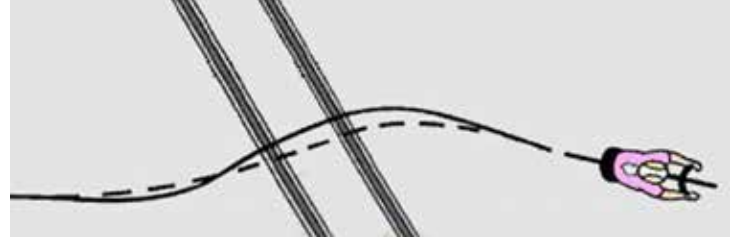


Crossing Railroad Tracks at a Right Angle

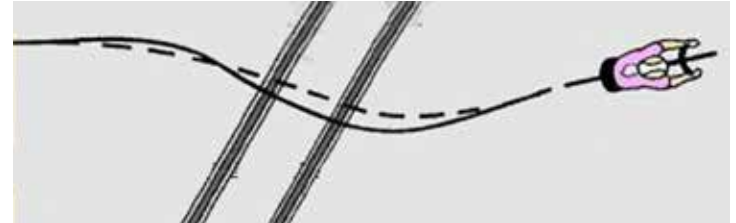
The black dotted line indicates the travel of the rear wheel.

The important point is to have your front wheel cross the tracks at a right angle to avoid it becoming caught in the space between the rail and the pavement.



The sharper the angle of the tracks, the more you will need to move out to cross them safely.

If there are more than one set of tracks, you may need to make this maneuver separately for each set.



To avoid conflicts with other vehicles (bikes or motorized vehicles) you need to not cross tracks alongside any others if that can be avoided.

Tell bicyclists to cross single file.

If motorized vehicles are behind you, take the center of the lane well in advance of the tracks to control where you need to go safely.

You should not be on the far right side with no room to maneuver.

The link below is to a good example showing safe procedure for crossing tracks.

<https://vimeo.com/47915116>

Credit to American Bicycling Education Association and Keri Caffrey.

Once you have learned how to properly cross railroad tracks you should be able to avoid an accident like the one in the video below.

<https://vimeo.com/144582196>

For more discussion on how to address railroad tracks safely, review the Safe Cycling Practices, Section V.A. on our website.

Crossing Railroad Tracks Step-By-Step

When approaching railroad tracks, you have two goals in mind:

- A.** To preferably cross the tracks with no bikes or other vehicles beside you. You may need to do some quick maneuvering to follow the safest path for your bike; if another vehicle is next to you, that can be difficult.
- B.** To avoid your wheels getting caught in the rut between the track and pavement. You want to cross as close to a right angle as possible.

1. When you see tracks ahead, check for traffic in the rear. If you are riding with others, let them know you should ride single file across the tracks to allow for any lateral moves each may need to make. If motorized traffic is very near, let them pass and cross first.



2. Signal that you are moving left in the lane, then move over toward the center of the lane. You need to be able to maneuver left or right depending on track angle and conditions. Also, by being in the center of the lane, you deter others from passing you.



3. Prepare to cross the tracks so your front wheel crosses at a right angle. Sometimes this means you move far out into the center of the road, near the centerline; other times this means you start on the right but must move to the left to cross safely.



4. Cross the tracks at a right angle, or as close to that as you can maneuver. Some tracks are tricky and make that difficult. You want to avoid your front wheel getting caught in the rut between tracks.



5. Rough tracks need to be treated like any other rough surface - stand on your pedals to ride through the rough spots with control. Keep a firm grip on your handlebars.



6. After crossing the tracks, resume your normal lane position as needed for the road you are riding.

A note about vehicles passing you on tracks.

If you “take the lane” early enough you can keep most drivers from passing you on the tracks. Still, many will pass you (illegally), posing great danger to you and any oncoming vehicles. This is their choice - if you do what is safest for you and they choose to pass anyway, you still have done what is safest for you.

