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Biking in Dortmund

A beginners guide by the universities

Mobility Management

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1 Introduction – Why biking is a perfect way to move within Dortmund

Traditionally, Germany is a car oriented country. The car is still the most frequently used form of mobility thanks to its comfort and flexibility. Even though, on the other hand there are quite a few downsides of a car-oriented society (especially within urbanized Cities).

Starting with the design of cities like Dortmund, which, after World War II has primarily been designed for car traffic (but not for humans). Cars, which statistically are not being moved for at least 23 hours each a day, occupy lots of space within the city, which could be used otherwise. Furthermore, the CO₂ emitted while burning gasoline to power the car increases global problems like climate change. Particular matter being released during the process of driving (e.g. while breaking) moreover burdens the air quality within cities that can cause serious lung diseases. Finally, cars are a very exclusive form of mobility since you need a license and a car and the car needs to be fueled, it needs an insurance and you also have to pay taxes and repair works. All of this can be quite expensive and therefore exclusive since not everyone is able to afford all of this. So there's a bunch of reasons to look for alternative forms of mobility, especially when you live within a city offering those alternatives.

Besides the public transport service (in Germany often abbreviated with 'ÖPNV') the bicycle comes to mind. Biking also has a big tradition in Germany and it is quite common to go by bike, even for people who could afford to go by car. The reason is that in comparison it is much cheaper and healthier for you and for our planet as well. And the more people ride bikes within the city (and the less go by car), the safer the traffic gets. Though the City Administration of Dortmund is working on the infrastructure development for cyclists (e.g. with bicycle lanes or safe places to park your bike), as a cyclist you currently often need to share the streets either with pedestrians or with cars.

Generally the city of Dortmund is quite appropriate to be explored by bike since it is not too hilly and not too extended. A bike ride from the city centre (e.g. from the central station) to the Universities campus Emil-Figge-Straße outside of the city centre will take approximately 20 minutes.

So, if you decide to explore the city by bicycle, in order to be on the road safely, it is useful and important to have in mind the explicit and implicit rules of German (bicycle) traffic. With this document, you will get a broad overview of the basic traffic rules in Germany as well as some information on where to buy, rent or repair bicycles within the city.

Enjoy and always have a safe ride!

2 Basic Rules

In general, the traffic system in Germany can be condensed to two basic principles:

1. „Rechts vor links“ („Right before left“) (If not indicated otherwise, the party coming from the right has the right of way)
2. In case of doubt: Priority of the weaker party (meaning that if you are on the bike, you especially need to take care on pedestrians safety)

Where to drive?

Generally in Germany, applies the right-hand-traffic, means, that within your driving direction, you usually drive on the right side of the road. This also applies for the usage of bicycle lanes. You should not, except for the case where a traffic sign indicates otherwise, drive on the left cycling lane or on the left side of the pedestrian walk (in your driving direction).

If there is a cycling lane (indicated by the round blue sign showing a bicycle), you are obligated to use it. If there is no official sign but a cycling lane (e.g. red bricks on the pedestrian walk) you are free to choose whether you want to drive on this lane or on the street. If there is no cycling lane at all, all cyclists over the age of 9 are obligated to use the road. While driving on the road you should always keep a clearance of at least one meter from the (parking) cars on your right-hand-side (in case someone opens the car door without checking if the road is clear).

How to behave at intersections?

There is a set of rules how to correctly behave at intersections. This set of rules consists of a step-by-step prioritization you need to keep in mind. Once you reach an intersection and a **Policeman** is standing on it organizing the traffic, you need to follow his instructions. However, this case is rather an exception. If there is no police officer organizing the traffic, the next thing to look out for are **traffic lights**, which show you when it is your turn to drive. If there is no traffic light at the intersection either, it is probable that the rules for, how to behave at the intersection are defined by **traffic signs** (e.g. „Priority Road“ or „Stop“). In any other case, where there are no policemen, traffic lights or traffic signs present to regulate the traffic, the basic rule „**right-before-left**“ applies.

