

- “Gruppetto” is Cycle Folsom’s introductory group. The objective for the group is to give opportunity to build group-riding skills, and build a fitness base that will allow riders to increase distance, and to prepare for tackling introductory hills.
- Group is riding different than riding on your own; requires a different set of skills and awareness.
- If you are new to group riding, it’s a good idea to maintain at least a half-bike length distance between your bike and the bike in front of you. With experience, this distance will eventually tighten up to as little as 6 to 8 inches (requires skill and safety training, as well as experience).
- Experienced riders often join our Gruppetto Group Rides to help out, lend experience, and help maintain consistent pacing. It’s a good idea to understand who the ride leaders are, as well as the experienced riders—and also those who are repeating the Gruppetto series, as they have experience with the group.
- When we ride, we want to enjoy ourselves, but just like talking on a cell phone while driving, you can lose focus while chatting with others on the bike and it can become dangerous in an instant. Plus, others may be trying to communicate to you. So make “staying alert” and “ready to react” your primary objective when riding in a group.
- Predictability is key to group riding.
 - Be conscious of the space around you; self-awareness and spatial awareness.
 - Hold your line; try to minimize lateral movement.
- Gear selection can make a big difference here. Pedaling too hard can make you sway on your bike. Pedaling too fast can make you bounce in your seat.
- Look ahead for hills. Adjust your gears so that it becomes easier to pedal. On downhill grades, adjust gears so that it becomes harder to pedal.
- “Big ring” (front derailleur) shifts should be accompanied by small ring shifts. If you’re new to your bike, play with your gears on the flats so you know what to expect and how to change them when you need to. Seriously. Shifting gears should become second nature.
- The ultimate goal is to maintain a relatively consistent cadence (the speed of your pedal stroke), if possible.
- You’re responsible to maintain a safe distance with the bike in front of you. Protect your front wheel.
 - Don’t overlap wheels (don’t let your front wheel ride up alongside the rear wheel of the bike in front of you); don’t ride too close for the same reason.
 - Don’t surge off the front (if you’re drafting and the rider in front peels off leaving you to “pull,” don’t speed up. Just keep the speed and pace constant. The rider that peels off will drift to the back of the pace line and re-enter the rear of the pace line.
- Look ahead of the rider in front of you and anticipate what is coming so that you have time to prepare for movement or avoidance of objects, and so that you can do it smoothly without jarring the flow of the group.
 - Look ahead over the shoulder of the person in front of you, through their forks, slightly off to the side, etc. Stay alert and stay prepared to adjust. Watch and listen for signals from others in front of you, or in back of you.
- Communicate. Talk to others, use signals, etc.
 - Point to objects or debris
 - Point and wave a bit for loose gravel, rocks, and sand or perhaps wet pavement.
 - Indicate “runner-up, walker-up, bike back passing left,” etc. Signal accordingly if needed.
 - Indicate “slowing” or “stopping”



- SUPER DANGEROUS: Poles. Call them out and point to them. Waste-high poles are often placed in the center of the trail at entry and exit points. It can be difficult to see these when riding in a group, which is why we always call them out and point to them. We do our best to ride on the right side of the poles when passing, but if the trail is tight, one or more riders may have to pass the pole on the left if there. Here is where it is incredibly important to call out and point to the pole to indicate that you'll be passing it on the left. Otherwise, someone will follow you unknowingly and run right into the pole.
- About mid-way through the Gruppetto series, we introduce pace lines. In anticipation of this, practice holding a consistent pace by adjusting pressure on your pedals. This will allow you to brake less often. This is also referred to as "soft-pedaling;" you keep pedaling, but without a lot of force. As needed, you slowly increase the pressure to maintain the pace. If you fall back a bit in the pace line, don't rush to speed up. Just increase your pressure on your pedals as required to ease yourself back up to the person in front of you. This will minimize the "slinky" effect.
- Climbs
 - Stand-up smoothly and try to accelerate as you stand
 - Give space to person ahead
 - Ride/pedal through top of climb
- Descents -- Give space to person ahead, hold your line in case someone will be passing you on either side.
- Getting on your bike: Start at top of pedal stroke, don't worry about clipping both pedals in. Getting rolling a bit and then clip in.