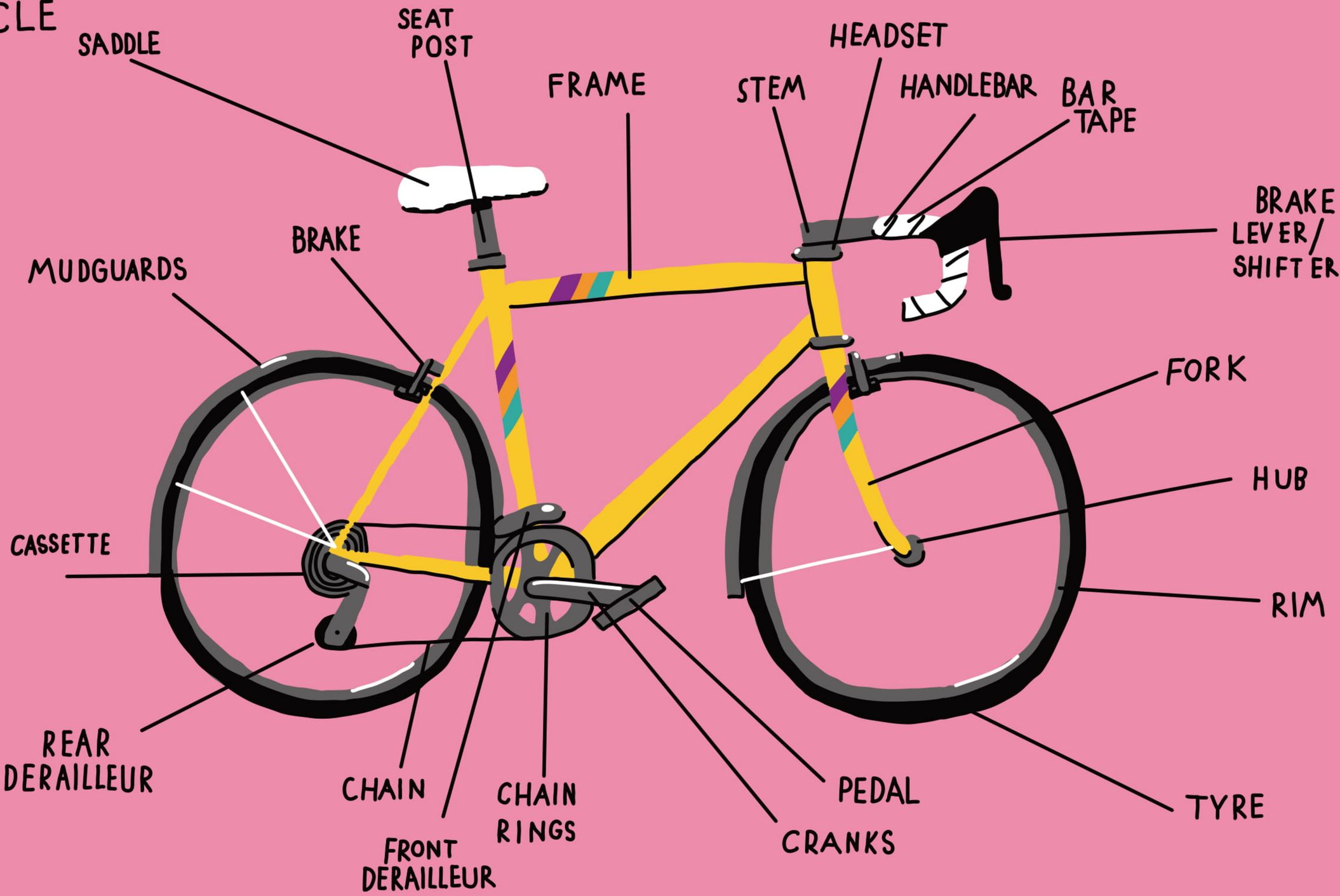
ANATOMY OF A BICYCLE





“Light. Strong. Cheap. Pick two.”

—

Keith Bontrager

Choosing a Bike

There are a few things to take into account when you choose a bike. But the most important thing of all is that it has to be fun to ride. And the bikes that are the most fun to ride are the lightest, because they’re also the fastest. Unfortunately, they also tend to be the most expensive.

Bikes are usually made of steel, which is heavy, or aluminium which is lighter. At the very top end, you can get a frame made of carbon fibre, which is super-light. Choose the lightest bike your money can buy and don’t worry too much about fancy gears or suspension.

Ask your local bike shop for help and always take two or three different bikes for a spin before you decide. Test how they handle corners, hills and different road surfaces. Check the brakes – the brakes on a kid’s bike should be very responsive.

The lightest bicycle in the world was custom built by Jason Woznick of Arizona, and weighs in at a mere 2.7 kg. The heaviest rideable bicycle weighed 1,385 kg.

Bike Fit

If your bike is too big, it will be hard to control and to balance. If your bike is too small, your knees will get in the way of the handlebars, which is a) uncomfortable and b) embarrassing.

A good bike shop will measure you up for the right fit, but if you are buying your bike second-hand or online, or just want to measure yourself for fun, here's how you do it.

Firstly, measure your height by standing against a wall with no shoes on, feet hip-width apart.

Then measure your inseam as follows: still standing against a wall, feet hip-width apart, get someone to put a large book between your legs with its spine firmly against your crotch. Step away from the wall and measure from the floor to the spine of the book. This will give you your inseam measurement.

Using these measurements, work out what wheel size you need using the chart to the right. At the lowest seat position, your saddle height should be 5-7 cm higher than your inseam – so that you can touch the ground with your toes, but not put your feet flat on the floor.



This is a general size guide. The big number is the wheel size in inches. Take it with a pinch of salt – every body and every bike is different. A good bike manufacturer will list their minimum seat-post heights on their website.

Your legs power the bicycle. Your thigh-bone works like a lever. If it's longer than your shin-bone it will provide extra leverage on each stroke of the pedals.

