Indoor Cycling: Improve Your Fitness, Boost Your Income

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UNIT ONE

A Beginner's Guide to Indoor Cycling

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It's understandable to be apprehensive when trying a new type of fitness training—as a trainer or a client. Because you're unfamiliar, you don't know what to expect. You may also not know how to maximize that specific exercise to get the results you want. If this is where you stand regarding indoor cycling, this first unit is for you.

The Essentials of Indoor Cycling

Indoor cycling, sometimes called cycling, is a form of exercise that involves using a stationary bike in an indoor setting. This activity is primarily cardio, boosting your heart rate. That said, it does also promote the growth of lean muscle tissue.

The exercise bike typically used in indoor classes has a weighted flywheel. This allows the rider to vary workout intensity. Some bikes alter intensity automatically, such as when using a software or internet-based cycling program. Older bikes may require you to adjust intensity manually via a resistance knob.

Benefits of Indoor Cycling

Using an indoor cycling bike offers many advantages. Here are a few to consider:

- **Great for weight loss.** Research indicates that sedentary, overweight women lost between 2.6 and 3.2 percent of their body weight after indoor cycling for 12 weeks. Their fat mass reduced by up to 5 percent too. That makes this a great workout for clients who are interested in shedding a few pounds. A 150-pound person who engages in 45 minutes of medium intensity cycling burns around 462 calories.
- **Builds a strong lower body.** Cycling is primarily a lower-body workout. It works all of the muscles in your legs—your quads, hamstrings, and calves—as well as your glutes. With each pedal stroke, your lower body becomes stronger and more fit.
- **Works your core.** One way that an indoor bike trainer increases intensity is to have you rise off your seat and pedal as fast you can. Keeping your body balanced requires that you engage your core muscles. Your abdominal area becomes stronger as a result.
- **Ability to alter your resistance.** When you cycle outside, your path dictates the level of resistance. If you live in a flat area, this makes it difficult to get a good uphill challenge. An indoor cyclist doesn't have this issue. You can alter the resistance on the bike itself. You decide whether the workout is easy or tough without having to pick a new path.
- **Out of the weather.** While you can bike in the rain and snow, this type of weather can lead to slippery surfaces. This increases your risk of wiping out and potentially being injured. Indoor training is available no matter what it's like outside. As long as you can get to your bike, you will get a good workout.
- **Away from traffic.** Another hazard associated with outdoor training is related to safety. Approximately 857 cyclists are killed annually in traffic crashes. Taking your workout indoors eliminates this risk. Plus, many of these deadly accidents occur between the hours of 6 and 9 pm. If you want to exercise after work, indoor training helps you stay safe in the process.

Indoor Training Options for Cycling

You have three options when it comes to indoor cycling. One is joining a cycling class. Most of the large fitness facilities offer at least one class. Other businesses specialize in cycling and don't offer any other type of workout. A quick search of "indoor cycling classes near me" will provide a few options local to you.

If the idea of working out with others makes you smile, joining an indoor cycling class is a great way to mix social time with exercise. If you'd rather do your workout alone, cycling at home may feel like a better option.

Purchase a stationary bike and you can do your solo workout whenever you'd like. Several companies sell indoor bikes. You can get a Peloton bike, Wahoo KICKR, Fluid Trainer, or some other brand. Additionally, you can purchase an upright bike or a recumbent bike. The list goes on and on.

A third option is to turn your road bike into a stationary bike with the help of a turbo trainer. A turbo trainer suspends your rear wheel in the air. This allows you to pedal yet remain stationary. If you are comfortable with technology, you can purchase a smart trainer instead. A smart trainer is a turbo trainer that uses software to change and control your resistance.

Tips for Picking the Right Indoor Cycling Class

Should you decide to join a cycling class, it's important to choose one that you'd enjoy. You want a class that makes you look forward to returning week after week. How do you find this type of cycling class?

