

# How to be a Cycling Flat-Dweller

## Bike storage solutions for individuals & communities



Edinburgh is increasingly a cycling city, and both Spokes and the City of Edinburgh Council want to help more people to cycle more often. For many residents, improving bike storage at home is a necessary first step.

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**The Lothian Cycle Campaign**

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, St. Martin's Centre, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG  
www.spokes.org.uk • Email: [spokes@spokes.org.uk](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk) • Twitter @Spokeslothian

## Factsheet contents:

1. Storage for individuals: bike choice, security, in-flat options
2. Storage at stairwell-level, including back-greens etc
3. Community level storage, e.g. on-street facilities
4. E-bikes and cargo bikes

## Think about:

- Number and type of bikes to be stored
- Bike storage security
- Other spaces that might be used
- Neighbours' opinions
- Permissions needed

# 1. Tackling storage as an individual

## 1.1 Choose a Bike with Storage in Mind

*Think carefully about storage and security when choosing a bike*

- Is it worth spending more on a bike light enough to carry upstairs?
- Would a folding bike meet your needs?
- Will you need to spend a lot on security and storage for an expensive bike stored out of your sight?

## 1.2 Keeping a Bike in Your Flat

*Storing a bike in your flat offers high security*

*Good organisation might fit in more bikes than you'd think*

- There are many different storage fittings – check bike shops, local DIY/hardware stores and online (possible suppliers on back page).
- Consider wall hooks, brackets (some fold back when not in use), ceiling pulleys/hoists, etc to hang bikes. Always follow manufacturers' advice about maximum weights and wall-quality.
- Consider the clearance space needed around the bike (especially handlebars).
- Protect wall/floors from bike dirt.
- Seek landlord permission, if required, before fixing equipment to walls or ceilings, or use free-standing options.



Five bike hanging bike rack © Mottez



© Brompton.com

**A folding bike might be one answer**

### 1.3 If you can't store it in your flat

*A bike stored outside your flat is at greater risk from theft so minimise the temptation*

- Use one or more decent locks, and secure both wheels and frame. Look for the 'Sold Secure' logo. See [www.soldsecure.com](http://www.soldsecure.com)
- Lock to something immovable. Remove items such as saddle, lights and panniers.
- Use stairwell door locks; talk to neighbours about keeping doors shut. Bike thieves find banisters and rails easy to force or cut (and they're expensive to repair).
- If outside, get a waterproof cover to keep off rain and screen the bike from thieves.



© www.cycloc.com

### 1.4 Security advice

Register your bike with the Police and security-mark it, e.g. [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com)

Police Crime Prevention Officers may give further advice - tel 0131 311 3131

More ideas on the Spokes security page: [spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/security](http://spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/security)

**Ceiling and wall racks come in many forms**



© Momentum Magazine



Floor-to-Ceiling aluminum bike rack © Gear Up

## 2. Tackling storage collectively at stair level, inside or out

*Even small storage improvements can improve both bike security and stairwell tidiness, and reduce conflicts with neighbours – as well as encouraging more cycling*

*Obviously cost/security trade-offs, and building regulations, must all be considered too*

### 2.1 Get Organised

*Discuss with neighbours whether stairwell space might be better organised, for bikes and anything else, always keeping fire safety in mind*

*Can you also improve access to exits and back-greens, and make cleaning easier?*

- Discuss use of any other accessible spaces, such as backgreens or cellars.
- Consider creating an Owners' Association for the stair. For ideas on working with neighbours see [edinburgh.gov.uk/sharedrepairs](https://edinburgh.gov.uk/sharedrepairs) (tenement toolkit). Developments (e.g. a bike shed) need unanimity although common repairs only need a simple majority.
- Remove 'dead' or unused bikes that are taking up space (but avoid unintended 'theft'). The Bike Station is a good destination for redundant bikes (click donate button at [thebikestation.org.uk](https://thebikestation.org.uk)).

### 2.2 Fixtures and Fittings which may help, inside or out

- Rings/anchors/bars for locking bikes, secured to wall or floor.
- Wall-mounted brackets or racks (see 'in-flat' solutions above).
- Bike stands, e.g. a 'Sheffield rack', or several joined as a 'toast-rack', fixed or free-standing. Avoid the butterfly-shaped 'wheel-benders'. If outside, consider a cover.
- Lockable containers or sheds - fireproof if possible.

### 2.3 Regulations and permissions (check if fees apply)

- **Building Standards** (search for Building Warrants at [edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk)).  
In stairwells exits must not be obstructed; there must be clear access of at least 800mm; and bikes should be secured so as not to slip. Outdoors a cycle container must not be within 3m of a tenement external wall.
- **Planning permission** (search for Planning Permission at [edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk)).  
We strongly suggest that you follow the advice in the Spokes factsheet, which has been approved as appropriate by the Council. [spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/bike-storage-gardens](https://spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/bike-storage-gardens). There is a planning application fee (currently £105) which is not refunded even if the application is turned down.
- **Listed Building consent** (search for Listed Buildings at [edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk)).  
You may need this if the character or external appearance of a listed building is affected.