1. Police
2. Traffic Light
3. Traffic Sign
4. Right-before-Left

But even though there are many rules in theory, the most important rule might be the following:

Do not insist on your right at all costs!

You'll surely notice that once you start biking within the city, there will be a lot of other traffic participants who will (consciously or unconsciously) violate your rights by walking on the cycling lane, taking your right of way or turning right without noticing you being there on your bike.

So, the best thing you can do for your own safety to **think for others as well**.

Some example thoughts:






„Is this car over there going to take a right turn and cross my cycling path? If yes, he is obligated to stop and grant me the right of way. But will he? Better slow down, be alerted and see, what he is doing.“

On a bike, you are always more vulnerable than someone sitting in a car. And insisting on your right is not worth it being injured in an accident!

3 Most important traffic signs for cyclists




There are more than 400 traffic signs known to the German traffic system. Some of them you will only come across on Highways (Autobahn), others can be found quite frequent. In the following, you'll find a broad overview of the traffic signs, you'll find the most within the German city traffic and which are relevant for you to be familiar with once you start exploring the city by bike. A complete list of all traffic signs are to be found on the following website (in German language):

[Verkehrsschilder: Verkehrszeichen und ihre Bedeutung | ADAC](#)

Visual Display	Name (German / English)	What it means
Gefahrenzeichen / Hazard signs These types of signs always have the same basic form (red framed triangle) with alternating symbols in the centre. These signs usually appear 150-200 Meters before the respective danger – so be alert!		
	Fußgängerüberweg / Crosswalk	Upcoming crosswalk. Pay attention, pedestrians always have a right of way here and you need to stop, if anyone intends to cross the road.
	Wildwechsel / Deer Crossing	Usually applies for a longer section of the road, usually through a forest or something similar. Animals (especially Deer) can cross the road in this section.
	Gefahrenstelle / Dangerous spot	Usually comes with a specification of the respective danger. Be alert and pay attention.
	Kreuzung oder Einmündung mit Vorfahrt von rechts / Crossing or junction with right of way from the right side	On the next crossing or junction, you need to grant the right of way to the cars driving on the crossroad or the junction.
	Arbeitsstelle / Road Construction	Indicates an upcoming road construction. Usually, the street is narrowed by construction fences. View can be unclear, so better slow down in case you have troubles surveying the situation.






Verbotszeichen / Prohibition Signs










Round sign with a red frame and alternating symbols in the centre. These can never permit you to do anything. Whatever happens in the centre is not permitted here.









	Verbot für Fahrzeuge aller Art / Prohibition for all types of vehicles	This road is usually private and should not be entered by vehicle at all.
	Verbot für Radverkehr / Prohibition for bicycle traffic	Bicycles are not allowed on this road. Find another way or get off and push the bike.
	Zulässige Höchstgeschwindigkeit / maximum Speed	Maximum Speed (Kilometres per Hour). Usually applies to motorized vehicles.

Vorschriftzeichen / Regulation Signs

These come in different forms and colours and usually prescribe certain behaviours.

	Gemeinsamer Geh- und Radweg / Joint sidewalk and bicycle path	Take care of the pedestrians since they are the traffic participants more vulnerable. Ring the bell on you bike to indicate your presence in case if you are not sure, if you can surpass without risk.
	Vorgeschriebene Fahrtrichtung / prescribed direction of traffic	Usually, you find these on junctions leading into one-way-roads. Your are only permitted to go right here. There are versions of this sign with an arrow to the left, straight ahead or combinations of different directions.
	Vorfahrt gewähren / grant right of way	Indicates that you need to grant the right of way to all other traffic participants on this crossroad.
	Halt. Vorfahrt gewähren. / Stop. Grant right of way.	Indicates that you need to grant the right of way to all other traffic participants on this crossroad. Additionally you need to stop your vehicle for at least on second before continuing your ride.
	Einbahnstraße / One-way Street	Only one direction of traffic is permitted.