- Pick a cycling class that matches your fitness level so you don't feel overwhelmed
- Choose a class based on your fitness goals as some are strictly cardio whereas others combine cardio with strength training
- Select a class that fits well with your schedule, increasing the likelihood that you'll go
- Research what type of music they play (it's more fun to exercise to your favorite tunes!)
- Call the facility and ask about class size so you can pick a session comfortable for you

If you feel nervous walking into your first indoor cycling class, speak with the bike trainer beforehand. This gives you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. It also allows you to share your anxieties, which any good trainer will instantly put to ease.

Arriving early is also beneficial in that it gives you time to adjust your indoor bike. Saddle height, saddle position, and handlebar height can all affect your ride. Ask the trainer for help. This ensures that your ride will be comfortable. It also reduces your risk of injury.

Indoor Cycling at Home

One of the main concerns when cycling at home is whether the workout is effective. If you are worried about this too, an indoor trainer can devise a cycling program that will help you meet your fitness goals. They also know

how to change it up from time to time so you continue to progress. This could include creating a program that gets progressively harder the longer you pedal. Another option is to incorporate interval training. This involves alternating between low and high-intensity segments multiple times throughout the workout session.

Some bikes come with software or an internet-based training program. This provides access to a variety of cycling programs at the touch of your fingertip.

Want to learn how to build a safe and effective exercise program? Check out the ISSA's Personal Training course online. You can learn about the science behind health and fitness for your own benefit or to help others get fit and build a healthy lifestyle.

UNIT TWO

Fuel Your Ride: Cycling Pre-Workout Nutrition

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It's a well-known fact that when we exercise, we must fuel our body correctly to support the activity we are doing. It's a lesser-known fact what exactly this "correct" fuel is.

The reason there is so much confusion around this topic is that it depends on so many variables. One such variable is the type of exercise you are performing. In this article, we are going to uncover the basics of cycling nutrition and understand how to stay strong during rides and improve your overall performance.

What Can the Right Nutrition Do for Your Body During a Cycling Workout?

You would never take your car out for a long weekend drive without first fueling it up properly; no one wants to get stranded on the side of the road. Just as important is fueling up properly before we exercise. When we don't get the right nutrition, our bodies experience a lack of power and endurance. We may even feel a little bit fatigued or dizzy. It's important to eat before exercise to ensure adequate and sustained energy throughout your ride.

The calories you eat prior to a ride can have a major bearing on your overall performance. Eating before you exercise helps to top off the body's glycogen stores. Glycogen is the stored form of glucose within the body. It is stored in the liver as well as skeletal muscle where it serves as a form of energy storage for the muscles themselves. Eating before you exercise ensures you have a full tank of glycogen stores in both your skeletal muscles as well as the liver.

Skeletal muscle glycogen is the first source of energy your muscles will tap into on your ride. This is ideal, as the breakdown of muscle glycogen during exercise impedes the muscles' ability to take up glucose from the blood. This leaves glucose in the blood more readily available for use in other body tissues during your ride.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOT PREPARE FOR CYCLING WORKOUT WITH PROPER NUTRITION?

Failing to fuel properly for a ride can lead to early fatigue and burnout. Inadequate nutrition, or poor nutrition, can lead to a lack of endurance and power and can lead to early fatigue and dizziness.

Fueling with inadequate calories leads to your glycogen stores depleting very quickly. Because the muscles do not have enough stored energy of their own, shortly into your ride they will start to draw glucose from the blood for fuel.

This is not necessarily a bad thing as it is a normal and healthy response during exercise. But when there is only so much fuel to go around, your body will always prioritize keeping essential functions running. This means that fuel is going to go to keeping your heart pumping first rather than keeping your legs pedaling. By fueling up before your ride your body will have more energy to go around, leading to a longer, stronger workout.

HOW DO YOU IMPROVE YOUR CYCLING PERFORMANCE THROUGH NUTRITION?

Calories from food serve as fuel for the body. And just like in your car, not all fuel forms are equal in terms of quality. It's your choice to fill with quick cheap fuel or load up on high-octane fuel. Your engine will run either way, but you won't get the same level of performance from both types of fuel. It's important to fuel your body with clean and sustainable energy.

Best Foods to Eat Before A Cycling Workout: High-Octane Fuel

Understanding the importance of fueling your body with the right calories before you exercise is just the first step. The next step is understanding what high-octane fuel for your body looks like. What foods are going to give you the best energy before going cycling?

