One of my favorite activities is biking. I am not crazy about riding with cars on the road but riding on trails is great. Taking in nature as I pedal along is relaxing and gives exercise at the same time.

Two years ago I started back riding after taking a ten year break. On my first few rides I went into some gears that should be avoided due to the stress they put on the chain. It is always good to have reminders of how to shift on a bike.

Many people wonder how many gears are enough. As long as you have a low enough gear to climb the toughest hills you climb and a high enough gear that you can continue to pedal going down gentle inclines you have enough gears. The more gears the bike has the closer the steps between those gears may be but this is not always true. Take bikes on test rides. Climb a steep hill and pedal down a gentle incline. Go through the gears to see which one has the range that you like best.

Do not forget that you must be pedaling for the bike to shift gears. However, change to easier gears before you need to for smoother shifts. Change to an easier gear before stopping so that starting off will be much more pleasant for you and your bike. It is difficult to change gears and is bad for your bike when you are cranking away on the pedals in a gear that is too hard.

Below is an example of the gears that should be used if you have an 8 speed (24 speed). The first number is the chain ring on the front and the second number is the cog wheel/sprocket/gear on the rear. The shifter for your back sprocket/gear is usually at your right hand and will be used most.

An 8 speed bike does not have 24 gear choices as are sometimes believed. Keeping the chain in a fairly straight line is important when changing gears. Notice that the 8 speed (24 speed) is really about a 13 speed.

1 front small chain ring (for climbing hills)- 1 easiest or biggest sprocket

1-2

1-3

1-4

2 front middle chain ring (for mostly flat riding)-2

2-3

2-4

2-5

2-6

3-5

3-6

3-7

3 largest chain ring (going downhill)-8 hardest or smallest sprocket