

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Balance bikes are a brilliant way to help your child get ready to pedal. Any bike can be turned into a balance bike by removing the pedals. This section includes simple instructions on how to do it yourself.

The following activities will help your child to explore their community and experience the freedom that a bike gives at an early age.

These games can be adapted by you and your child and they can be repeated once they are pedalling.

Try taking all these skills out on a ride round your park or to the shops. What can you practise while you are out and about?

At the end of this set of games there are challenges to complete, then you will be ready to have a go at the next set: Skills 2 Ride - Pedals. Let's go!



Skills 2 Ride - Balance

The Skills 2 Ride - Balance games and their focus are:

- **Wibble wobble** – I can lift my feet up and balance.
- **Scoot, stride and glide** – I can scoot, stride and glide.
- **Speed it up and slow it down** – I can speed up and slow down.
- **Box the lot** – I can scoot and/or stride and stop accurately.
- **Criss cross** – I can scoot or stride in different directions.
- **Dot to dot** – I can scoot or stride changing direction and stop.
- **I spy** – I can scoot and stride and look forwards.
- **Scoot and limbo** – I can glide and duck.

There are short videos showing each of these games in action on readysetride.co.uk



These materials have been developed jointly by British Cycling and the Youth Sport Trust. The activities can be delivered by any responsible adult who feels confident to use them, but they are not designed for the running of formal coaching sessions unless the person overseeing those sessions holds a relevant qualification.

Creating a safe space in which to carry out any activity is important and if at any time you feel that an activity is not within your capability and safety may be compromised then you should stop the activity immediately. Please contact the British Cycling education team if you have any concerns.

The rider

Do you want to learn to ride a bike?

Have a go at all these games and try to get your family to do it with you!

We will help you to pedal a bike all on your own and then get really good so you can explore on your bike and go on really fun bike rides.

Parents and families

We want you to be the one to help your child learn to ride a bike.

There is no rush to do any of this; your child will learn at their own speed. Don't compare them to others.

Whether you are a mad keen cyclist, haven't ridden for years or haven't had the chance to learn yourself, these games and guides will help to break everything down into easy-to-follow steps.

Playing with more than one rider?

All of the games can be played with a group of children, where it's easy to scale up for a group of friends, whole class, or perhaps a Brownie or Cubs pack.

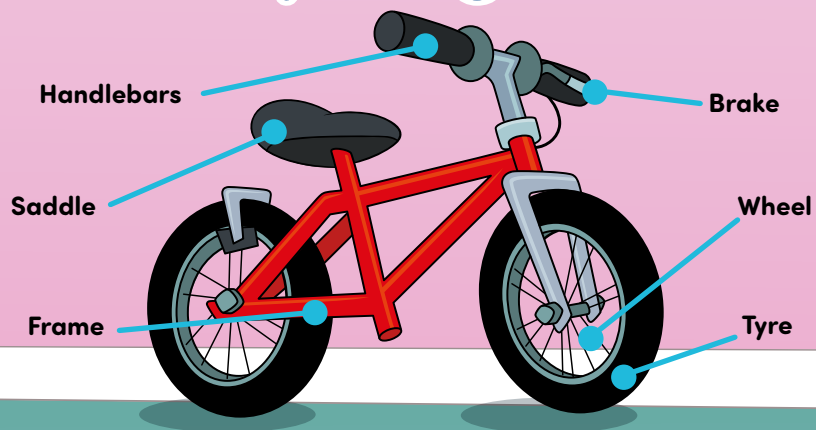
Remember, you can organise a large group into small groups, playing different games and rotating around. Learning together is often even more fun!

Families can easily make up a group; it isn't always about children of the same age together, and we bet that there are games in here that any adult would find a challenge!



Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Getting set up and ready to go



Setting up your bike

Setting the seat and handlebar height is important to get your child in the best position for riding. On most bikes you can adjust the height of the seat and the handlebars. You may need some tools for this; either an allen key or spanner.

