

May Training Tip

Understanding pedal pressure and knowing why you are in the gear you are in

YOUR GOAL AS AN ENDURANCE ATHLETE IS TO EFFECTIVELY TURN AS MUCH ENERGY FROM YOUR MUSCLES INTO FORWARD MOTION. YOU WANT USE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF ENERGY TO COVER THE DISTANCE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. CADENCE, THE RIGHT GEAR SELECTION AND YOUR POSITION ON THE BIKE ARE KEY FACTORS IN BECOMING A MORE EFFICIENT CYCLIST.

Cadence - If you're relatively new to cycling, you maybe riding at a cadence that is below your optimum. There is something about feeling burning of the quads that we think makes a better workout- and there is a time and a place for low-cadence workouts when in a strength portion of your training, but during a normal base

ride, aim for a smooth spin at between 85-100 rpm (pedal revolutions per minute) which is much more efficient



-- and easier on the legs, especially the knees.

Although your cadence can be increased through training, it may not fit with your personal physiology and biomechanics, so the key is to determine your riding style and play! The make-up of your leg muscles (the ratio of fast-twitch to slow-twitch fibers), combined with your fitness, will play a large role in what cadence you default to.

In your training you can become more aware of what your default is during your warm-up. Pedal for a good 20-30mins getting used to moving say after a day of work to warm-up the body - then see where you are at. Either check out your cadence on your computer or count your cadence to see where you are settling into. This is not about feeling you should be anywhere right now - this is all about seeing where you settle in. If you find you are below 90 then do a few(4-10) x 1min of faster than your normal cadence by just 8-10rpms with 2-3 mins easy between to see if you can stimulate that quicker feel in your legs. If you

find you are spinning already at a high cadence (100+) then you may want to add a bit more resistance so you are not just spinning without feeling the sensation of that pedal. In this situation you will want to do a few(4-10) x 1min efforts in a harder gear - again just 8-10 change in your rpms - so closer to 90rpms. Then carry on with the rest of your workout.

A smooth pedal stroke without any dead spots is key in being the most efficient cyclist you can be. We often practice single leg drills on our trainer during the winter but come spring and the tires hit the road we often forget the simple act of our single leg drill. I encourage you to practice this very effective drill on the road (may I make a note.....A VERY QUIET ROAD WHERE YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT TRAFFIC AS YOU CLIP AND UNCLIP). You may feel a number of things such as the sensation of stopping and starting, a bit of a hiccup as you move across the earth. Ideally you want to work towards smooth movement as you roll over the earth.

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