A pre-ride meal should be something easy to digest and consist of familiar enjoyable foods. When you are going out for a long bike ride, it's not the best time to experiment with new foods your body hasn't encountered much before. Pick something simple and familiar, rich in carbohydrates and moderate protein.

CARBOHYDRATES

To best fill up glycogen stores before a ride, foods rich in carbohydrates have shown to be the best choice. Carbohydrate calories can be used as an immediate fuel source or stored in glycogen and adipose tissue to draw on for later energy needs.

Because carbohydrates are the body's main source of fuel, embarking on a low-carb diet may not provide the best energy for your cycling goals. Some diets that have proven beneficial for cyclists are carb cycling and high carbohydrate diets. Diets that consist of a healthy volume of carbohydrates effectively load your body's glycogen stores and prepare you to perform at your best.

The type of carbohydrates you choose for your pre-ride meal is equally important. Simple carbohydrates are broken down very quickly by the body and don't provide long term energy. Simple carbs are great for quick energy boosts, but if you're heading out for a long bike ride, they are not ideal. Complex carbs are a great energy source as they are broken down slowly by the body and provide a sustained energy source.

One popular complex carbohydrate is quinoa. Quinoa provides double the amount of protein in comparison to regular grains at 8 grams of protein per cup. It's great for providing slow-release energy during a long ride. It's also a very versatile food and can be added to both sweet and savory dishes.

Bananas are also a great option before a ride as they are packed with loads of potassium. Potassium is an electrolyte that helps nerve and muscle function during your workout which can help to avoid cramping during your ride.

Peanut butter is a great addition to add in some extra grams of protein and healthy fats to create a killer pre-workout meal.

PROTEIN

Protein provides essential calories and amino acids to be included in your pre-cycling meals. Protein is essential in helping build and repair muscle mass. Eating protein before your ride can promote a better anabolic response as well as aid in muscle recovery and overall muscle performance.

Pairing a healthy protein source like a chicken breast with a healthy complex carb like a sweet potato is a great pre-ride meal. Protein powders are also a great way to get a quick source of protein in before a ride in an easily digestible form. Blending protein powders with 15 grams of nut butter into a smoothie is a great meal before a ride.

HYDRATE

It's important to drink enough fluid during your ride to promote better energy levels. Cyclists should be drinking about 1.5 to 2 liters of water per day plus additional fluids to match what was lost during their workout.

Milk has made its way to the main stage as a potentially beneficial sports drink. Replacing fluid and nutrients after an intense workout is critical to repairing and replenishing the muscles. Milk provides protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water which can be readily absorbed by the body to replenish nutrient stores after activity.

On the pre-activity side, energy drinks can be a helpful source to provide both fluid and fuel to the body during a long ride. Energy drinks serve two basic purposes: provide carbohydrates to fuel activity and replace electrolytes. The carbohydrates from energy drinks are quickly absorbed into the bloodstream and can be used to boost energy levels mid-ride. The caffeine in energy drinks can also provide a helpful energy boost during your ride.

Chia seeds are flavorless and can be added to just about any meal. These little seeds can play a critical part in the battle against dehydration. Because they can absorb about 30 times their weight in water, they help to regulate body fluids and retain electrolytes. Ground these seeds into a powder and add them to a sports or energy drink for an extra boost in energy and hydration.

Foods to Avoid Before a Cycling Workout

Foods rich in carbohydrates and moderate protein have been shown to be the best pre-fuel meal for a long ride. But certain foods should be avoided as they may sap your energy before a cycling workout.

Foods high in fat and fiber are not a great pre-ride energy source. Fat and fiber are digested by the body relatively slowly. Pre-ride fuel should be a good source of energy that can be broken down relatively quickly. Because fat and fiber take a while to digest, they stay in the stomach a lot longer. This can lead to that bogged down feeling

you may have experienced before when heading out for a ride. Fried food from most fast food joints is a meal to steer clear of when fueling for a ride.