The handlebars should be set at a height that allows your child to be in full control; just above belly button height when sitting on the saddle is a good guide. If the handlebars are too high or too close to the body then it makes turning and balancing much harder to master.

For activities on a balance bike, your child should be able to place the balls of their feet on the floor when sitting on it. There should also be a slight bend in their knees.

Turning a pedal bike into a balance bike

This saves you having to buy two bikes. All you have to do is take the pedals off!

This is easy to do. You need an adjustable spanner or one of the right size (15mm) with a long handle.

Remember the simple 'back off' rule to take the pedals off; turn the spanner towards the back of the bike to take the pedals off.

Don't do them up too tightly again but make sure they are nice and firm.

If you don't have the tools, most bike shops will do this for you for a small fee or free.

Balance bike check

Things to check before you ride:

- ✓ **The tyres are firm and full of air.**
- ✓ **If the balance bike has brakes, check they work and stop the bike from moving.**
- ✓ **The handlebars don't wobble.**
- ✓ **The bike seat is not moving at all and is done up tightly.**

If your bike needs a bit of fixing, a family member may be able to help. If not, there are friendly mechanics working in bike shops.



Watch the video!

You can find out more at readysetrider.co.uk/doyouknow.

Getting set up and ready to go

Helmet and clothing check

Wearing a helmet is a personal choice for your family. While we recommend that you and your children use one while on a bike, do make sure it fits properly. If not, a helmet can be uncomfortable to wear and your children may push it out of place, high on their forehead.



Check there is no more than two fingers' width between the eyebrows and the front of the helmet.

Check that the chin strap is tight; two fingers should fit comfortably between the strap and the chin.



Check that the strap forms a V around the ear on both sides. Shake the head – the helmet shouldn't wobble.



When it is cold, consider some well-fitting warm gloves with grippy palms. Hands get cold very quickly on a bike, and that is no fun. Wrap up warm! A well tucked-in scarf is a good idea to keep out draughts. Longer thick socks are great for toasty toes and can double up for tucking trousers into, keeping them out of the way of chains and spokes!

Getting on and off a bike



Off

- Hold the handlebars and squeeze the brakes (if the bike has brakes).
- Place both feet flat on the floor and stand up.
- Bend one leg slightly and lean the bike slightly towards the bent leg.
- Lift your other leg, swinging it over the back of the bike and bike seat to reach the other side.
- Practise this several times to build confidence.

On

- Hold the bike handlebars from the side, squeezing the brakes (if the bike has brakes).
- Lean the bike slightly towards your body and lift your leg nearest the bike.
- Bend your standing leg slightly while your other leg is lifted and swing it over the back of the bike seat to reach the other side.

You can make it into a fun game by playing musical bikes together, getting on and off the bike as the music stops. Try getting on and off on both sides!

1 Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Wibble wobble

Sit up tall

Knees up high



✓ Now I can...
Lift my feet up
and balance

Things you may need

- Nothing!

Let's go!

- Sit on the bike.
- Walk feet out to the sides as wide as possible using small steps, keeping upper body and bike still.
- Walk feet back in and repeat.
- Try running on the spot while seated.

Safety

- Ensure individuals play to their own level.
- Ensure there is space either side in case of loss of balance.

Easier

- Take smaller steps outwards and inwards.
- Keep feet closer to the bike.

Harder

- Place a bean bag on your head while playing.
- Try up, up and away (see over).



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Swipe and swap and Step it up games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Wibble wobble

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

Why should you use small steps when walking feet out to the side in this game?



Social Me

Why is it good to ask for help if you are struggling to balance during this game?



Healthy Me

Which parts of this game do you enjoy most and why?



Physical Me

What can you do with your body to keep it from wobbling?



Creative Me

How can you set yourself a challenge when playing this?

What else are riders learning from the wibble wobble game?

- ✓ Listening skills
- ✓ Making judgements

- ✓ Self-challenge

If playing with a group

Play in a larger space.

Play in pairs opposite each other, one leading the other, copying.

Create a challenge:

Who can balance for the longest without putting their foot down?



Out and about

Try both these games when stationary, waiting at school, in the park or garden.

