

Cycling



Cycling is a versatile activity that can be adapted to suit level, finance and seriousness of the individual.

It is a partial weight-bearing activity which means there is less force being transferred through the joints and can therefore be a transitory activity between swimming and running in rehab from an injury or be used as a cardiovascular activity for heart

health.

TRAINING FOCUS

Preparing for healthy participation in cycling will require attention in the following key areas:

Muscular Endurance: the ability of certain muscles (especially legs and core) to contract repetitively, without tiring.

Cardiovascular Endurance: the combined ability of the heart and lungs to pump oxygenated blood around the body.



If you are a competitive cyclist then speed and strength will also feature highly in your training. If cycling becomes a favourite, then bike set up, quality of bike purchased, specialist clothing and equipment and nutrition will all take on greater importance.

For everybody at any level, a cycling helmet is a given.

GOING THROUGH THE GEARS

Without meaning to be too simplistic cycling, in essence, requires the ability to maintain upper body stability whilst the legs pump like pistons, ensuring efficiency of the energy being driven vertically through the pedals, rather than some of it “escaping” through the core-translated as rocking in the torso (wasted energy).

For many, the first recollection of riding a bike as an adult is the ‘burn’ felt in the thighs before getting off the bike and trying to walk with legs that felt like jelly! For some, there may also be the sensation of their chest feeling it was about to burst...

These experiences highlight the elements of fitness required to enjoy cycling safely and to avoid (or minimise) injury.



For those starting their journey with cycling, there is a training programme that will allow you to gauge your ability- the [sofa to 50Km training plan](#) is a good place to start.

With a good foundation of attributes, the intermediate and advanced/professional cyclist than focus more on strength and speed. The isolation of fitness components when not on a bike becomes paramount and then being able to translate them to the bike. Technique of riding also becomes more important as this is likely to make the marginal difference when those around also have been in the gym, focussing on strength, conditioning and speed endurance. If your [interest is peaked on the finer points of improving your cycling this article is a great resource](#) to view, with links to other aspects of training, nutrition, bike set up and more!

Post-cycle, the areas of the body that are likely to feel most tired/stiff are the hip flexors, quads, hamstrings (front and back of the thighs) and glutes (buttocks). Relaxation stretches in these areas are advised before and after the ride to support these areas that are worked the hardest.

DON'T SPIN INTO INJURY

- Trauma (impact) injuries due to falls, including concussion and collar bone breaks
- Muscle strains, resulting in direct injuries of the strained muscle but also injuries in other muscles, due to compensations and overuse to avoid the original injury
- Lower back pain. This can be initiated by the amount of time in the saddle, the incorrect position of the handlebars (hence bike set up is important) and can lead to postural changes or adaptations in an attempt to avoid pain.
- Knee pain
- Hand/wrist/neck pain from being tense/poor position from seat to handlebars
- Achilles pain
- 'Hot Foot'/plantar fasciitis

Maintaining your bike (whether it is worth £200 or £2000) and equipment in good working order can help to avoid some of the impact injuries and to protect against graze and bruising from a fall. It can also counteract the relentless pressure on the saddle, pedals and handlebars, reducing the chance of sores and blisters.