Highly processed, simple carbohydrate sugary foods provide empty calories and are best to avoid before your ride. Breakfast cereals and yogurts are not great pre-ride nutrition choices as they are high in added sugars which contribute to the crash and burn phenomenon. The last thing you want when you set out for a long ride is to feel great the first 10 minutes and then hit a wall. The body breaks down these highly processed sugary foods almost instantaneously. They are used as immediate fuel and do not provide sustained energy.

Consuming foods with 20+ grams of added sugar before a cycling workout does not set your body up for performance success. The combination of very high sugar and low fiber foods leads to blood sugar and insulin spikes. These spikes are then accompanied by a crash where blood sugar levels tank and you find yourself hungry for more mid-ride. In addition, sugars lead the body to crave other sugary foods, thereby creating an energy-depleting cycle. It's best to avoid these sugary snacks before you exercise and opt for more sustainable energy sources.

Top Diet Plans for Cyclists

Finding the best nutrition plan for endurance athletes is a personal journey. Determining if your goals are to build muscle mass, promote weight loss, or build endurance are all factors to consider when developing your personalized plan. What works for one person, may not work for the next. Determining the best diet for your cycling endeavors can come down to trial and error. Cyclists that have the most effective diets are those that listen to the rhythms of their own body. Bodies change over time so what worked for you last month may not work for you next month.

The one thing that the best diet plans have in common is that they are specific to the cyclist. They include a focus on pre-workout as well as post-workout nutrition. It consists of a diet that provides energy to meet the demands and requirements of the task at hand and is adhered to with consistency. The most important thing is to find what works best for you and adjust while you go. Realize that your plan may change over time, and that's okay. Find what works best for you and track your progress over time.

UNIT THREE

Cycling + Strength Training: How Important is it to Do Both?

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Cycling is a great activity for health, fitness, and weight maintenance. It's also fun, especially when you take it out of the gym and into the real world. If you or your clients enjoy cycling, you're getting a lot of important benefits:

- Cycling is a great cardiovascular workout. It elevates the heart rate and leads to improved cardio fitness.
- For anyone with joint pain, cycling is easy on the knees and hips.
- Although not adequate alone as strength training, cycling does build muscle.
- Cycling also builds bone density as you push down on the pedals.
- Studies have found that cycling rather than driving to work reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer and even extends life expectancy[1].

But, keep in mind that the best way to overall fitness includes variation. Don't forget about weight training. Building muscle will provide many benefits, including improved cycling performance, endurance, and speed. It can also help you reverse the few negative consequences of spending a lot of time on a bike.

Remind your clients how important cross training is. It's great to get enthusiastic about a sport like cycling, but variation and cross training improves performance and overall fitness measures.

Do Cyclists Need to Strength Train?

Yes. Of course, everyone needs to incorporate strength training into their regular exercise routines, but there are some particular reasons for cyclists to prioritize it. As with any other sport, including regular resistance training will make you stronger, which in turn improves performance. Cycling is so much about leg strength, so why not build that when not on the bike?

Less obvious reasons strength training is important have to do with some of the harm that cycling can cause. Again, this isn't unique to cycling, but with any sport, too much of one movement can create overuse injuries, muscle imbalances, and pain. You need to include strength training to mitigate these.

Certain groups need strength training more than others. Everyone should be doing it, but older cyclists, for instance, really need these exercises to counteract the natural effects of muscle loss. Cycling helps build muscle, but it isn't enough. Aging naturally leads to declines in muscle mass that can be slowed and even reversed with the right training.

The Major Benefits of Both Cycling and Strength Training Exercises

Cyclists may focus on getting in miles on the bike, but they will also get serious benefits by spending some time in the gym. Regardless of the type of cardio activity or sport a person is involved in, strength training is important.

The right strength workout will improve and increase muscle mass, build bone strength and reduce the risk of injuries, improve flexibility in joints, help manage weight, shift to a healthier body composition, and just make everyday, functional movements easier. For cyclists in particular, there are specific benefits that come from adding in appropriate strength exercises.

MORE MUSCLE, BETTER PERFORMANCE

One of the most motivating factors in getting clients to add strength training is the potential benefit to performance. This is especially true for your competitors. Cyclists who participate in races, including endurance racing, will definitely see improvements in power, speed, and race times when they strength train regularly.