	Verbot der Einfahrt / Entry prohibition	Usually you find this on the exit of a one-way-street. Sometimes this only applies to cars and cyclists are permitted to use the road in both directions (if this is the case you'll find the information below the sign > see „Radfahrer frei“)
	Beginn einer Fußgängerzone / Beginning of pedestrian Zone	Usually you'll find this at the entrance of shopping streets within city centres. You should not ride your bike here. You can get off and push your bike though.
	Beginn einer Tempo 30 Zone / Beginning of a speed 30 Zone	If there are no signs indicating something different, in these zones usually applies the right of way rule „right before left“.
	Absolutes Halteverbot / No stopping or parking	Do not park here (usually applies to cars).
Richtzeichen / Indicator signs		
	Vorfahrt (an der nächsten Kreuzung oder Einmündung) / Right of way at the next crossroad or junction	Indicates, that on the very next crossroad or junction, you have the right of way.
	Vorfahrtstraße / Priority Road	Indicates that you are now driving on a priority road. If not indicated different, you always have the right of way here.
	Ende der Vorfahrtstraße / End of Priority Road	Indicates the end of a priority road.
	Beginn eines Verkehrsberuhigten Bereiches / Start of a traffic calmed Area	Also called „Playing Road“ since there might be children playing on the road here. You should only ride your bike in walking speed (5-7 km/h) and stay alert.
	Fußgängerüberweg / Crosswalk	Also indicated by white stripes on the road. In Germany this is also called „Zebrasstreifen“. If pedestrians are trying to cross here, you need to stop and let them pass.

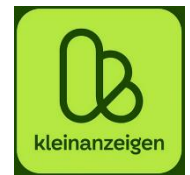
	Radschnellweg / Cycle path	Cars are also allowed here, but as a cyclist, you always have the right of way. Furthermore, it is permitted to ride next to another cyclist.
	Sackgasse / Dead End	You cannot pass through this road.
	Für Radverkehr und Fußgänger durchlässige Sackgasse / Dead end for Cars open to cyclists and pedestrians	You can't pass through this road by car. With a bike or as a pedestrian you will be able to pass through.
Zusatzzeichen / Additional Signs Usually, they do not stand on their own but complement or specify another sign above.		
	Grünpfeil für Radfahrende / Green Arrow for cyclists	Even if the traffic light is red you are allowed to take a turn to the right with your bike, if the road you want to enter is free. Take care though!
	Radfahrende Kreuzen von rechts und links / Crossing cyclists from left and right	Attention! Cyclist may cross from left and / or right here. Better slowdown in case you do not have a good view on the crossroads.
	Radfahrer frei / Bicycles free	As a cyclist, you are free to drive here.
	Verlauf der Vorfahrtstraße an Kreuzungen / Course of the priority road	Usually you'll find this beneath a „Priority Road Sign“ in case the priority road is not continuing straight ahead but with a turn. The thick black line indicates the priority roads course (in this case with a turn to the left).
	Radfahrer absteigen / cyclist get off the bike	Usually you will find this before bridges or other narrow spots where there is not much space and pedestrians need to be protected.

4 Where to get a Bike?

Even though bikes in general are much cheaper than motorized vehicles such as cars or motorbikes, especially new bikes can be a bit pricey. Luckily there are several other options to buy second hand bikes, that are usually cheaper. Depending on your expectations you should get a decent second-hand bike for around 100–200€. Some of those options are listed below:

Kleinanzeigen

There is an application called „Kleinanzeigen“ („Classified ads“), where you can buy and sell almost anything (including bicycles). In the Apps Settings you can define a radius around your current location. The App then shows you all the ads inside of this radius (e.g. 5 kilometers). Sometimes shopping on Kleinanzeigen can be a bit tiring though but with a little patience and luck, this is probably the cheapest place to purchase a bike.



