

Stretching: To help you optimise the performance of your body, prevent injury and aid recovery.



Hip Flexors

It is important for cyclists to stretch their hip flexors in order to increase mobility through the hip joint.

Hold the stretch for 1 minute on each side and repeat twice.



Hamstrings

It is renowned for cyclists to have tight hamstrings. This prevents utilising the glute muscles to their full potential and can lead to a sore lower back. Make sure to stretch your hamstrings after every ride.

Try this developmental stretch over 2 minutes and increase gradually.



Glutes

This is an important muscle to stretch to increase mobility in the hips and boost cycling efficiency.

Hold this stretch for 1 minute per side and repeat twice.



Lower Back

Riding on a road bike can be painful for anyone not used to an extreme position and if the legs are tight it can often pull the lower back. Try this stretch to keep the lower back supple and mobile.

Repeat for 10 repetitions and hold for 3 seconds per side.



Quadriceps

This will be the main muscle group working during cycling. The aim is to touch your heel to your bum when holding this important stretch.

Hold for 2 minutes per side and repeat twice.



Child's Pose

This gently stretches the hips, thighs and ankles. It can also help to relieve head and neck pain which can occur after a long ride.

Hold for 1 minute whilst relaxing your breathing.

My Functional Threshold Power – FTP

Functional Threshold Power or FTP for short is commonly defined as the highest average power you can sustain for an hour, measured in WATTS. FTP is often used to determine training zones when using a power meter and to measure improvement.

The beginner FTP test is 5 minutes long using a WATTBIKE or another bike with the ability to measure power in WATTS. You will need to know your average WATT score at the end of the 5 minutes to complete the FTP calculation below:

5 min WATT average X 0.85 = **YOUR FTP**

In this training programme we will use this test to measure improvement over the 12 weeks. The higher your average WATT score, the more power you will be able to sustain whilst out on the road. It will be a simple, easy way to prove to yourself that you are making improvements throughout the programme.

During the **FTP** test and whilst cycling out on the road you should aim for a high cadence/RPM (revolutions per minute)

Out on the Road

The optimum cadence is **70-100rpm**

Cadence rates will vary between individuals but remember to go with what feels right but bear in mind that a slower cadence with a harder gear will have a greater impact on your muscle fatigue. This is known as 'grinding' your gears and should be avoided. Your aim is to hold a smooth cadence so that you can tackle any challenge as efficiently as possible.

Examples of riders being successful with different cadences are; Nairo Quintana (multiple Grand Tour winner) who has a cadence of 70rpm whilst climbing. At the other extreme Chris Froome (4 time Tour De France winner) has a cadence of 100-110rpm.

Rate of Perceived Exertion – RPE

High intensity rides, such as your Wednesday and Friday rides, are shorter in time but higher in effort levels. You should aim to push your **RPE** (i.e. effort level) to try to find the limits within your own capability.

Meanwhile the longer but less intense rides will have a lower **RPE**. These rides should be focused on duration and comfort. Secondary objectives for these rides include; finding a consistent cycling style, working on controlling your outputs and understanding when and where to take on food and fluids.

Cycling Nutrition

Talking Points

Hydration

Hydration is No.1 when it comes to maximising performance and energy on the bike. In simple terms, you should drink whenever you feel thirsty but for a more measured approach look to take on 500ml to 1ltr of fluid per hour depending on your sweat rate. However, taking on just water may not be enough...you may want to try an Electrolyte Drink during your ride, which will help replenish the salts lost through sweat. These salts help fluid be absorbed and retained by the body hence keeping you better hydrated.

After your ride it is important to replenish fluids lost through exercise. A good option is to weigh yourself before and after your ride and for every 1 kilogram of bodyweight lost you will need to drink 1 litre of water to rehydrate your cells.

Pre ride

Roughly 2-3 hours before riding you should look to take on a good portion of slow release carbohydrates, such as porridge. Then 10-15 minutes before your event starts remember to top up with a smaller portion of carbohydrate such as a banana or a gel.

During Your Ride

If you are doing a shorter ride (anything up to 1 hour) and you have eaten well throughout the day then you should not need to eat. If you are doing anything over 1 hour you should look to take on approximately 2 servings (60-90 grams) of carbohydrate per hour. Some great sources of performance carbohydrates are energy drinks, bars and gels, however you could look to make your own oat based bars or rice cakes, this way you will know exactly what has gone in them.

Post Ride

After your ride it is important to replenish the nutrients that your body has used as soon as possible, ideally within an hour of finishing. A balanced meal of carbohydrate, protein and healthy fats will help boost your energy stores and rebuild your muscles stronger for the next ride.

Lean meats such as chicken/turkey together with lots of vegetables and a serving of brown rice/pasta is the ideal post-ride meal. If this is unavailable to you then a balanced protein shake or bar is an option.

TOP TIP **'SPIN TO WIN'**

A phrase to remember when tackling those tough climbs

TOP TIP

Make sure your Nutrition routine is tried and tested so that you know what works for you