Cycling is largely a cardio sport, but to go fast and to go long you must have strength, especially in leg, core, and glute muscles. Strength training builds muscle, which in turn improves cycling performance measures. There are several studies to back this up:

- **Improved leg strength and power.** A study looked at a group of cyclists training for 12 weeks and then participating in a racing season for 13 weeks. They were divided into two groups based on training. One group only did endurance training, while the other included strength training as well. During the competition phase, those who did strength training had significantly greater improvements in leg strength power as compared to the other group [2].
- **Faster, more powerful race finishes.** In a similar study, cyclists were again separated by endurance training only and endurance along with strength training. The test at the end of the training period was an endurance ride ending in a sprint. Those who strength trained had lower heart rates and rates of oxygen consumption during the sprint. They also had more power [3].
- **Increased force, efficiency, and endurance.** Another study measured several other factors in two groups that used either endurance or endurance and strength training for race preparation. The strength training group saw big improvements in cycling economy, work efficiency, time to exhaustion, and development of force. All of these were significant compared to the control group and helped improve cycling performance [4].

Don't forget about nutrition for your endurance athletes. Fueling the right way for long rides is essential.

CORE STRENGTH FOR STABILITY AND ENDURANCE

Don't make the mistake of focusing solely on the powerful leg muscles. Cyclists also need core strength. On a bike you have to hold your body up and balance. This requires core strength. Targeted, regular core work will develop those muscles. This will help you stabilize better on the bike and be able to hold good form longer. Fatigue in the core can easily set in when doing long rides, which interferes with speed, power, and the ability to keep going.

CYCLING AND STRENGTH TRAINING BOOSTS OVERALL FITNESS

Strength training for anyone is good for overall fitness. The obvious result of including resistance and strength exercises is building strength. Muscles get bigger and stronger when you work them in the right ways.

But there are other fitness benefits too. Adding muscle mass increases metabolism, which in turn helps burn more fat. Changing body composition through strength training helps improve all areas of fitness. Strength training also improves cardiovascular fitness. If you're doing it right, your heart rate will get up and give you a good cardio workout. Strength training also helps improve general mobility and flexibility, including in the joints.

CORRECT MUSCLE IMBALANCES

Any type of repetitive activity, like cycling, will lead to imbalances in muscle strength over time, unless you correct for it with targeted training. When muscles are imbalanced it can lead to injuries and also significant pain.

Regular cycling tends to develop more strength in the quads and glutes. The hamstrings and hip flexors generally fall behind. Strength training that focuses on these muscles can help to avoid or correct problematic imbalances.

IMPROVE CYCLIST POSTURE

Another issue cyclists often face is poor posture. After spending so much time hunched over a bike, it's not surprising that you tend to develop a rounded, shoulder-forward posture. Specific strength and posture exercises will help correct this problem, which otherwise can lead to neck and back pain and tension.

Developing a Strength Training Plan

A strength training plan for cyclists should include overall body exercises but with a particular focus on lower body, core, and posture exercises. Change things up to hit all the important muscle groups. Some good exercises for lower body strength include:

- Straight-leg deadlifts
- Single-leg bridges
- Squats
- Hamstring curls
- Lunges

A core workout should include a variety of moves to strengthen the abs and back:

- Planks and plan variations
- Push-ups to renegade row
- Russian twists
- Back extensions
- Boat pose
- Bicycle crunches

To work on posture when not cycling, focus on stretching the chest and using these exercises to strengthen the back and shoulders:

- Reverse fly
- Lat pulldowns

- Renegade rows
- Overhead presses
- Bent over rows

Don't forget to add in some upper body training as well. It may not be as important for cycling, but arm, chest, and back strength is still beneficial, especially for posture and avoiding fatigue on long rides. Include stretching too. Cycling is like sitting for long periods of time in that it tightens up the hips. Do targeted hip stretches after every workout.

Making Time for Strength Training

Being enthusiastic about cycling is great. It's a sport that provides so many health and fitness benefits. But it can also take up a lot of your time. If you love to cycle, especially if you compete, you want to get out there and do as many miles as possible. It can be hard to justify time spent in the gym when you have other responsibilities.

