

Ebikes – Why You May Want to Consider Buying One...

The Okanagan is a beautiful place to live for a lot of reasons - especially when it comes to cycling. We have a long bike riding season and a great cycling infrastructure for all types of riding – commuting, recreation, road and mountain biking. We also have an above-average active population - but those large hills and mountains surrounding us can sometimes be a challenge.

Then along came ebikes...

They've been around for many years as add-on kits and with either a rear hub drive motor or a front hub drive motor. Ebikes have been very popular in many European countries for over 20 years. In North America it only started gaining popularity about 8 years ago when the larger manufacturers (Specialized, Giant, Trek, Norco, Devinci, Rocky Mountain, Cube, the list goes on) started offering mid-drive ebikes. They incorporated the motor into the lower frame providing a lower center of gravity and improving the bike handling. The time delay between putting pressure on the pedals and the motor assisting the rider had now disappeared and provided the rider with immediate electric assist. Since there was no longer a delay in the electric assist, there was no longer a need for a throttle to get them going when starting on an incline.

Mid-drive ebikes also got sleeker looking with the battery incorporated into the bike frame.

Instead of just comfy beach cruiser style ebikes, manufacturers were now providing ebike models and styles to suit all riders, similar to the choice they would have with non-ebikes. Expanding the model selection now increased the interest in ebikes – and then the ebike craze began!

With the increase in types of ebikes available, the age of the cyclists expanded to include riders in their teens to riders over 80 years old! People recovering from various injuries were now often able to ride an ebike to better assist them in their recovery.

Ebikes come with different strengths of motor torque (measured in newton-meters) and different capacity of lithium ion batteries (measured in watt-hours). The higher the torque, the more power you have for those hills. Focussing on the wattage of the motor is not an accurate measurement of torque. Depending on the bike, torque can range from as low as 35nM to as high as 85nM. The larger the battery capacity, the further you can ride before having to recharge the battery. Battery capacity typically ranges from a low of 400Wh to over 800Wh. There are many commuter ebike models with a battery capacity capable of exceeding 100 kms on a single charge.

Now those Okanagan hills aren't so daunting. Instead of putting their bikes onto a car rack and driving down to the valley to ride, the ebike riders can now ride down and back UP those hills – often riding more than ever before. People who hadn't jumped on a bike in years were now considering an ebike.

Just a heads up though, ebikes are going to be more expensive than the equivalent non-ebike - but keep in mind that you get what you pay for.

Ebikes will also be heavier and require a heavy duty bike rack to transport them with your car.

But no matter what your lifestyle or fitness level is, there is an ebike to suit you. The best way to determine which one to buy is to take a few for a test ride and determine which one best fits you and also has the features you're looking for,

And..... be ready to fall in love with them!

Garry Norkum
Cyclepath Kelowna Inc.





**Thinking about an e-bike? Come on in...
Check out our great selection.
Test rides encouraged!**

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2169 Springfield Rd - Kelowna, BC. (250) 868-0122