Bike Shops

There are many shops all over Dortmund both new and used bikes. You find a list of all of them on the following website (unfortunately only available in German): <http://fahrradladen-dortmund.de/>

The *dobeq* is another option not in the list above, that can be recommended for this purpose. The *dobeq* is collecting old and defective bikes from all over Dortmund in order to repair and then resell them for a decent price. The store is located only a few minutes away from the site of the cycling course. Website:

[FAST WIE NEU.Bikes : Fahrradrecycling : Fahrradservice am HBF Dortmund \(dobeq.de\)](http://www.dobeq.de/)

5 Where to repair a Bike?

In case you bought a bicycle, you may also want to know where to go for necessary repairs. Typical repairs, that occur with bicycles over time, are for example patching flat tires, renewing brake pads or cleaning and re-greasing chain and gears.

For basic things like inflating tires or tightening screws, the university offers self-service-stations that can be used autonomously and for free. You'll find them in the following spots:

- Emil-Figge-Straße (EFS): Next to the Building EF50 between Campus TU Dortmund and FH Dortmund
- Sonnenstraße (SON): in the eastern part of the Courtyard
- Max-Ophüls-Platz (MOP): Courtyard, next to the entrance to the Mensa

For anything beyond those basic repairs, the universities start-up-service called „SQuArE“ (Located in Lindemannstraße 79, next to campus MOP) is running a repair shop which can be used by members of FH Dortmund free of charge. Every Wednesday (12:00 – 18:00) you can go there for a bike repair. Basic Tools are provided and you get professional support getting your bike back into shape. In case you have a rather complex or particular concern, please announce your visit and your concern with a quick mail to gruendungsservice@fh-dortmund.de in advance.

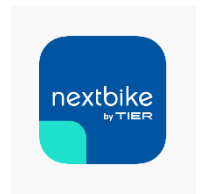
Besides the bike repair, the repair shop also features possibilities for additive manufacturing via 3D-printers, electrical engineering, microcontrollers, mechanical as well as woodworking, a laser cutter, a sewing and embroidery machine, two cutting plotters, a print plotter up to A1, a vacuum former, a lathe and many more. Moreover, the SQuArE is also offering a co-working room and PC-pool. So make sure you check it out!

Another opportunity to repair not only bikes but also electrical devices or clothes is the repair café „Werkstatt im Pulsschlag“ in the community centre of Dortmund Dorstfeld (close to campus Emil-Figge-Straße). Honorary repairers do their best to help you to give your defective stuff a second life. The event is taking place once every month, usually on Sunday afternoon. Check the linked website for more information, such as the next scheduled dates.