- Use compound movements to make strength sessions more efficient and quicker.
- Find short times during the day to do just a few exercises at a time. For clients who work at a desk, getting up occasionally for strength training will benefit their hips too, giving them a chance to stretch and loosen the joints.
- Do strength training in the living room during TV time.
- Add in a few moves before and after each ride as a quick warm up and cool down that also become strength training sessions.
- Use rest days from cycling as strength training or gym days.
- Spend less time strength training without focus. A few exercises with perfect form and with an emphasis on the most important moves is much better than long sessions done without much thought.

Cycling is a great sport that many people enjoy. If you love to cycle or have clients who are enthusiasts, keep pushing for strength training. Two sessions a week will help improve fitness and strength, performance measures, and muscle imbalances and poor posture. It can be easy to get focused on cycling only, but you won't regret making time for strength training too.

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UNIT FOUR

Best Leg Workouts for Cycling Strength & Endurance

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Personal training clients have different preferences when it comes to exercise. They also have varying goals. Some engage in exercise to lose weight. Others are more intent on building muscle. Indoor cycling, which is increasing in popularity, does both.

Indoor Cycling Good Source of Cardio and Strength Training

Approximately 9.93 million Americans engage in group-based stationary cycling. This number has been rising steadily since 2013, when just over 8 million participated in this sport. That's in addition to those who work out an exercise bike in the comfort of their own home.

One benefit of using a stationary bike is that it is a good cardio workout. The faster you pedal, the more you raise your heart rate. This contributes to a stronger heart and lungs. Aerobic exercise also assists with weight loss. That makes indoor cycling helpful for clients who want to lose excess pounds. It even boosts immunity, improves sleep, and provides many other healthful benefits.

If you want a strength training workout for your lower body, indoor cycling delivers here as well. With each pedal stroke, you build your quadriceps, gluteal muscles, and hip flexors. Your hamstring and calf muscle are engaged too.

During times when you are standing off your seat, you work your upper body. You rely on your arms, chest, shoulders, and back to keep you upright. You also build your core with indoor cycling. Engaged abdominal muscles provide better balance and support.

For purposes of this article, we are going to focus solely on the leg muscles. Creating a training program geared toward this muscle group offers many advantages.

Benefits of a Cycling Workout that Improves Leg Strength and Endurance

Strong legs make it easier to get through your cycling workout. Your muscles can provide the power needed from the first pedal stroke to the last. The stronger each leg muscle is, the greater your ability to push through the resistance.

Leg training workouts that increase endurance prepares the lower body to engage in longer cycling sessions. It prepares the rider to go further distances. Plus, you will find that you aren't as tired after you are done.

Top Leg Workouts for Cycling Strength

A solid leg strengthening workout address three key muscles. They are the quads, hamstring muscles, and calves. These are the same muscles used during the pedal stroke. Leg building exercises that work each of these muscles and can help boost cycling strength include:

- **Squat.** The squat works every muscle in the leg. It also strengthens the glute muscles and the abs. For clients new to strength training, begin with a basic bodyweight squat. This enables them to learn proper form. Include squat variations for more experienced clients. The goblet squat and Bulgarian split squat are two to consider. This adds variety to the leg exercise program while working each muscle in a different way.
- **Deadlift.** If you want to work every muscle in the lower body, the deadlift is one way to go. Performing a Romanian deadlift puts even more muscle strain on the glutes and hamstrings. Single-leg deadlifts increase intensity too. Because single-leg exercises require a good deal of balance, they should only be used for clients who can perform them while remaining upright. This reduces the risk of injury.
- **Lunge.** A lunge works the quads, hamstrings, and glutes. For more of a focus on the latter two muscle groups, add a reverse lunge to the workout. Just be sure to do this exercise on each leg. Do a set of lunges stepping forward with your right leg, rest, then do lunges with your left leg. If you don't work the opposite leg, you risk imbalance in the muscles. A walking lunge is another option for clients with good balance. If lunges create knee pain, this exercise should be not be used in the leg workout.
- **Leg press.** The only difference between this thigh exercise and the others on this list is that it does require the use of a machine. If you work with clients in the gym, this shouldn't be an issue. However, if they do their workouts at home, a leg press may not be an option. The key to making the leg press effective is keeping the feet hip width apart. Bend the knees to a 90-degree angle to fully engage the quad muscle.
- **Calf raise.** Have you ever had a burning sensation in your calves after cycling? This highlights the importance of strengthening this muscle. Calf raises will do just that. Hold a dumbbell in each hand while performing this exercise. Increase the weight slowly over time to place more effort on this muscle.

