

[<Back](#) [Print](#)

Intermediate Bike Training News

Create a Sustainable Healthy Lifestyle

March 27, 2007

Dear Rick,

It's great to get back out on the road again. Hard to be a cyclist if you're not cycling. I mentioned that I'm behind on my mileage this year but I'm not concerned. We are cycling for health first and to improve our riding second. Feeling that you are behind and have to catch up, or can't catch up, is a sure way to demotivate yourself. Remember, the Midlife Cycling philosophy is that any exercise is better than no exercise.

In this issue...

- **On The Road...**
- **Indoor training...**
- **Food and Nutrition...**
- **Classroom...**
- **Final Notes...**

So just get out and do the best you can with whatever time you have. The question to always ask yourself is "do I feel better now than I did at this time last year?" Like the stock market, we are interested in our long-term conditioning trend and not the day-to-day or week-to-week fluctuations.

Have a great week.

Rick Russon

On The Road...



The MS150 and other events are rapidly approaching. I've had people coming to me to set up a training plan for them. Surprisingly I don't. Perhaps if I was a better businessman than a coach I would sell you the ten week schedule of endurance, tempo, and interval training rides that would guarantee your success. But, as a coach, I'm compelled to really help you ride better.

First problem: statistics show that only 5-10% of you will actually have the discipline, and time, to follow a training schedule to the letter. After all, this is recreation and we don't need yet another job.

Second problem: existing schedules are built off numerous variations of 5-10% increases in frequency, volume, or intensity. There are training macrocycles and microcycles which sound so very scientific. But not every body adapts at the same rate.

Here are some other considerations:

- are you riding the same route every ride?
- what if you have a tailwind one time and a headwind next time?
- do you have the same stress level each day leading up to each ride?
- do you maintain the same nutrition each day before a ride?

In the gym on machines, or if training is your job as a pro athlete, conditions are quite similar from day to day and you could use a rather precise schedule. But, in reality, even most advanced recreational riders don't train to a set schedule. My advice is to learn what your body is teaching you and adjust your riding accordingly.

*** CAUTION - overt sales message ****

You can read and study all you want. You can even ride with various groups and pick up hints and tips. But, nothing beats riding with a coach at least once. I am a USA Cycling certified Level II (Expert) coach. While I don't train competitive cyclists learning how to ride efficiently and manage energy like they do will help you improve significantly. And, you'll learn why many of their race training methods don't help and can actually harm you. The one-time assessment is a 90- minute ride that costs \$90. I don't have time to do personal training on a regular basis so don't worry that I'll try to hook you into a recurring expense. Also, evenings and weekends are almost impossible to schedule just to let you know.

*** End of sales message ***

My rides so far this year have been 30, 40, 47, 50, and 90 miles. I've seen people ride 25 miles one weekend then 50 the next. And, I've seen people ride 125 miles one weekend then barely make it through 60 several weeks later. This is why I claim that pre- measured training is a waste for recreational cyclists.

The focus of our riding is the RMCC schedule. Depending upon how I feel or what I'm trying to accomplish I'll select either the Saturday ride, which is typically climbing, or the flatter Sunday ride. My training is determined by the actual ride. If it is windy I'll slow down on the flats and focus on hills. If my legs are tired I will slow down and go for more mileage. If I have lots of nervous energy I'll ride faster and throw in some intervals. I want to be a well rounded cyclist so if I worked on climbing the last ride I'll work on speed the next ride. Sometimes I'll ride to my strengths instead of training my weaknesses.

Having seen thousands of riders by now riding well is determined by the same factors as other sports:

- ride every week as consistency is key.
- put in mileage-there is a fairly direct relationship between mileage and riding ability.
- perfect pedaling and shifting technique.
- learn how to manage energy by using terrain to your advantage.

Notice I didn't mention equipment. You should have a decent bike so you enjoy the ride. But many of our best riders started on bikes that cost less than \$200.

[Ride Schedule...](#)

Indoor training...



Not much to say about indoor training. This time of year we train indoors if the weather is bad. As you do more of the climbing rides you need to back off your weight training. And, always do core exercises whenever you can. Yoga and Pilates classes are still an appropriate accompaniment to your cycling.

Food and Nutrition...



My last ride I was fighting some dehydration and it hasn't even gotten hot yet. For many of us it is hard to drink a lot of water. You actually have to train yourself to do that. So now is the time to force yourself to drink on the bike. The minimum is one large bottle per hour. In this phase of endurance building you can drink half of that as sports drink and the other half as plain water. As it gets hotter and we ride more aggressively you will want to move toward one bottle of sport drink and a half bottle of water. We'll discuss

electrolyte supplements as it gets hotter.

HYPONATREMIA - people die from this. Did I get your attention? The most common way this happens is when novice athletes get dehydrated during exercise then gulp down lots of cool, refreshing water afterwards. They dilute the electrolytes in their blood and can go into a coma. I will mention this repeatedly as it gets hotter. Simple rules - drink during exercise and always use sports drinks that have electrolytes in them. Aside from preventing hyponatremia it only takes 3% dehydration to feel a noticeable decrease in your performance.

Classroom...

Please come to the RMCC meeting at the Downtown REI on April 9th at 6:30 pm. There will be a short Board Meeting to discuss club business followed by a general membership meeting. The general membership meeting is something new we are trying to get more member involvement in the club. It is a chance for you to voice your suggestions and concerns to the club leadership.



This first meeting I will be discussing how to successfully ride with RMCC. A lot of people come out for a ride, get dropped, and never come back. Part of that is poor leadership on our part but some of it is underestimating the abilities of RMCC cyclists and riding outside of your capability.

*** Final sales pitch *** The other problem is not being adequately prepared for an RMCC ride. The club does not train people on rides. Midlife Cycling is the training resource for the club. You need to seek help outside of the club rides. I see many riders, novice and advanced, make the same mistakes repeatedly. My "Getting Started" CD gives you all the basics you need to start riding with RMCC. I am going to change its misleading title. This is NOT just for a new bike rider. It is for any person who wants to ride SERIOUSLY with the club. It is cheap at \$9.95 considering all the frustration and money you'll save not having to relearn what the club already knows.

[Free papers...](#)

Final Notes...

Last newsletter I responded to the statement that I seem to focus on the 100-mile Century ride. I said that was true because it is a challenging yet relatively easy goal to accomplish. What I forgot to mention is that the knowledge that you gain for the Century will help you become a better and more efficient rider at shorter distances. The principles of pre-ride preparation, warm-up, technique, nutrition, and recovery apply to 25 miles rides as well as Centuries. Start out too fast, and burn the glycogen out of your legs, and you will have just as miserable a 25 mile ride. Poor pedaling and shifting techniques will show up even more on short rides. I dropped a lot of people riding out of Golden towards Sloans Lake last year because they couldn't manage the sustained climb efficiently.

I will discuss training at and around Lactate Threshold a little more this year. It will benefit you riders who go shorter and spend more time near LT. It will also help the long distance riders build their speed as you need to understand the cost of LT on a long ride. For endurance riders a little LT goes a long way (excuse the pun).

Quick Links...

- [Ride Schedule](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Cycling Club](#)
- [Rick's Ride Schedule](#)
- [Denver Bicycle Touring Club](#)
- [Join RMCC Online](#)

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