

HERE'S WINTER !

Getting started on Winter Preparation is sort of like getting going on the first sentence or two of an article or school paper, one just hates to let go of status quo & get going. Some of the racers who have to be on top of their form in June have already done their planning calendars & are in the gym while others are hanging on to the Cross season and enjoying it. Track sprinters probably have been working on strength all year long and are keying in on preparation for their major races. Newbies to the sport will be looking to their mentors and spending most of their time riding the bike. Other bikies have either been resting or just finished their last event.

Top quality Winter Preparation certainly makes good use of the "Overload Principle". This goes with my belief that nothing beats muscle at the finish line. Its a rare athlete who can continue to enjoy their sport if they have no success & their personal progress is nil. Progress in the muscle department helps personal satisfaction greatly--as in training becomes fun! The ingredients in the recipe are a pinch of socializing, a pound of rollers, a quart of weights, a spot of testing, a dash of sauna, season with stretching, and cook for four months. If this recipe is not over or under cooked the result is a cyclist who is strong and wants to go fast.

Long long ago when I was a parent of a teen ager, I worked out with our cycling club under the coaching of a former Pentathlete member of the US Olympic Team. We prepared for our weight workouts with a running warm-up. The routine was simple- run for twenty minutes & then do three sets of selected weights followed by shower & sauna. Later the Coach put us on rollers with track bikes followed by weights. After a warm-up on rollers, we did top speed sprints of ten to thirty seconds. This was followed by our weight circuit. As the Coach moved to other activities, I coached & followed his pattern. The benefits were apparent to all- leg speed went up - right along with strength.

This training pattern has evolved but still retains its form. The riders are going into the weight portion of their workouts thoroughly warm and the time in the weight room assisted in the recovery from the intervals. Enthusiasm remained high. When we put heart monitors on the riders, it was discovered that heart rates went down & recovery was faster and more consistent. We also discovered that extra long intense intervals did not improve their heart recovery time. In fact the riders reported feeling tired muscles on the following workout day.

In the group setting this is a coaches delight. The coach can monitor improvements in recovery, leg speed, balance, and attitude. The coach can see who is efficient and who is easily distracted. Its easy to change the evening schedule to prepare for a weekend, a holiday or the experience level of members of the group. The group enthusiasm is infectious and makes the routine into fun. The speedy spinner is a winner!

Moving this procedure into the world of the Triathlete is easy. Cycling alone produces arched backs, weak abdominals, tight quads, & weak upper bodies. Use a different sequence of events with the weight preparation. Some examples are treadmill to weights, ergometer spin to weights, and even swim to rollers to weights. It is my belief that weight training without a proper warm-up can lead to injury and poor recovery. Training with a partner or mentor can keep enthusiasm up. One key question is: did you bring your notebook?

But Wait! its time to consider some truisms about training & weights. The greatest & most rapid strength gains will be done with heavy weights. Muscle action is however specific, that is, and exercise should closely approximate, or assist in muscle balance for the activity. An example of specific training would be that found in some instructions for Ergometers, that is intervals at 50rpms (slow) and with high pressure. For swimmers this can mean weighted flutter exercises & arm pull downs. If you watch Soccer or Australian Football on TV take note of the bulk of the hamstrings and upper bodies of these athletes.

Here is a partial weight list for cycling: Leg Press, Hamstring Curl, Toe Raises, Bench Press, Bench Row (exaggerate to work the back) Lat pull Downs, Leg Extensions, Leg Lifts, Back Raises, Roman Chair, & all manner of abdominal exercises. Lunges, Squats, Presses & Dead Lifts can be added as the skill & strength progresses.

A typical progression for Winter strength building might go from two to three sets of each exercise at about 75% of capacity for 15 repetitions to 12 reps to 8 or 6 reps with heavier weights & to failure. The procedures are really simple- warm-up with vigor, on to the weights, keep a record, move the targets, stretch, shower & say what a good person am I !!

The next Tips **WINTER II** will spend more time on targeting improvements and adding a base of volume.

Phil Sanders
Go Fast Cycling
11/5/98