Next: Up, up and away

- Try lifting both feet up at the same time and see how long you can balance for, when hearing "Up, up and away", with knees bent and lifted upwards. Balance for as long as possible with the bike still stationary.

2

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Scoot, stride and glide

✓ Now I can...
Scoot, stride and glide

Feet up high

Tuck feet in



Things you may need

- Chalk, jumper, water bottle as glide line marker.

Safety

- Start slowly and build up speed.
- Ensure there is plenty of room for stopping.

Easier

- Choose when to glide by not using the glide line.
- Use a small downward slope to help with movement.

Harder

- Use a wiggly route.
- Increase the distance to the start and try and go faster.

Let's go!

- Mark a 'glide start' point.
- Scoot or stride towards the 'glide start' point.
- On reaching the start, lift feet from the ground and glide as far as possible.



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Stamp and slide and Swipe and swap games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.

Scoot, stride and glide

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

Why do we practise going from striding and then to gliding?



Social Me

How can you celebrate getting better?



Healthy Me

Which joints do you use when scooting and striding?



Physical Me

What can you do with your body to help you to glide for longer?



Creative Me

What else could we use to show when to start gliding?

What else are riders learning from the scoot, stride and glide game?

- ✓ Listening skills
- ✓ Planning

- ✓ Perseverance
- ✓ Observation

If playing with a group

Play in pairs alongside each other.

Set out a course with a number of glide points for riders to start gliding.

Allow riders to travel around and use a verbal cue for riders to start the glide phase.

Create a challenge:

Who can glide the furthest?

Out and about

Go out in the rain and glide through puddles without getting your feet wet.



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Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Speed it up and slow it down

✓ Now I can...
Speed up and slow down

Heels first,
little steps

Slower



Things you may need

- Jumpers or water bottles (for creating a circular route).

Safety

- Leave space between riders if in a group.

Let's go!

- Travel in a line or in a circle.
- Set off slowly, following instructions:
 - "Faster" – use the ball of the foot and take big strides.
 - "Slower" – heel first, use little steps.
 - "Stop" – use both feet or squeeze brakes gently to carefully come to a standstill.

Easier

- Practise one instruction and stop before trying the next.

Harder

- Reduce the gap between giving the instructions.
- Add additional instructions such as 'glide' where both feet are lifted up.



READY SET RIDE



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Twist and pass and Step it up games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.



Speed it up and slow it down

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

When might you change speeds when cycling?



Social Me

Why is listening carefully when playing important?



Healthy Me

Which muscles are you using when you play this game?



Physical Me

What do you need to do with your legs when riding at different speeds, and why?



Creative Me

Where might be a good place to practise this game?

What else are riders learning from the speed it up and slow it down game?

- ✓ Listening skills
- ✓ Following instructions
- ✓ Perseverance
- ✓ Decision making

If playing with a group

Create lanes for riders to travel up and down.
Create a large circle if space allows for riders to travel around.

Create a challenge:

Who listens carefully and responds correctly?

Out and about

Can you speed up and slow down between lamp posts or trees when you are next out on your bike?



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Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Box the lot

Look where you'll stop



Think about slowing down before stopping

Let's go!

- Mark a large box and/or square shape on the ground.
- Scoot or stride towards the box in a straight line.
- Stop in the box by putting both feet down on the ground or by using the brakes.

✓ Now I can...
Scoot and/or stride
and stop accurately

Things you may need

- Chalk, tape to create the box shapes, water bottles, yoghurt pots to mark out four corners of the square.



Safety

- Ensure there is enough space beyond the box for riders who don't stop inside it.
- Be careful when surface is gravel or wet.

Easier

- Make the box bigger.
- Travel slowly.

Harder

- Make the box smaller.
- Increase speed.



READY SET RIDE



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Swipe and swap and Step it up games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.



Box the lot

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

Why is it important to be able to stop accurately when cycling?



Social Me

Why is it important to follow instructions when playing this game?



Healthy Me

How can practice help you to improve?



Physical Me

What can you do to help you stop more accurately?