Building maximal strength requires doing fewer reps (1-5) with higher loads (80 percent of one repetition maximum or higher). This forces the muscle to adapt and grow. Rest between single exercises is also generally longer. A typical range is between 3 and 7 minutes.

Building strength endurance requires a slightly different approach. In this case, repetitions are generally higher (13+) but the load is much less (40 percent one repetition max or lower). Rest between single exercises decreases as well. Between 2 and 5 minutes is usually enough.

Excellent Leg Workouts for Endurance

Increasing endurance involves creating a training program that increases the time spent cycling. This may require clients to cycle outdoors between in-gym training sessions. If they have a mini exercise bike at home, that works too.

If you track progress by distance, vary the distances the client rides. For instance, if they cycle for 5 miles on Monday, have them ride 8-10 miles later in the week. Another option is to track progress by time. Mix up 30, 60, and 90-minute workouts to help them increase endurance.

Plyometric exercises are also good for building endurance. They increase power too. One that is good for the legs is a squat jump. A squat jump helps increase leg explosiveness. So too do box jumps. If you use box jumps,

choose a box height that is difficult for your clients but not too high. Start with a lower height to get them used to the box and move up from there.

Combining Strength & Endurance Training for a Complete Leg Workout

A complete cycling workout program includes leg exercises geared toward both strength and endurance. This could involve focusing on strength one day and endurance the next. An example of this is:

- Monday – leg exercises (strength)
- Tuesday – cycling for 30 minutes (endurance)
- Wednesday – off
- Thursday - leg exercises (strength)
- Friday – cycling for 45 minutes (endurance)
- Saturday – off
- Sunday – light intensity cycling for 90 minutes (endurance)

Taking two rest days each week gives the muscle in the leg time to repair. If you work this muscle group every day, you risk overtraining. Injuries can occur, which means no cycling at all.

Interval training is another option. This type of workout helps clients boost strength and endurance in less time. Here is an example of a leg day workout based on intervals:

- Warm-up with light cycling – 5 minutes
- Moderate cycling intensity – 90 seconds
- High cycling intensity – 30 seconds
- Alternate between moderate and high intensity 4-9 more times
- Cool down with light cycling – 5 minutes

Because interval training is higher in intensity, it's best to space out this type of workout. Do it only once or twice per week so you don't work the muscle too hard.

UNIT FIVE

Why You Should Teach Cycling & Why Clients Should Try It

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Think about your last training session: Was it with one client or multiple? Was it a small group training or large?

Most people view personal training as more of a small group or private coaching atmosphere. Group fitness classes include any form of workouts that take place in a large group setting. These often include cycling classes, but encompass many others as well.

The requirements to become a group fitness instructor encompass more on how to conduct group workouts. Whereas personal training trends toward small group fitness and private coaching. But that doesn't mean you can't do both!

Benefits of Teaching Cycling as a Personal Trainer

One of the biggest impacts cycling classes have on fitness professionals is the ability to grow a business. Fitness trainers who decide to incorporate cycling classes into their schedules immediately increase their income. This is not only a result of taking on extra training sessions but also due to the popularity of cycling.

According to the Association of Fitness Studios' 2016 Marketing Best Practices Research Report, indoor cycling studios generate 55% more revenue than other types of fitness studios.

Plus, a personal trainer can improve their skills through teaching cycling. For instance, teaching cycling helps build coaching skills like goal setting and creating a plan for fitness. A trainer's ability to teach, demonstrate and cue applies to both cycling and personal training.

These skills are vital in helping clients achieve their goals. Other skills acquired through coaching cycling. are body position adjustments, eye movement efficiency, timing and coordination, and fundamental movement proficiency.

