

What's strength have to do with it?

By Rob Lockey, CSCS

So, what does strength have to do with it? Well, everything when it comes to health. When performed properly and in periodized fashion, strength training can enhance all facets of daily life. These include daily active living and exercise.

Daily active living includes a multitude of body movements like: getting in and out of bed, bathing, reaching for the cereal box on the top shelf, walking up and down stairs, and carrying groceries into the house from the car. Basically everything we do as mobile humans involves the use of muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments and bones. Without some measure of strength we would be hard pressed to complete even the easiest of daily tasks. With our world of reduced physical labor, it becomes important to take up strength training to maintain our physical being.

Following the guidance of a certified fitness professional and using the wide range of equipment available for strength training we can add measured stresses to our bodies which will assist in the needed adaptations to improve and/or maintain our physical strengths. The benefits gained even from minimal strength work are increased joint motion and stability as well as increased self preservation as we age, all too important if we want to enjoy our retirement years. Taking part in a periodized strength plan, which consists of phases in which the body is methodically pressed to get stronger, will allow for improvements of cardiovascular exercise.

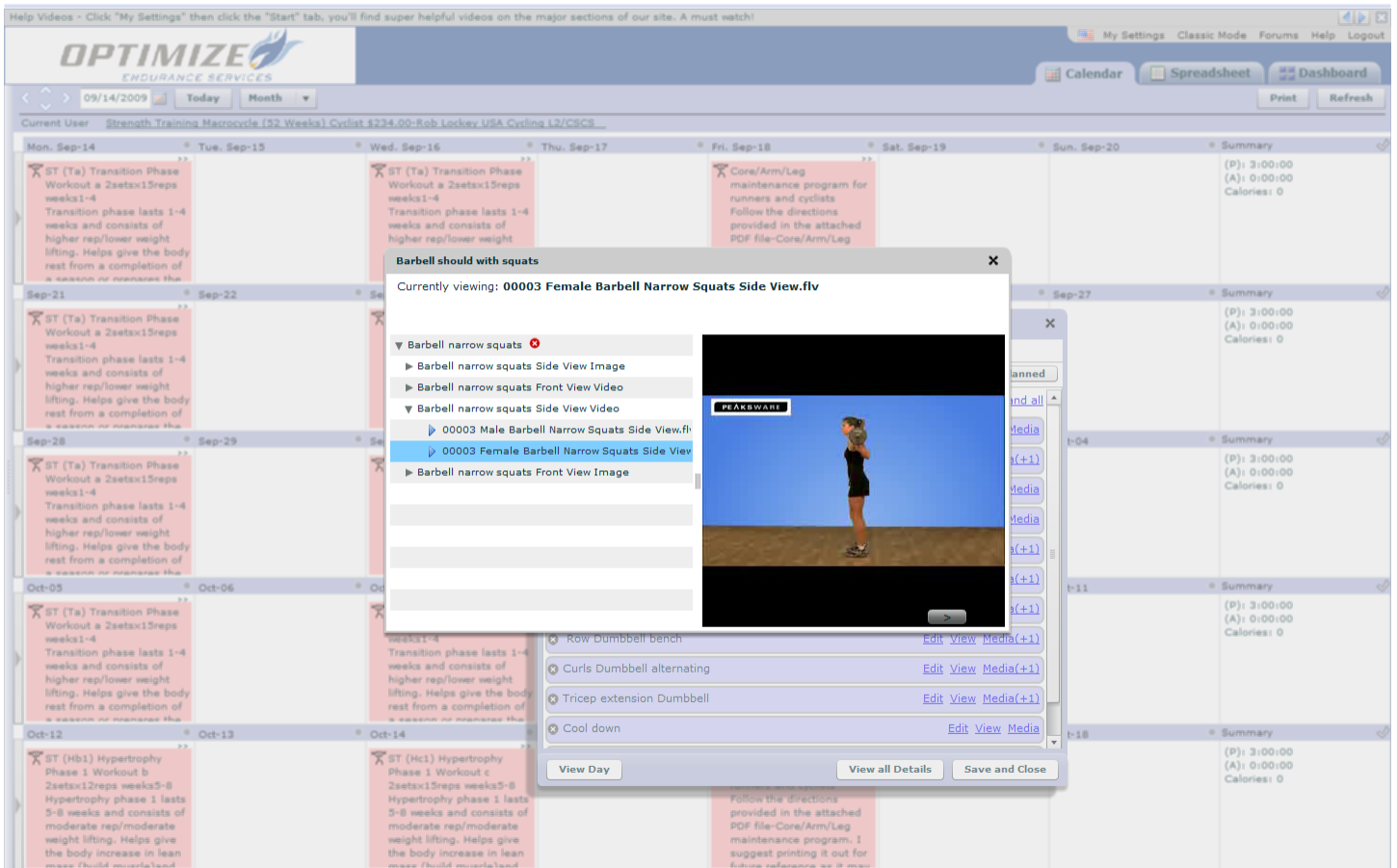
Cycling by itself can improve on daily active living, but when coupled with strength training the benefits increase at a greater rate. For example muscle power gained through performing multi-joint strength exercises like the squat, will translate to the pedals in added force on hills and the ability to maintain a higher constant speed over an entire bike ride. Both of these benefits alone will allow for the completion of a summer event in a shorter time, generally the number one goal of cyclists.

From a health standpoint, the stresses of strength training on our body translate to bone health. Put simply, the bone being stressed by the added forces will remodel itself to counteract those forces. This is very important since we are at our peak bone density very early in life and then start a steady decline towards osteoporosis as we lose bone density. So, strength training along with proper diet can aid us in staving off this loss. Strong bones allow us to survive crashes, falls and common daily accidents with greater resiliency. This formula also applies to the muscles, tendons and ligaments.

Strength training doesn't have to mean getting huge and hulky; you can have large improvements in strength with small changes in physical appearance. The thing to take away from this is that no matter the sport there are strength plans available to enhance that sport. A well designed plan will not overtake the important aspects of sport specificity; just enhancement of the physiological benefit created when performing that sport.

OES has purchasable strength plans designed for cyclists, runners and has incorporated strength training into this year's Triple Bypass training plans. Learn more by going to the OES website or give Rob a call, he's available to assist.

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Presented here is a screen shot of the TrainingPeaks interface for Strength Training, showing available media.