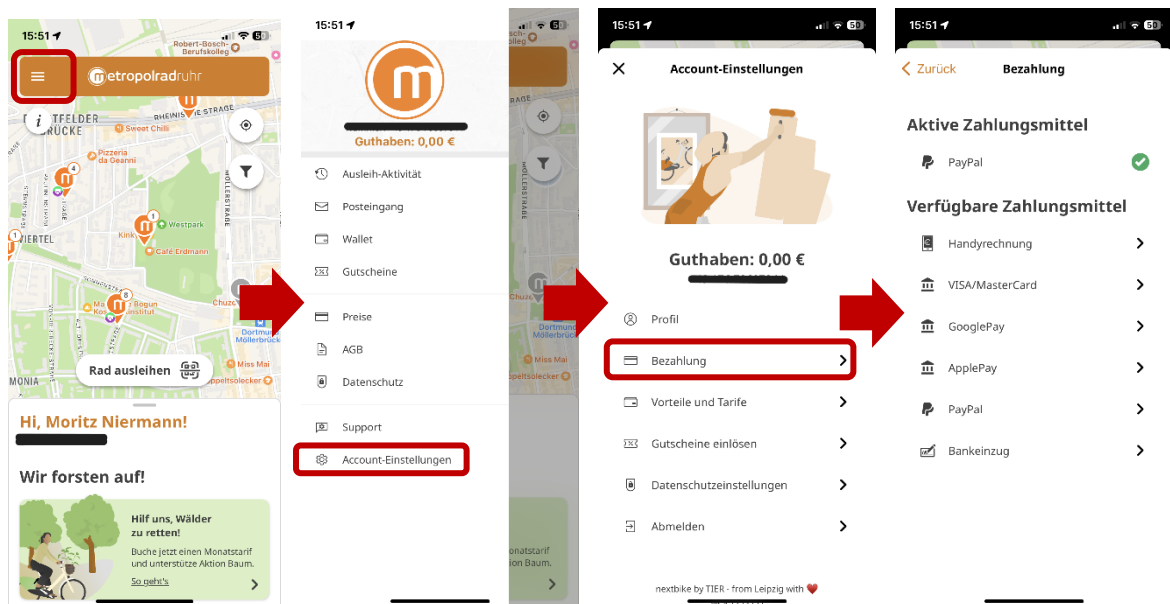
6 How to get a „nextbike“ – A manual

How to get the App and a profile?

1. Download „nextbike by TIER“ in your Appstore / Playstore
 2. Register with your FH-Dortmund Mailadress (usually namesurname@fh-dortmund.de)
 3. Select FH Dortmund as „Partner“
 4. For the registration it is also necessary to indicate your phone number since your profile gets activated by a code they send you via SMS
 5. It is also recommended to **enter a Payment Method** (Credit Card, Paypal etc. is possible).
- As long as you stay under 60 Minutes each ride, you do not necessarily need to do this. Your account will be blocked though, if you rent a bike for more than 60 Minutes and you did not enter a payment method in advance). The Charge is 0,50€ per 30 Minutes, maximum fee per ride is 5,00€ which equals a 10 hour ride)

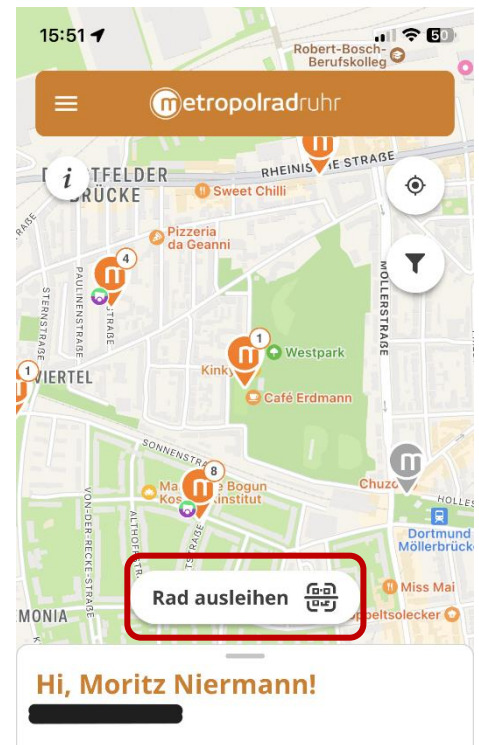


How to enter a payment method?



How to rent a bike?

1. Open the nextbike-App
2. Find a free bike in your surrounding area (Orange „M“, the number indicated the number of available bikes)
3. Go to the bikes location and click „Rad ausleihen“ („Rent Bike“) in the middle of your screen
4. By clicking your camera will open up
5. Scan the QR Code on the bikes / Alternatively you can enter the bicycles number manually by clicking „Nummerneingabe“ on the bottom of the screen
6. The Lock will open up and you start your ride
7. If you registered with your FH Dortmund Data, you can use the bikes for free the first 60 Minutes of every ride

