

Trike, Bike or Recumbent?

Meniere's stops many cyclists from riding.

But - I have I put the word out there to find out if there were MD sufferers cycling.

This document is for those who have cycled before and feel the time is right to get back on your bikes. I feel the time is right for me, however, after gentamicin my balance isn't what it used to be hence this research.

Perhaps this feedback and research may help you decide if you do take that step.

Do you get back on your old bike or buy one suitable for your needs i.e. sport, transport, touring or shopping.

PLEASE NOTE:

- There is a lot to consider if you want to ride again.
- We are all at various stages of Meniere's so it may not be timely.
- Cycling is not for everyone.
- When the time is right you will know.
- Maybe you have said goodbye to cycling and have decided to try something new?

Cyclists' feedback – bikes and trikes

Dizzy No. 1: Rides a bike and is bilateral

D1 has severe bilateral Meniere's now at burnout stage. Inner-ear balance is poor but D1 has been able to compensate in everyday life with the use of vision & proprioception. When vision is unavailable (if it is very dark, for example), he is quite unsteady.

He still rides a bike. He can manage, provided the bike is a **mountain bike style or a hybrid style**. With these types of bicycle he can ride sitting upright, using vision continually. It helps him to stay seated, as that gives another point of reference for balance. So one has five reference points, the others being the hands on the handlebars, and the feet on the pedals. This gives maximum opportunity for proprioception to play a role in maintaining balance while riding.

He suspects he would be unable to ride a road bike, of the sort where you hunch over the handlebars. And of course he would not attempt to ride at night. Until recently he had been riding 10kms, three days a week and hoping to get back to regular bike rides soon.

What is important he said is being **able to continually keep one's eyes on the road or pathway ahead**. He believes that posture, in itself, is not the important factor.

He envies the way other riders can take their eyes off the road ahead (for example to look at their phone). He would go off course (at the very least), if he tried to do that. He is very dependent on vision for balance and direction.

He can't help much on the comfort question as he does not do long rides. Maximum these days would be 15 km. He can say he hasn't had any problems with respect to comfort in my rides. He adds he is not a fast rider, the speed limit on the shared pedestrian & bike path he uses is 10 km/h does not go much over that.

He has never had a problem about balance on his bike. Sometimes he thinks his balance better on the bike than walking! He said if you are in a position to borrow or hire a hybrid bike, or a mountain bike, and take it for a ride on a safe bike path? His prediction is that you'll be fine!

He wouldn't make that prediction to someone with little previous experience of bike riding, but if you have previous bike-riding experience, you have all that "muscle-memory" just waiting to be activated again.

Dizzy No. 2 – Rides a bike

Was a keen cyclist before, during and now post Meniere's disease. He resisted gentamicin and can still ride well with only the slight issue of not keeping the perfect line when looking back over the shoulder.

He has suggested:

- An upright regular trike may not be the best for good cornering capabilities. Gormier has a 6 speed. There are many others. Electric trikes are very heavy.
- Asked me if I considered a recumbent trike? They would handle much better and be available with a great range of gearing as they use a regular derailleur and cluster set up. He has not ridden one though.
- However he agrees with me that they are low with visibility issues but you can have flags and lights. Riding on the road is dangerous in Sydney due to the local culture, which is why a lot of his riding is on cycle ways and quieter roads.

He suggested:

- Perhaps starting on an indoor trainer then riding carefully somewhere quiet.
- Maybe a bike with wider tyres could help with some stability.

He doesn't know of any made to measure companies. However the trikes seem quite adjustable with the chassis/crank mount simply shortening/lengthening with the Performer and Greenspeed brands.

DT recumbents in QLD seem to distribute some brands locally. Baccetta carbon trike –it looks so fast!

Suggested Websites:

<https://www.bicyclestore.com.au/gomier-20-tricycle-6-speed.html>

<https://thebeastreviews.com/best-adult-tricycles/>

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1CHBD_en-GBAU762AU762&q=performance+tricycles+with+gears&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjE9M6GovjoAhWL4jgGHckxDZgQsAR6BAGKEAE

<https://freedomwheels.org.au/bike/recumbent-trike/>

<https://ilcaustralia.org.au/products/21620>

<https://trikeasylum.wordpress.com/rider-stories/triker-jen-greenspeed/>

<https://www.dtreccumbents.com.au>

Dizzy No. 3 – Rides a bike - three gentamicin injections

Can still ride a bike. No issues with balance. She has no issues with riding and turning her head. **She is unilateral so she feels that is the reason** Is fine on a normal road bike as well but likes the idea of a trike.

She has had three gentamicin injections now, with the associated vestibular rehabilitation. She did **replace the 'click ins' with straight pedals**, because it is less stressful. She no longer tears along - but is ok otherwise

She is also unilateral and suggests perhaps that makes the difference. It also took some time (actually about 10 months) after the last gentamicin to feel confident enough to have a go. She is reticent to ride too far from home alone the way she used to. Her husband rides as well and they generally go together. She does not do the tough and long rides she used to do but is perfectly ok over shorter and flatter distances.

