

Group Riding vs. Pace Line Riding (see [Group Riding and Pace Lines](#))

- **Group Riding** consists of two or more riders traveling in a **loose group (i.e. spaced several feet apart) who are NOT primarily intending to draft**.
 - Depending on the size of the group, riders can receive some benefit of drafting up to six feet (about one bicycle length) from the rider in front of them.
 - Riders generally are spaced at least one bicycle length (C/D/E/F Rides) to one wheel width (C+/B Rides).
 - Riders may (at Ride Leader's discretion and stated time/distance duration) rotate being the front rider.
 - When conditions permit, cyclists can safely ride two across (max) and carry on a conversation or when in single file make comments to the riders immediately in front or in back of them.
- **Pace Line Riding** consists of two or more riders traveling in a **tight group in the draft** of the rider(s) in front of them, regardless of speed.
 - For Sussex Cyclists B/B+ and A Group Rides, the group MAY ride as a Pace Line **SOLELY at Ride Leader's discretion, with sensitivity to riders' skills, their familiarity with other riders in group and road/weather conditions** (see [Ride Speed Categories](#)).
 - Riders generally are spaced no more than one half a wheel width apart.
 - Riders usually rotate at short intervals (as proscribed by Ride Leader) being the lead (front) rider.
 - Riders minimize chatter so they are concentrating on ride safety and listening for voice signals.
- **Core Skills and Etiquette in Preparation for Pace Line Riding**
 - Constantly pedal with a minimal amount of coasting (so as not to drift back).
 - Avoid wheel overlapping and practice skills to maintain constant spacing between your front wheel and the rear wheel of the rider in front of you while moving (e.g. lightly feathering your brake while pedaling, shifting into a higher/easier gear, creating wind resistance while in line, moving off line).
 - Do not stare at the wheel of the rider in front of you – be aware of what is happening in front of you by looking over riders' shoulders so you see arm signals for direction changes or pointing out road hazards.
 - Never suddenly slow or stop without first signaling by voice.
 - Learn when and when not to give hand or verbal signals.
 - Learn to ride without distractions (e.g. put your bike computer and phone in your jersey pockets).
- **Basics for Pace Line Riding** (in addition to preparation skills above – see also [Pace Lining Checklist](#))
 - Always check for traffic and road hazards and use the signal proscribed by the Ride Leader before you move off line.
 - Rotate off the front of the pace line at a maximum time/distance interval proscribed by the Ride Leader.
 - Maintain your speed or slightly accelerate as you move off line; once you have cleared the rider in back of you, pull off the front and decrease your speed by pedaling in a higher (easier) gear and move to the back of the pace line (or in front of riders who are not rotating) as soon as safely possible.
 - As you approach the rear of the pace line, adjust gear and cadence to match the speed of the group and wait for a verbal signal “last” (from last rider) or “ok” from riders not rotating.
 - Give appropriate hand and/or verbal signals four or more seconds in advance.
 - Pass hand signals down the pace line and verbal signals up and down the pace line from rider to rider.
 - Minimize wheel overlap (except when in an echelon formation); carefully pull out of line if necessary to create a safe amount of space between wheels if you are overtaking the rider in front of you.
 - Try to save drinking, eating or taking a gel to when you are in the rear of the pace line. Never drink if you are the lead or second rider and if you need to drink while otherwise in the pace line, pull out of line and hand signal when you are ready to get back in line.
 - Unless safety dictates otherwise, make all movements on your bike smooth, small and predictable.