraption that routinely bruises your bottom side, causes carpal tunnel syndrome and leads to neck and back pain? That's why manufacturers such as Schwinn, Electra, Sun, Raleigh, GT, Giant, and Trek are making a line of "comfort" bikes that are feel-good alternatives to the high-performance road bikes and nubby-tired mountain bikes.

Comfort bikes let you sit upright which eases lower-back strain. They come with bigger tires that ensure a smooth ride, have raised, swept-back handlebars to reduce pressure on the wrists and hands and offer oversized seats to eliminate saddle soreness.

Some comfort bikes also come with suspension (shock absorbing) seat posts and/or forks connecting to the front tire to help ease your ride. And some offer unique design features like an ultra low step-over bar that makes getting on and off easy for people with limited flexibility (See the Biria EZ Board www.biria.com) or the "flat-foot" design offered by many manufacturers that lets you literally put your feet down flat while seated - a great safety feature for older riders. And Trek, Raleigh and Giant all offer bikes with the Shimano Coasting system which is an automatic three-speed shifter that changes the gears for you - ideal for boomers who haven't ridden in a while. Costs will range from between \$400 to \$800 or more depending on its features.

Keep in mind, though, that what you gain in ease when you ride a comfort or cruise bike, you lose in performance. The upright position is not exactly aerodynamic or ideal when it comes to getting the most leverage from your legs. So forget about these bikes if you have a need for speed or if you want to do some off-road riding on a bumpy mountain path. Comfort bikes are for pleasure/fitness rides around town, running errands, and generally to have fun.

Other Options

If the comfort bikes don't strike your fancy, some other boomer-friendly bike types you might want to consider include:

Recumbent - These are the odd-looking, low-to-the-ground, stretched-out frame bikes that allow you to recline with your legs positioned in front of you. Recumbents are very comfy, easy on the back and aerodynamic which make them ideal for long rides and touring. (See www.sunbicycles.com for a nice variety) The disadvantages: because they are low-to-the-ground, they are harder to balance and maneuver and are more difficult for other vehicles to see. Also see www.day6bicycles.com for a fantastic semi-recumbent bike.

Trike - If you worry about falling or want more stability when you ride get a trike (three-wheel bicycle). Recumbents also come in three wheel versions.

Tandem - If you plan to ride, primarily with your spouse or another partner, consider purchasing a tandem bike that both riders can pedal at the same rate.

Folding - For boomers who like to travel, folding bikes have become very popular. Dahon (www.dahon.com) offers the best variety including the user-friendly Ciao 8, that offers a variety of ergonomic features including a low step-through frame.

Savvy Tip - To see the list of boomer-friendly bikes I featured on the Today Show go to www.savvysenior.org/today.htm.