

The right clothing can make a difference in winter

Winter cycling and the wind chill can be a problem. Your head, hands and feet will suffer most, and that is where the specialist clothing comes in according to former mountain bike champion Jonny McBain.

Depending on what type of cycling you are doing, general outdoor clothing will suffice if you are going out to do a few miles and your are only on the bike for around 30 minutes.

When you decide to do a really long cycle, that is where specific clothing comes into play, according to Jonny, a long-established retailer.

He said: "You can get gloves, shoes, socks, and a whole array of other body apparel plus something which can sit under your helmet. It is all about keeping warm.

"Naturally, you want your clothing to fit correctly. Remember, when you are cycling you are in a weird position. When you stand up straight cycle clothing may not appear to fit but when you assume the bike position everything falls into place."

Also, in winter, Jonny suggests that stretching exercises are a good idea before setting off on your trip and the owner of Pedal Power in West Calder said: "I would recommend stretching

every time. Go onto YouTube and type in cycle specific stretches and there are pages of them and the material is good stuff."

There are also groups of cyclists who go out regularly. Indeed, Jonny notices them passing his busy shop, particularly at weekends, and joining in could be an advantage. The groups are all ranges and he said: "There are those who are at the top end who have their own goals, the Tour de France men. There are others like club cyclists on a Sunday morning who want to do 20 miles or so and head back home.

"So, there are a wide range of cyclists out there, but roads are a dangerous place. There are big vehicles out there so you have got to have your wits about you, however, the good thing about West Lothian and Edinburgh are the cycle paths. They are all over the place.

"For example, I commuted this morning to my shop and I did not touch a road. My journey was all on cycle paths so I would look to use them if you can. If you have to get on the road then you must be careful.

"There are, of course, courses in road craft but, if you drive a car on the roads, you know the rules of the road."

Maintenance of the bike is important. Should you DIY or bring the bike into a retailer? Jonny argued: "You should know how to do it yourself, 100 per cent. If you brought your bike in for a service to us here then we would run you through what we have done and how we do it.

"In Pedal Power we are all about learning yourself but we recommend bringing your bike in once or twice a year for a thorough going over and deep clean. You need to know what is happening in all the bearings but, as the owner of the bike, you should know how to do a check-over/intermediate service."

PICTURE: selection of shoes and other clothing