This is beneficial because it is outside the normal scope of practice for trainers. The good news with this is the transfer of new skills improves training sessions. It increases your knowledge and ability to correct technical issues while adding to your list of qualifications.

With such a high demand for fitness training—group fitness classes and personal training fitness—industry traits like these will make you stand out. Adding new skills allows for more industry knowledge. Plus, you become a more dependable professional and better communicator with clients. This way both you and your clients stay motivated.

Added value also builds rapport and retention. You can take it a step further by obtaining a group fitness certification. Obtaining the certification increases the number of classes you can teach and creates more schedule flexibility with what you can offer a client. Having a certification allows you to serve a wide range of clients and even get your own workout in.

One of our very own, Bob Rollins, teaches indoor cycling classes and maintains a roster of 12-15 clients.

How Cycling Can Improve Other Areas of a Personal Training Routine

Cycling is a great low impact workout. And it still targets lower body muscles and the core. Building strength in these areas is essential to all client results. Correct cycling form can help increase strength in the hamstrings, quads, calves, and core.

CORE WORK

Stationary biking requires less core activation than regular road biking. This is because the core is responsible for all movement and rotation. When turning on a bike, your core must be engaged to help stabilize the body. Core stabilization improves balance and eliminates excessive lateral movement.

The more challenging the ride, the more core strength needed. Cycling does not take the place of core training during a personal training routine. It does, however, perfectly complement a client's regular exercise routine.

Starting clients off with using a stationary bike might be beneficial if you find their core is weak. Stationary bikes provide many benefits.

HAMMIES AND QUADS

Cycling can strengthen the hamstrings and quads. This can lead to tighter leg muscles that need stretching more often to maintain flexibility. Although it can also contribute to increased flexibility by opening the hamstrings, quads, calves, and hips.

It is important to maintain this flexibility and mobility through consistent physical activity. Cycling alone can be a great addition to client programs to help maximize fat burn, strength building, and mobility.

Just like any type of exercise, cycling can always lead to injury. You might have a client who has issues applying proper cycling form or position on the bike. Try prescribing corrective exercises to help with fixing some of the most common imbalances in cyclists.

How Indoor Cycling Can Improve Your Training

Exercise without a doubt helps clients achieve fitness goals. These can include muscle gain, weight loss, and strength gain. Having the proper exercise prescription helps clients achieve their goals. Let's explore how indoor cycling can improve your clients' training and your ability to train.

CONSISTENCY AND CONTROL

No client wants to cycle in cold or wet weather unless it is a competition or race. Indoor cycling helps competitive cyclists stay on track with their training and even a step ahead of their competition. When weather conditions are poor, cyclists should take advantage of the high-intensity interval training they can do indoors.

This type of exercise is easier to execute and track indoors. On a stationary bike, there are no external factors that can influence the ride. The intensity and volume are under full control of the client and trainer.

Clients can go faster and harder on stationary bikes without having to worry about balance, road conditions, and other riders. The more challenging part about indoor bikes is that you do not rest. On an outdoor bike if you are riding down a hill you can coast. On a stationary bike, you just keep pedaling.

ACTIVE RECOVERY

This includes light exercise and is crucial to enhanced performance. Cycling helps clients of all types recover with a low-impact workout.

Prescribing a client to be in a cycling class on a recovery day isn't always the most optimal form of recovery. However, having them on a stationary bike riding at a slow pace and low intensity is a great way to recover without overtraining.

If your client has an at-home stationary bike, share with them the advantages of having a fluid or magnetic bike trainer.

COACHING SKILLS

As a personal trainer, teaching indoor cycling classes can improve your skills. It helps you develop preparation skills and improves your ability to communicate with a variety of clients at once. The often fast-paced classes truly help you dial in terminology to be quick and effective. All of which lead to improved creativity and coaching.

Set your training foundation with the Certified Personal Trainer course. Level up with the Nutritionist course to help your clients fuel appropriately. Then top it off with the Glute Specialist course to really amp up your knowledge of the posterior chain (or any other specialization of your choice) to stand out from other trainers, make more money, and help more clients.