

Heading into Winter, a few thoughts.

## Lights

A few good rechargeable front bike lights and a strong red tail light are essential as our rides will mostly be in twilight or darkness for the next few months. Many years ago I would spend \$150 to get 125 lumens and be pretty happy out on the gravel at night. Every year lumens and battery performance seems to get better. Currently I mostly use a \$60 pair (back and front combo package) from Lezyne (Minidrive 400XL) <https://ride.lezyne.com/collections/led-lights>

Some riders need more light to feel comfortable than others. For mountain biking I'd want a much more powerful light than for gravel, plus I'd add a light on my helmet for tighter turns.

In winter I use an old 125 lumen Serfas light I got from Bikes 2 You as a backup or if I want to boost my lights when riding alone. Riding in a group at night gives you more light to ride in. Riding at night is actually a lot easier than it seems because the lights give a really good contrast, easily showing a smooth line and the darker, rougher holes.

Spending more money buys you more lumens (good!) and more battery life and more weight. The more expensive lights will give you a broader light out front as well. Attaching a light on your helmet is pretty common for mountain bikers and can be a good alternative. 2 cheaper lights can be used up front. A backup light is always a good idea.

Serfas, Lezyne, Bontrager all make good lights. Beware of no-name cheap 8000 lumens \$39 Amazon lights-they just won't last.

## Winter Rides

I intend to keep riding Tuesday nights through the winter. A ride closer to two hours is probably good till it gets really cold. I'll choose even an hour outside to avoid spending time on an indoor trainer. As soon as we get ice on the road I'll switch to my fat tire bike with studs to keep from falling and breaking a hip. The safety of studded tires can't be overstated. Any studs are better than nothing and the best studded tires give you Velcro traction and stopping power on sheer ice. Time changes November 6 so 530 rides will be in the dark. Once winter really hits I stay in town if the wind is severe, riding sheltered alleys, cemetery and Arbor. 5-6 people got studs last year and enjoyed our snowy cold rides. Some type of handlebar pogies/covers let you ride in regular ski gloves. Flat pedals let you wear real snow boots/Sorels. Chemical heaters (Theisens) in riding shoes with covers can usually give you an hour or two of comfort. Hit me up with any questions about bike/gear set up.

-Tim Ellsworth