**Discuss with neighbours whether space might be used better, for bikes and anything else**

Multiple bike stairwell rack © Tpi Consultancy

**Communal racks have to be strong - avoid poor designs which can bend wheels**



This floor-mounted rack holds six bikes but can be made to other sizes (from various suppliers).  
© [www.cyclehoop.com/product/racks/toast-rack/](http://www.cyclehoop.com/product/racks/toast-rack/)

**Be aware of the constraints posed by Building Standards**

**Choices include hanging bikes, a floor rack, or a bike shed. Different premises will offer different possibilities.**



Outdoor bicycle storage box © [www.trimetals.co.uk/product/metal-bike-storage/](http://www.trimetals.co.uk/product/metal-bike-storage/)



### 3. Community level solutions, beyond the individual tenement

*Even if in-flat, stairwell or back-green storage seem impossible, there is still hope!*

*Talk to your councillors (3 or 4 for each ward - see [edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors](http://edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors)).*

#### 3.1 On-street bike parking

In Edinburgh this is usually 'Edinburgh racks' - a Sheffield rack (inverted U shape) plus a horizontal bar. Frame and wheel can be locked, and it supports bikes of all sizes, including childrens. There are also 'loops' bolted on lamp-posts so bikes can be locked with less danger of slipping. However, such facilities are open to the weather and to thieves – they are good for short-term or even all-day

parking but risky for overnight storage.

To suggest additional locations, email [activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk)

#### 3.2 On-street secure storage

Edinburgh Council has appointed Cyclehoop ([www.cyclehoop.rentals](http://www.cyclehoop.rentals)) to install and manage bike lockers for overnight storage - expected to begin operation in late 2019. Residents will be able to hire a space (and suggest additional locations) via a website. Initial plans are for 180 lockers, each holding 5 or 6 bikes, in streets where requests have been received. For more info email [activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk)

#### 3.3 Other options

Is there a disused or vacant room or building nearby that could be used for temporary or permanent storage?



Edinburgh racks



The 'Bikehanger' by CycleHoop - weatherproof, secure storage

## 4. E-bikes, cargo bikes and trailers

### 4.1 E-Bikes

*E-bikes are increasingly popular. Read about the remarkable experiences of new e-bike users in our factsheet, **Why E-Bike?** at [spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/e-bikes](http://spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/e-bikes).*

*However, storing an e-bike has some considerations additional to a traditional bike...*

- It is heavy (usually 25-30kg) and harder to manoeuvre than a traditional bike when pushing

- Battery charging is not a problem - batteries are easily removed and can be charged from an ordinary 13amp socket
- With most modern e-bikes, an overnight charge is sufficient for most trips in one day



### 4.2 Cargo bikes and trailers

These come in a huge range of sizes and shapes, and many cargo-bikes are e-assist. Spokes has a web page about cargo bikes at [spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/cargo-bikes](http://spokes.org.uk/documents/advice/cargo-bikes). Obviously appropriate sized, secure and accessible storage space is needed if you have a cargo bike or trailer, but some of the ideas in sections 2 and 3 above may still help.



Note - thanks to kind donations from our members Spokes currently has a scheme where we offer a contribution to community organisations in Edinburgh and the Lothians towards the cost of a cargo bike. See the above web page for details.



## Suppliers

[www.cyclehoop.com](http://www.cyclehoop.com) A range of cycle shelters are available in a variety of finishes and include the award-winning Bikehangar - as used in Edinburgh Council's pilot storage project.

[www.cycloc.com](http://www.cycloc.com) Various designs to store bikes horizontally or vertically.

[www.bluetonltd.com](http://www.bluetonltd.com) Local firm supplying shelters and bike racks.

## FEEDBACK...

Feedback, suggestions and ideas to help others are very welcome. We'd also love to hear about actions by you or neighbours to improve bike storage.

Email: [spokes@spokes.org.uk](mailto:spokes@spokes.org.uk)

## MORE INFO ON BIKE STORAGE...

- See relevant Spokes website pages. The master page is at... [spokes.org.uk/documents/members-campaigning/edinburgh/residential-bike-storage/](http://spokes.org.uk/documents/members-campaigning/edinburgh/residential-bike-storage/)
- Other Cycle Campaigns are also working on this e.g. London Cycling Campaign: (search for bike storage at [lcc.org.uk](http://lcc.org.uk)) and Cambridge Cycle Campaign (search for cycle parking guide at [camcycle.org.uk](http://camcycle.org.uk))

## MORE INFO ON CYCLING IN EDINBURGH AND LOTHIAN...

- [spokes.org.uk](http://spokes.org.uk) Spokes fights for better conditions for using a bike for everyday journeys. Help us by joining! (click the membership tab)
- [spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps](http://spokes.org.uk/spokes-maps) We produce highly-regarded cycle maps of Edinburgh and the Lothians
- [thebikestation.org.uk](http://thebikestation.org.uk) Edinburgh's bike recycling charity. Quality re-conditioned bikes at good prices.
- [edinburgh.gov.uk/cycling](http://edinburgh.gov.uk/cycling) Council cycling info
- [citycyclingedinburgh.info](http://citycyclingedinburgh.info) Cycling discussion forums, info

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**The Lothian Cycle Campaign**