

## Stay on track

By Rob Lockey, CSCS

With the change from summer to fall upon us and winter quickly showing up to the party, it seemed like a good time to look at some tips that will help you complete your workouts now and through this winter. Below are ten suggestions to consider when the seasons throw you off track of your training plan.

In the early season of fall, as available daylight decreases, workouts can suffer during the week. So, overall training time on the bike ends up being crammed in on the weekend. While it's good that you are getting out, it's not as good that it's only on the weekend. Here are some tips to even things out over the week while the fall weather is still desirable enough to be outside.

1. Plan for one day mid-week to leave work an hour early for a bike ride. Start and end your ride at work to allow for more saddle time. This can start to balance out the longer duration weekend rides and recovery days from week to week.
2. Plan for at least one high intensity/short duration ride during the week. This type of ride has a short warm-up phase and then gets right down to the high intensity, finishing with a cool down phase. This workout should be hard and rewarding when done over several weeks, can be as short as an hour.
3. Missed a couple of workouts due to work or traffic jams on the way home and it's now dark? Then spend a few hard earned dollars on a good set of lights. A helmet mount or handlebar mount style lantern can bring a new meaning to cycling. The sun has set but you're still able to safely navigate your workout to complete your day. If you're going to be on the streets also invest in a rear mount safety beacon.
4. Lights can also allow for commuting on your trusty steed which not only allows for the workout to be completed, but you also reduce your consumption of gas. Just be sure to have a collection of warm cycling gear for the colder morning temps.
5. Sometimes it's not about the bike and you should just go for a walk with your family after a nice dinner and look at the Halloween decorations. The recovery will do wonders for the epic ride planned on the weekend and your family will appreciate the time spent with you.

As winter takes hold with messy streets and cold temperatures, cycling moves to the stationary fashion. This is great for about an hour and then the monotony of the pedaling that goes nowhere kicks in. To stay on track it is necessary to find the strength to lift a leg over the bike and ride without the nice scenery, wind in the face

and the dusty singletrack of the summer months. Below are the last five suggestions to help keep the workouts rolling while indoors.

6. Have a designated spot for your bike training, preferably in front of a television that you can play videos or DVD's on. This way your bike is always ready to be ridden and you have the ability to watch cycling workouts, last year's TdF or even a movie. The distraction works wonders in helping the time go by.
7. Since you're not able to create wind across the body for evaporative cooling, be careful not to overheat and drink plenty of fluids. Place a fan in the immediate area to help keep the temperature desirable and a towel handy to capture perspiration.
8. While your bike is mounted in the trainer you can do several things to increase the intensity of the workout. Simulate hills by raising the front wheel up higher than the rear wheel so you engage the leg muscles differently. Increase the resistance on the wheel or shift to harder gears to simulate hills. Last but not least, riding rollers can help maintain balance and core strength.
9. Break a long ride into several parts. Much of the same benefit of continuous exercise happens even when we break it up into smaller parts in a day. So, your three hour ride got snowed out, try two one and a half hour rides with a few hours between them and come away still on track with your plan. Another thing to consider when riding a stationary bike is that not much coasting or resting occurs. This means your duration can be reduced up to 20% and still get the same adaptations as an outdoor ride.
10. Once again it's not all about the bike and the winter season is a great time to be inside strength training, doing Pilates or Yoga and any other form of exercise you can think of. Break up the routine and you will find that the movement to improvement happens whether you're on the bike or a mat stretching after a group exercise class.

Hopefully these tips help you to find some balance with the change of seasons and allow for the transition from fun in the sun to making the most of the winter. Stick to a plan that has some alternative choices to mix up the routine and next spring will be full of promising new possibilities on the bike.

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