Creative Me

How else could you mark out the box shape?

What else are riders learning from the box the lot game?

- ✓ Decision making
- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Spatial awareness

If playing with a group

Create a number of box shapes and play in small groups, taking turns to enter the box and stop accurately.

Create a course with boxes throughout, for riders to follow and stop accurately in each box. Consider numbers of riders on each course.

Create a challenge:

Create different sized boxes with points chalked inside – the smaller the box, the higher the points. Which team or pair scores the most points based on accuracy?

Out and about

When out on your bike choose something to stop on and go for it!



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Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Criss cross

Look where you want to go

Let's go!

- Create four corner marks.
- Create wiggly lines between the four corners so that they cross over in places.
- Scoot and/or stride along the lines trying to visit all four corners.



✓ Now I can...
Scoot or stride
in different directions

Things you may need

- Chalk or other items to mark a line e.g. leaves, clothing and water bottles.

Safety

- Ensure lines have enough space in between.

Easier

- Create a wiggly line between two points.
- Travel slowly.

Harder

- Use lines that cross.
- Use instructions to change the speed of the rider.



READY SET RIDE



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Stamp and slide and Fingers and thumbs games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.



Criss cross

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

When might you need to follow a different line than planned?



Social Me

When the lines cross, how can you communicate with other riders?



Healthy Me

What happens to your breathing during this game and why?



Physical Me

What can you do with your body to help you go around the bends on the lines?



Creative Me

What can you use to create a wiggly line?

What else are riders learning from the criss cross game?

- ✓ Decision making
- ✓ Observation

- ✓ Spatial awareness
- ✓ Directional language

If playing with a group

Create more lines in a larger area.

Play in small groups, each with their own game space and lines to follow. Let them follow and lead each other along the wiggly lines.

Create a challenge:

Who can visit all four corners safely first?