She has had no falls and no problem turning her head to look at obstacles

Dizzy No. 4

Never had any problems turning her head but never went on roads. Was only riding around pathways where there was little chance of obstacles. But the one and only time she tried ice skating- THAT was a different story!

Dizzy No. 5 – rides a tricycle

She has just bought a tricycle. It has 7 gears and came flat packed. Her husband is handy and easily assembled it with the aid of a detailed instruction booklet. It was not expensive at only \$329 free shipping. Came in a matter of days from eBay. Australian distributor. GG is looking forward to trying the new mode of transport which will give a new sense of freedom.

Dizzy No. 6 – rides a tricycle

Has had Meniere's since she was 26 and is now 60.

She has been riding a 5 gear trike for over 13 years with no issues at all. She manages through diet alone and still gets dizzy but puts it down to stress. She bought a standard trike with a basket on the back for shopping.

Her one word of advice is: when riding the trike do not attempt to lean your body to either side when going around corners as this will unbalance the trike. Riding a trike is nothing like riding a bicycle. You have to keep your body in an upright position at all times, turning the handlebars only to turn a corner. You also have to remember that the trike is quite wide when passing pedestrians on shared lanes.

Her bike is made of steel and manufactured in Taiwan. It has front and rear brakes and has 5 gears. Most of the time I am in 1st gear due to the local terrain. I have a large seat for comfort.

She originally tried to purchase an alloy trike which would have been a lot lighter to manage but was unable to get one at the time. The trike she owns originally had a large metal cage on the back which weighed a ton when lifting the trike over gutters. The plastic box I have now is very handy to carry water, groceries etc.

As a child she did not have a bike due to balance problems and in her forties tried with disastrous results.

She loves the freedom her trike gives her and the only accessory she would buy would be rear view mirrors.

Dizzy No. 7 – rides a bike – unilateral MD

Does not know the extent of her Meniere's but said she has one-sided Meniere's (so far, she has her fingers crossed) and imagines, in the burnt out phase (over a year without a really bad attack)

Whilst her balance is not what it used to be, after venturing back on her regular bike recently, with some trepidation, has found that she can still ride it OK. She and her husband are enjoying the safe and scenic rides at ebikerdiary.com

She has no advice on tricycles.

Dizzy No. 8 – rides a bike

Has had MD of VM for 11 years and **when not having attacks has no problem cycling**. She has an exercise bike

Dizzy No. 9 – wants to buy a bike

Has been looking for an option to try one out before buying. He can be sent off balance when walking with his rollator if the surface is rough it changes shape

Dizzy 10 – is able to ride but not at moment

Is able to ride a bike, though has not done so for quite some time. The last time he rode one was after a 20 year gap and was totally fine. He is aware he can get recumbent trikes where you sit in a reclining position.

Dizzy 11 – rides a skateboard

Its not cycling but still rides a skateboard, only on flat ground now after breaking his collarbone a few years back riding at the skate park. For many years he used to ride a half pipe even after diagnosis. He broken bones were due to skateboard and not dizzies!

Dizzy 12 – Marathon rides

One wrote in about a rider who rides a marathon bike and has one or both cochlear implants. He has ups and downs but he seems to be persistent and copes well. He wants a tricycle himself.

Dizzy 13 – might buy an E-bike

Has been riding a bike since she was a kid and got a bike now, which she rides occasionally. She finds it is getting harder to ride in Sydney as it is too crowded and getting up the hills. She is contemplating of getting an E-Bike sometime in the future.

DIZZY 14 - would like to restore his bike

and also thinking about the alternative:

<https://recumbent.net.au/recreational-recumbents/>

Summary of above:**Bikes:**

- Some find they can get back on their bike and have no problem
- For some touring or mountain bikes suit as they are more stable
- Any balance concerns, think about stabilisers until you feel confident.

Tricycles/Cargo Trikes:

- Before you buy one you need to understand cornering is different to riding a bike.
- If not steered correctly, you can tip.
- However, this is something that can be learnt.
- As always, try before you buy.
- They are heavier than a bike and some heavier than others.
- You may not find one under 20kgs.

Electric bikes/trikes:

- You can let it do all the work for you or you can do some or all of the work.
- As they are heavier than a normal bike going up a hill is hard work so you need the battery.
- You can control how much work it does for you going up that hill!

Recumbent Trikes:

- No feedback from this group re recumbent.
- There are wonderful trikes so depending on the type of cycling you want to do
- Most fast trikes are low to the ground, so this could be an issue on a busy road as you are below the view line of the car.
- You would need to use flags or lights high up so that the driver of a car would know you are riding alongside the vehicle.

