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Sidewalk Etiquette

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sidewalk etiquette

By NICOLE GUSTAFSON
Illustration SETH LUNSFORD

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I get 10 minutes to walk between classes in Hamilton Hall and Design. Anyone familiar with campus knows that’s a bit of a trek, but I manage to make it to class only a minute or two late. What doesn’t help me out, though, is all the people walking around like they’ve never used a sidewalk before. Allow me to review for you some simple rules. Read them, remember them and try not to get in the way anymore.

walkers

1. If you can’t text, talk or select a song and walk at the same time, then you don’t belong on the sidewalk with everyone that can. Most people are trying to get to class in a timely manner, and you slow our progress when you fail at multitasking.

2. Do not, I repeat, do not stop for a long period of time in the middle of the sidewalk. There is plenty of grassy space for you to stand and do nothing.

3. Not very observant? Don’t feel bad, you’re not alone. Here’s something it seems most people haven’t thought of – people on CyRide are trying to get to class too. We learn in preschool how to take turns, so what makes people think that it doesn’t apply to them when they cross the street? The bus needs to be on time, too.

4. Ok, I get it. You’re so popular that you walk everywhere with a huge entourage and you all have to be side by side. I don’t care. Other people have just as much right to the sidewalk. Have some of your friends fall in step behind the rest of the group. Otherwise, next time, I might not move out of the way for you.

bikers

1. Don’t pass someone so closely that you come within inches of hitting them. This is common sense! You would be pretty pissed if someone walked by you, swinging their backpack and knocked you off your bike. Unless the person is wearing a University of Iowa shirt, give them some space.

2. If you are about to pass someone who might not be aware of your presence, don’t just sneak up on them. One night I was walking on campus, and there was no one around me. It was dark, and a bicyclist flew by, almost hitting me. It scared the crap out of me, but after I calmed down, I couldn’t believe that person had been such a dick. He didn’t even give me any kind of warning. We all know college students love to use their mouths for various things. Next time, use it to tell someone you’re about to pass them.

3. Some people don’t think bikes belong on campus sidewalks at all. Bikes traveling quickly can be dangerous to walkers if they get in a crash. On the other hand, bicyclists argue that they have just as much right to use the sidewalks and that walkers should take responsibility for their own safety. Breanna Lubkeman, sophomore in history, says, “It is way easier for people who are walking to move out of the way than it is for someone on a bike who is going really fast.” Regardless of your position, bicycles are still allowed on the sidewalks, so we should all try to share the space.

Has CyRide ever stopped a block away from you only to stay there for a solid ten minutes? Check out ethosmagazine.org to see what the hell they’re doing!