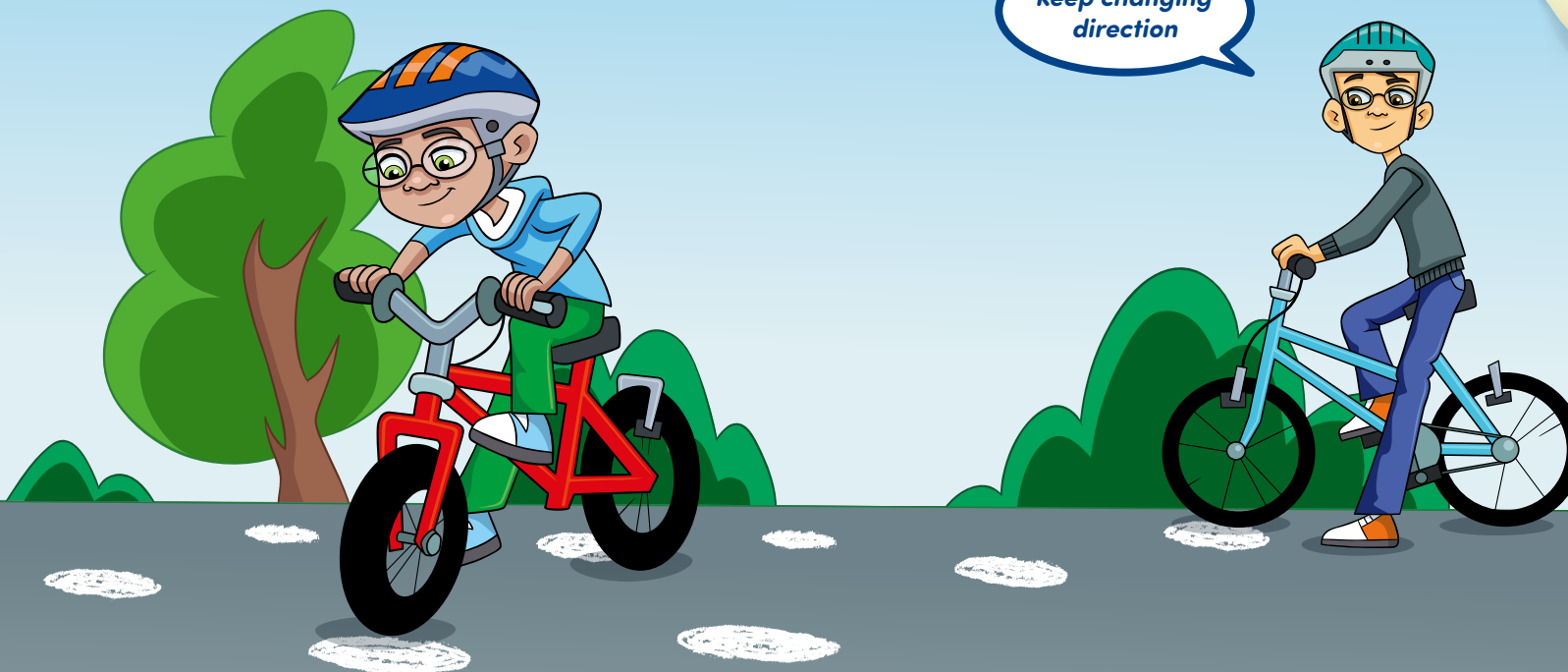
Out and about

When in the park, try scooting in and out of trees and around different objects.

6

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Dot to dot



✓ **Now I can...**
Scoot or stride, change directions and stop

Things you may need

- Chalk, grass marker, paper plates.

Safety

- Be aware of other riders.
- Be careful when surface is gravel or wet.

Easier

- Use bigger dots.
- Increase space between dots.

Harder

- Use smaller dots.
- Use lines to stop on, changing instruction to "On the line".
- Mix instructions between "On the line" and "On the dot" to add decision making.

Let's go!

- Mark dots on the ground around the area.
- Scoot and/or stride around until hearing the instruction "On the dot".
- Scoot and/or stride towards a dot and stop with the front wheel accurately on it.
- Try stopping on different dots each time.



READY SET RIDE



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Fingers and thumbs and Jump games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.



Dot to dot

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

How can you get better next time?



Social Me

Why is it important to have patience when playing this game?



Healthy Me

Why do we breathe faster when we are playing this game?



Physical Me

What do you need to do with your feet to stop accurately?



Creative Me

What other shapes could you draw to stop on?

What else are riders learning from the dot to dot game?

- ✓ Shapes
- ✓ Reviewing

- ✓ Spatial awareness

If playing with a group

Create more dots in a larger area.

Play in smaller zoned areas with small groups.

If in limited space, play in pairs – one rides and stops on a dot when instructed, leaves the area and their partner takes over. Repeat.

Introduce instructions for stopping with the front wheel or the back wheel on a dot, and award points for accuracy.

Create a challenge:

Who can collect the most points?

Out and about

When out riding, aim to stop on cracks or lines on paving stones or on leaves in the park.



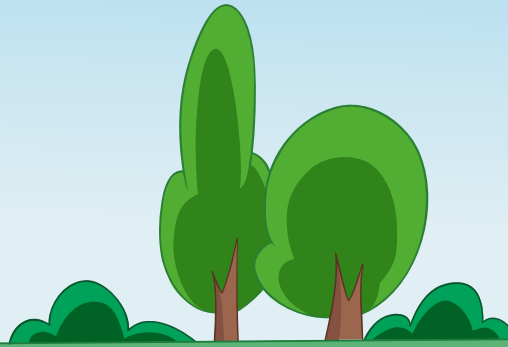
7 Skills 2 Ride - Balance

I spy

Look ahead



Think about your steering



✓ Now I can...
Scoot and/or stride
and look forwards

Things you may need

- Coloured paper or card, coloured clothing.

Safety

- Avoid standing in the line of the rider when holding up colours.

Easier

- Use one colour to start with.
- Use bigger coloured signs.

Harder

- Create a slalom route.
- Make the rider look behind them.
- Adult holds up fingers on a hand and the rider calls out how many they can see.

Let's go!