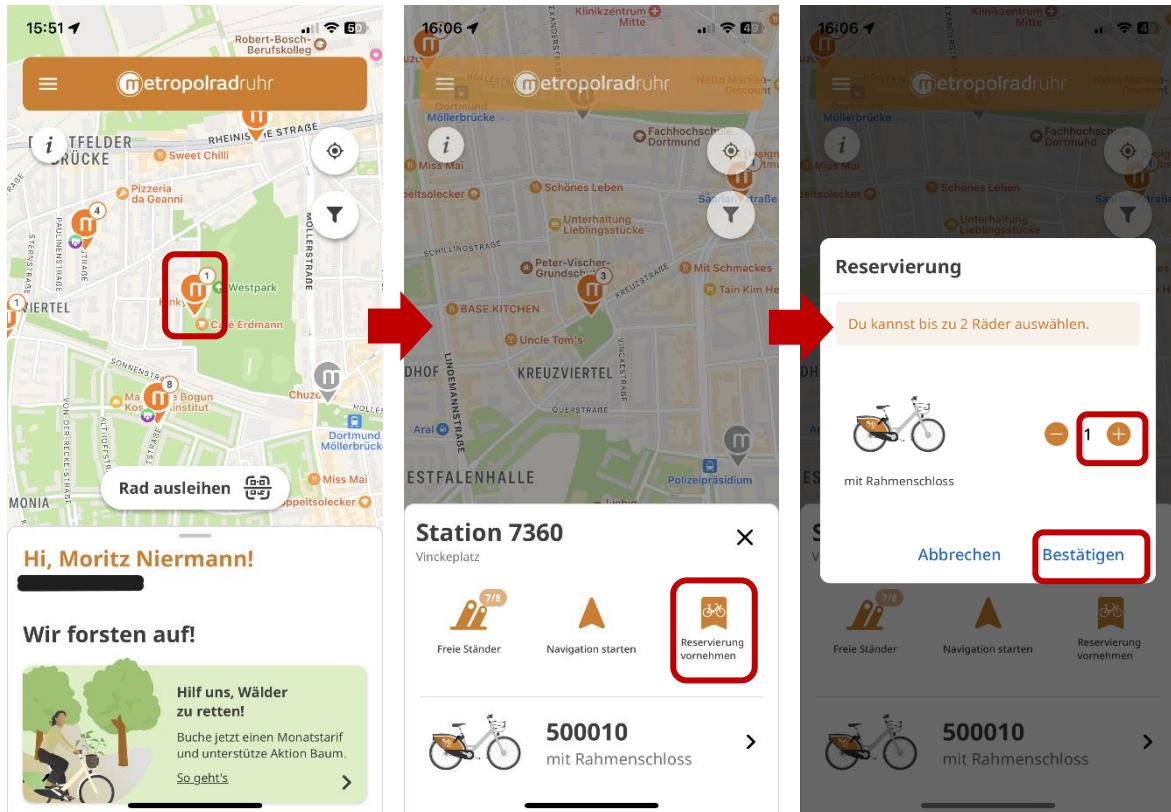


Returning the Bike

1. You need to return the bike at another station (Map will guide you to where the stations are in your surrounding area)
2. Once you arrived at the station you just push down the lock on the back wheel. You will hear mechanic beep sound indicating that the bike has successfully been returned. You do not need to open the App to return the bike. You will get a notification on your phone though after successfully returning the bike.

Good to know:

- You can make a **reservation** for a bike 30 minutes in advance (see pictures)
- If the button „Reservierung vornehmen“ is not orange but **gray**, you **cannot** make a reservation for the bike since it has already been reserved by someone else
- In this case you don't have to go to the station because it is not possible to rent the bike anyways (even if the number of bikes at the station indicates it; it's just bad design)



Stations on FH Dortmund Campuses

- Sonnenstraße 100 (Main entrance of building D)
- Emil-Figge-Straße 42
- Max-Ophüls-Platz 2
- All the other stations can be found on the Apps Map

7 Further Information

Website of FH Dortmunds CSR-Office (Responsible for anything concerning ecological or social sustainability at the University):

<https://intranet.fh-dortmund.de/hochschule/organisation/dezernate/organisations-und-perspektivmanagement/perspektivmanagement/gesundheitsmanagement/gesundheitscampus-fuer-studierende>

Website of FH Dortmunds Gesundheitscampus (Health Campus):

<https://intranet.fh-dortmund.de/hochschule/organisation/dezernate/organisations-und-perspektivmanagement/organisationsmanagement/organisationsentwicklung/nachhaltigkeit/nachhaltigkeit-csr>

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HEP-Projekt „Mobilitätsmanagement“

Moritz Niermann