Bike Stabilisers:

- Can be found on some disability websites
- This is a suggestion for those who want to get back on their bikes.
- It may help you get your confidence back or for those who want to learn to ride.
- There are adult stabilisers and the thicker the stabilizer tyres are the better.
- However, as there is little information on this so you will have to research whether this is suitable for your or not.

Below is some research I did on trikes

Touring Trikes research:

Jan & Gareth Tempo

sales@tempotricycle.com

<https://www.tempotricycle.com/sports-touring-tricycles>

Their touring and racing trike is similar in handling and performance to a bicycle of the same standard. Basically it will have 700 wheels that will take 25 (racing) to 43 (touring), choose of handlebars, 21 speed, braking on all 3 wheels and a safety bar at the back.

Gears: 21 gears

Breaking: on all 3 wheels

Corner stability:

- 90 degree turns at speed - you will need to slow down.
- Once you have the experience and confidence in the tricycle you will be able to lean away to help balance the trike.

Your height and weight:

They can make the frame to suit your size, which in itself will improve performance.

Rack:

There is an attachment at the rear of the trike has opportunities to make a rack for panniers or loads, which can incorporate the safety bar at the back

They are manufacturers so they can make it to suit

- The tricycle with an alloy frame is more expensive.
- A similar tricycle with a Cromoly frame (the previous racing standard, slightly heavier) is better value for money.

Handlebars: You can choose

They are custom made to your size

Average price is \$2,450 plus freight from Brisbane.

Freight to Sydney will be about \$250.

They are a Brisbane Company with their own manufacturing factory in Fiji

A custom made trike will be made only after receiving a firm order. The dimensions are the same as you would find on a racing bicycle so you have the same fit. The only noticeable difference is the cycle is ridged. They have been making trikes for more than 50 years, before that they made road and track racing frames.

Tricycle

Ben Goodall

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<https://trisled.com.au/>

I asked about a road and touring trike for long distance "Victoria". However he feels for touring purposes it is more as a mobility style device and would not be suitable for long distance. **He suggested that for tricycles, a recumbent style trike would be more appropriate**, there are a few off the shelf options but they don't sell them.

Tricycles

<https://www.bicyclestore.com.au/bikes/adult-trikes/gomier-2500-series-6-speed-shimano-24-adult-tricycle-bright-red.html>

<https://www.bikes.com.au/trikes/gomier/>

They have a range of tricycles with different speeds

Their trikes offer single, 3 and 6 speed gears in 20", 24" and 26" wheel sizes

Cargo Tricycle

www.facebook.com/krankiecycles/

www.facebook.com/krankiecycles/

Developer & Founder: Andrew Graf

Email: agraf@krankie.com.au

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DISTRIBUTORS:

Melbourne: <https://cargocycles.com.au/>

Adelaide: <https://treadlybikeshop.com.au/>

Australian Made:

Aluminium Frame

Can carry up to 80kgs, 120L Cabin

Customisable with many options available including a door, child seat & harnesses, tilt lock for loading/unloading, lockable lid, security lock & chain etc,

Other features

– Front mono-shock suspension for a smooth ride for either the rider & passenger or cargo.

– **Lean angle of up to 20 degrees**

– 24" front wheels for lower rolling friction.

There is one frame size only, but there are a number of things that can be done to accommodate people of varying heights.

For handlebar reach, there are 3 stem lengths to choose from 40,80 & 110mm. The stems can also be spun around 180 degrees (towards the rider), bringing them much closer if required

Tim Marquardt

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www.trisled.com.au

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Trisled/164374643594582>

My enquiry was regarding road/touring bike trikes. They sell two which may be suitable:

Gizmo – A light, quick touring trike –

<http://trisled.com.au/hpv/gizmo/>

Rotovelo – A fully enclosed trike suitable for commuting or touring -

<http://trisled.com.au/hpv/rotovelo-2/>

They can arrange a test ride at a time to suit.

When money is not an issue!

Cargo Trike – Made in Denmark, available in Australia

If you want to spend over \$11,000!

This cargo bike is amazing and you can watch how it rides on you tube if you want to spoil yourself. It's an electric trike. It is one of the best in the world for tilting and cornering. It is heavy but a great fun bike.

<https://cargocycles.com.au/product/butchers-bicycles-mk1e-cargo-bike>

Even if I had the money, I would not buy it as there is only one standard size. They don't suit short people like me!

RECUMBENT TRIKES:

<https://www.icetrikes.co/products/adventure>

This trike has great cornering, comfortable seating, 30 gears and available in Australia. Expensive but stable.

<https://recumbent.net.au>

<http://greenspeed-trikes.com>

Finally,

If anyone does buy a bike, trike or recumbent I would love to hear about your experience so we can share your story with others.

As I said earlier this is based on dizzy cyclists and their opinions and I think you can't get better advice that!

I hope this helps.

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