

YOUR FIRST CARGO BIKE

6 Things to Remember When Choosing the Best Bike for You

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INTRODUCTION

From pro cyclist to kid-wrangler

I gave up my professional cycling career a few years ago, but I still love to ride. When I had twins, I didn't want to trade my cleats for mom jeans. But, exhausted from taking care of two small children, I found myself strapping them into car seats, even for short journeys. I thought pushing up a 20 percent grade in mile 30 was exhausting – but that was before I tried to get two preschoolers out the door every day.

When I went in search of a bike I could ride with the twins, I needed something that would make my life easier, not harder. I found the Xtracycle Edgerunner cargo bike with electric assist.

“Getting an Xtracycle has changed my life.”

You don't have to be a pro cyclist or a bike geek to love this bike. You can even ride in mom jeans (or you can wear your fancy clothes and never break a sweat). I'm super stoked about the Xtracycle, but I had a few questions to answer before I made my choice. What I learned made me realize that there are some common mistakes and misconceptions people have when they shop for a cargo bike.

#1

Do make safety your first priority.

Riding with two young kids in tow, my biggest concern is safety. To be safe, I need a bike that's stable, even when the twins get the wiggles. I need to be able to make a quick start when I'm carrying a lot of extra weight. And I need to be able to stop quickly.

Some manufacturers use low-quality parts to lower the price, especially on electric bikes. When it comes to safety, and especially when my kids are on the back, good construction and quality parts are the price of safety.



**“I was blown away
by how safe the
Xtracycle felt
from my first test ride.”**

The Xtracycle's high quality brakes give me peace of mind. I am confident because I know I can make quick stops, even when I'm riding downhill. That adds up to a whole lot of safety. The Xtracycle lets me relax and enjoy the ride.

2

Don't assume you can't get there by bike.

Many people, myself included, make the mistake of assuming the grocery store, parks, kids' school, and other locations we drive to are too far for a bike trip. A cargo bike wouldn't do me any good if I couldn't get to where I needed to go.

So, I mapped out the most common destinations that I typically travelled to by car, often with the kids along. Shockaroo: most of these places fell within a six-mile radius of my home – easy biking distance, especially on an ebike.



**“I realized I could easily
do 90 percent of my daily
errands on bike.”**

Running errands by bike usually takes extra time; the electric assist changes that dynamic drastically. Better yet, I could get there without getting all sweaty, thanks to the electric drive system with various assist levels.

I rarely ride more than 20 miles in one trip, so I usually opt for full blast. Why? Because it is fun (uh, really fun).

How far do you want to go by bike? The Department of Transportation reports that 63% of our daily trips are five miles or less. You might be surprised, like I was, at how easily you can get there.

3

Don't freak out over the price.



A cargo bike is built to carry a lot of weight and that requires some fancy parts, like high-end brakes so you can stop quickly and safely, even when you're carrying a big load. If you want electric assist, a good motor can be pricey too.

If you're considering a cargo bike like an Xtracycle, it's a commitment, financially. With an electric assist, the price tag can go north of \$6,000. Some of my racing bikes cost more than that, but it was hard for me to spend that much on a cargo bike.

Here's the breakdown: If I ride my Xtracycle for 10 years (a conservative estimate – these bikes are built to last), that's \$600 per year or \$50 per month. I save more than that each month on gas and wear and tear on my car. If your family can give up a car completely because of a cargo bike, you can save even more.

**“Bottom line: if I love it
and I ride it, my cargo bike
pays for itself.”**

A cheaper cargo bike that is awkward or difficult to ride or that feels unsafe is a bike I probably won't get on too often – so it won't be worth the price, whatever I paid for it. A bike that's fun on wheels is one I'll want to ride every day – and that is worth the price tag.

I test rode a lot of electric bikes and I found that the motor on the Xtracycle stood out. Some e-bike motors lurch and surge – not something I want with my twins on the back. The Xtracycle has a smoother ride plus the power to take me up hills and carry heavy loads.

4

Do accessorize for safety.

You're not just buying a bicycle; you're getting a two-wheeled powerhouse that can transport everything you need, with the right add-ons.

Since my main motivation for buying a cargo bike was to ride with my kids, safety was my first concern. With the Hooptie installed, I don't have to look over my shoulder all the time; the twins hold onto the side bars and I know their fingers are protected and they won't tumble off. The bars are adjustable, so I can keep on keeping them safe as they get bigger.



“The accessories you add on may be almost as important as the bike itself.”

No matter why you want a cargo bike or what kind of cargo bike you end up with, don't make the mistake of skimping on the accessories. Those extras don't add much to the cost, but they will give a big boost to your enjoyment of the bike and your peace of mind.

5

Don't worry about the weight.

When it comes to cargo bikes, especially an electric cargo bike, it's a mistake to get hung up on your bike's weight.



I chose to pack the pounds on my Xtracycle by adding the accessories I needed. With electric assist, I can pull the extra weight with no sweat – literally.

Here's the thing: all cargo bikes are heavy. Unless you're going to ride your cargo bike in a road race (I wouldn't recommend it), you won't notice a couple of pounds more or less.

If you want a lightweight bike, buy a carbon fiber road bike. If you want a cargo bike that will get you and your crew where you need to go, don't worry about the weight.



6

Do power up your pedal with an e-assist.

I used to be a professional rider. When I want to ride for exercise, I'll pull a racing bike off the wall and hit the hills. There's nothing like the feeling of coming home, drenched in sweat, knowing I've pushed my body to the max.

But that's not how I want to feel when I get to work or to meet friends at a restaurant. Electric assist allows me to arrive at any destination still feeling fresh. Before I had kids, I couldn't imagine that I would ever be too zonked to ride. That's because I didn't understand true fatigue. I realized that if I wanted to power around town with two kids and three bags of groceries on the back, electric assist was a must.



“Riding a cargo bike with electric assist has changed my life.”

You might feel that electric assist is cheating. I felt that way too, at first. But the extra boost gets me onto my bike on days when I otherwise might drive a car. I am still moving my body and that energizes me, but it's not such an effort that I'm drained and cranky with the kids.

The other advantage of an electric bike is safety. I appreciate having the power to make a quick start, even when I'm fully loaded. With electric assist, I can even make it up the hill to the kids' school.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS...

I know my cargo bike has made my world a better place. I've rediscovered the joy of riding. I hope you will too.

**Schedule a call to choose
the right bike for you at
www.xtracycle.com/ride-review**