Bicycle Security

Don't be a loser! In Greater London about 80,000 bicycles were stolen in 2006 and fewer than 5 per cent of these were returned to their owners. Follow the golden rules below to reduce the risk of theft and increase the chances of recovering your bike if it's stolen.

Register your bike
Register your bicycle model, make and frame number at www.immobilise.com. This information will give the police a much better chance of recovering your bike if it's stolen. The Immobilise National Property Register already holds the details of thousands of bikes. Add your details now to help make your bike safer and reduce bicycle crime.

Lock your bike
If you can store your cycle inside your home or office - especially overnight - this may be the safest option. (Many insurance companies will only cover you if you store your cycle inside overnight). The next best option will normally be special secure home or office indoor cycle parking areas.

Where should you secure your bike?
• When parking on the street it is generally best to use cycle parking stands. Avoid using "street furniture" as these may be removed by Local Authorities. Keep in mind that some posts lift out of the ground, while cycles can be lifted off shorter posts like parking regulation signs and parking meters.

• Ensure you are not blocking pavements for other users and that you are not using fixtures that have signs asking you not to secure your cycle to them (or it may be removed/double locked).

• It is always best to lock your cycle where it will be visible so that thieves will have less opportunity to steal or vandalise it. Avoid hiding your cycle away out of public view, which gives the thieves the time and privacy to steal it.

• Multi-storey car parks in the city often provide free cycle parking which can potentially offer greater security than on-street parking.

UCL Bicycle Procedures

• Please remember to dismount from your bicycle when entering UCL Campus property. The Riding of Bicycles on the UCL Campus is not permitted.

• Always park your bike in a designated bicycle area, using the bicycle stands provided.

• When parking your Bicycle on UCL Property please ensure that you do not park your bike on Railings, pathways or stairways. Please also ensure that you do not park your bike next to or blocking Fire exits. If you do so this may result in your bicycle being removed by the Security Department.

• If you find you have any issues with bicycle thefts or you have any other Security related Concerns please contact the Security Department on Extension: 32108 for enquiries

          Extension: 222 in an Emergency

How should you secure your bike?
Always lock your frame and both wheels to an immovable object.

Take all accessories and easily removable parts with you, and be aware that quick release levers can make seats and wheels very easy to remove. You may need to take these with you or lock them with the bike if you have not replaced quick releases with a normal nut and bolt or specialised locking nut and bolt.

Use a good quality lock. The lock you choose should reflect the circumstances you will be locking your cycle under. The less secure the location the tougher the lock needs to be. Good advice is to spend at least 20% of the value of your cycle on a lock and preferably use two different types of lock if you are leaving your cycle for any length of time.

When using a chain to lock your cycle avoid laying it against the ground or against walls as thieves can smash the chains against these. Instead lock the chain high up around your bicycle and what you are locking to.
When using D locks (sometimes called U locks):

- Attach your frame and back wheel (optionally taking off the front wheel or include this too) to the immobile object you are locking to so you leave a minimum of space between these. This stops thieves inserting bars or jacks into the space and leveraging them open.
- Buy as small a D lock as is practicable to fit around what you are locking up.
- Position the lock opening facing down so it is harder to pour substances into the lock (these can be used to eat the lock away or to glue the lock up so you can't get it open and thieves can come along later to force it open).

What locks should you use?
Lock strength can vary enormously and you generally get what you pay for. Essentially any lock can be broken, but having a lock will definitely deter opportunistic thieves and using more than one type of lock will make stealing your bike even harder.

There is a three-tier security grading system developed by Sold Secure (a non-profit making company which assesses security products) and used by many insurance companies.

At the highest level are the Gold rated locking devices. These give you maximum security but may be too bulky or expensive for the average user. The Silver and Bronze levels may be lighter and cheaper but should still offer defence against the opportunist thief. When deciding which lock to buy you need to consider how much your cycle is worth, where you will be leaving it, and how often and for how long it will be left unattended.

D lock/U lock
These are rigid steel locks in a D or U shape, generally very heavy and tough looking, though the actual strength can vary and is normally reflected in the price you pay. D locks are by no means thief-proof and are best used in combination with another form of lock.

Cable locks
Cables can vary enormously in weight and strength. They are more flexible so can be used in situations where a D lock might not fit, but cheap versions are very easily cut through. Some heavier versions are Gold listed through the Sold Secure scheme. Thinner cables are useful in combination with other locks to secure parts like wheels or your saddle so that you don't need to remove them every time you leave your bike. Thinner cables should not, however, be relied on as the sole locking device.

Chains and padlocks
These can be heavy and awkward to cart around, but a good quality hardened heavy-duty chain combined with a couple of very good hardened padlocks may be the
strongest option available. If you need to leave your cycle locked up outside somewhere regularly you might consider leaving your chain locked there permanently (though please keep in mind inconvenience to other users).

**Click locks**
These are fixed to the bike near your seat post. These lock your rear wheel to the frame itself, this stops someone simply riding away on your bike. These locks should definitely only be used in combination with another good lock, so you can lock your bike to a secure immovable object.

**Locking nuts to replace quick release mechanism**
It is worth replacing your quick release mechanisms, which make it as easy for thieves to remove your seat or wheels as it is for you, with a safer alternative. You can use ordinary nuts and bolts which can be undone with a spanner or shifter, or nuts and bolts which fit allen keys, or you can get special locking nuts which can only be undone with a specially designed version of an allen key which is sold with the bolt. If you don't feel confident doing this yourself (some bikes will be more straightforward than others) then you should go to a bike shop to get these fitted, it is important that they are correctly fitted as you don't want your wheels coming loose as you ride along!

**Lock Tips**

- When not in use, cable locks can be wrapped around the seat post. D-locks normally have special attachments to fit them to the frame, or they can be carried on a rear rack. This frees up space on the frame for other accessories
- Keep your spare key in a safe place - you'll need it should your keys be lost or stolen
- Keep a note of your key number (this number will either be on the key or come with your lock when you buy it) so you can replace it if all else fails
- Some lock manufacturers offer warranties to replace the lock if your cycle is stolen while locked with their lock. You may have to register and pay for the service.

**Get Insured**
An easy way to do this is to extend your home contents insurance to cover your bicycle - but make sure it covers you for thefts outside the home too. If your bicycle is particularly valuable you may need to insure it separately.

Wording and advice sourced from the City of London Police.