- Player 1: Stand at the end of the cycle pathway.
- Player 2: Scoot and/or stride towards a partner, and call out the colour(s) they are holding up.

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

I spy

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

How can you ensure you see the coloured signals?



Social Me

Why could it be important to take turns holding up the colours?



Healthy Me

Why is being active important?



Physical Me

How can you keep your shoulders relaxed when cycling?



Creative Me

What could be used instead of colours?

What else are riders learning from the I spy game?

- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Communication

- ✓ Colours

If playing with a group

Create more than one lane.

The signal maker stands between two channels and holds up colours in both hands – one for each channel.

Ride in a circular route and hold up different coloured objects that all riders should shout out when they see it.

Out and about

When you're out, agree what you will look out for and then call out when you see one, such as road signs or road names.



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Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Scoot and limbo



✓ Now I can...
Glide and duck

Things you may need

- Twig, metre ruler, cane.

Safety

- Make sure the barrier is not fixed in place.

Easier

- Try the action without a barrier.
- Travel slowly in a straight line to the barrier.
- Raise the barrier.

Harder

- Travel faster.
- Approach from an angle.
- Lower the barrier.

Let's go!

- Create a limbo barrier for riders to duck under. Stick out an arm, hold a long twig.
- Scoot and/or stride towards the limbo barrier and glide as you get nearer.
- Move the body into a position low enough to glide under the barrier.



Watch the video!

You can see this activity in action at readysetrider.co.uk/balance.



If you need more help with this game

Try the Swipe and swap and Jump games from the Prepare 2 Ride activities.

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Scoot and limbo

The following questions can help riders develop their knowledge, understanding and cycling skills. Great for use in the home or at school!



Thinking Me

What do you need to do with your body before you reach the limbo barrier and why?



Social Me

How can you let the limbo barrier holder know you are ready to go?



Healthy Me

How does it feel when you successfully duck under the limbo barrier?



Physical Me

What different upper body positions could help you duck under the barrier?



Creative Me

When might you need to duck down when out cycling?

What else are riders learning from the scoot and limbo game?

- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Judgement

- ✓ Reflecting
- ✓ Turn taking

If playing with a group

Play in small groups with additional adults.

Create a circular pathway to the limbo barrier for riders to travel along.

Give a 'duck' instruction for all to practise every time someone ducks under the limbo barrier.

Create a challenge:

Who shows great resilience?



Out and about

Try ducking under branches when out or just practise the action without a barrier as you travel along.

Skills 2 Ride - Balance

Challenges

The following challenges need to be achieved before progressing to the next stage, Skills 2 Ride - Pedals.

Have a go and remember that you can use the games in this pack again to help you develop the skills needed.

Now I can...

Lift my feet up and balance



I can lift both my feet up from the floor with my knees bent when seated and stationary on my balance bike and return them to the ground without tilting to the side.

Have a go at the Wibble wobble game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Scoot, stride and glide



I can scoot and then glide for three metres.

Have a go at the Scoot, stride and glide game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Speed up and slow down



I can scoot or stride slowly and quickly by changing speeds.

Have a go at the Speed it up, slow it down game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Scoot or stride and stop accurately

- I can scoot or stride, slow down and stop accurately five consecutive times in a marked space approximately 3 x 3m.
Have a go at the Box the lot game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Scoot or stride in different directions

- I can scoot or stride following a wiggly line.
Have a go at the Criss cross game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Scoot or stride changing directions, and stop

- I can change direction while scooting/striding, stopping safely and accurately.
Have a go at the Dot to dot game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Scoot or stride and look forwards

- I can travel forwards and look in the direction of travel for 10 metres.
Have a go at the I spy game to help you to achieve this.

Now I can...

Glide and duck

- I can scoot or stride, adopt the correct body position, glide and duck under a 'barrier' safely with control three times.
Have a go at the Scoot and limbo game to help you to achieve this.

Once you have completed the challenges, your certificate awaits!
Log on and register on readysetrider.co.uk. You will then be ready to have a go at the next set, Skills 2 Ride - Pedals.