

# Bicycle Solitaire

By Stan Purdum, *Road Bike Rider*, April 15, 2020

For most cyclists in these anxious days, riding solo is the choice that best fits the stay-at-home guidelines currently in place in most states. Those rules generally permit outside exercise, but with the stipulation that we all stay at least six feet (2 m) apart. (The only exception is if you are cycling with another member of your household.)

In my case, I've settled on a loop ride that starts and ends at my front door. It's long enough to give me a good workout but short enough that I don't need to stop anywhere to eat, use public facilities or interact with others. For a bit of scenic variety, I ride the loop clockwise one day, counterclockwise the next and so on.

Riding solo is a good reason to make sure my bike is in good shape to minimize roadside breakdowns, and I carry ID and instructions about who to call should I crash.

I have cyclist friends that are doing similar rides of their own, and we'd prefer to be riding together, but we hope the current social distancing isn't necessary much longer.

But for now, **bicycle solitaire** is the only game in town, and we might as well make the best of it.

If nothing else, riding the same loop day after day is good chance to work on personal-best performance goals. I've been keeping track of my average speed, and it's gradually going up.

In many places, this is also an opportunity to ride on roads that are normally heavily traveled. In my case, I was in high-tourist part of Florida when the lockdown occurred, and with our home state of New Jersey being a hotspot for the pandemic, it made sense to remain here. But with tourists no longer coming, roads that I had considered too crowded with traffic to pedal on are now relatively quiet, and I use one of those roads on my daily loop.

Best of all, the time on the bike is an outlet for nervous energy, and I return home tired, but calmed and refreshed, not incidental benefits when the national news is troubling.

