

RIDE STRONG

Strength Training for Cyclists



Preview

Matty Graham

Sport Science and Performance Coach

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

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If any of the following apply to you, a physician’s advice and consent is absolutely essential:

- You are under the age of 18
- You are over the age of 40
- You are not an experienced or frequent participant of a regular fitness program
- You are a pregnant woman
- You have pre-existing health problems
- You are taking medication that may affect your heart rate

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This is an edited preview and contains insights into different aspects of the Ride Strong Package.

Please note page numbers and order of content does not match the actual product.



About The Author

Matty Graham is a Sport Scientist and Performance Coach based in Dunedin New Zealand. He bases his training and coaching approach on a combination of high level sport science education and practical experience.

Matty studied for six years at the School of Physical Education at the University of Otago majoring in sport science, before completing a master's degree in Physical Education, specifically focusing on exercise physiology and how blood volume is regulated in responses to endurance and repeat high intensity training. During this time he found that there was a real lack of evidence based training and coaching available to athletes. With many coaches relying solely on their past experiences in sport, how they were coached and on traditional training approaches. Wanting to share his passion for sport and knowing there was a better way that could benefit athletes he established Exponential Performance Coaching in 2009 with the aim of providing effective cutting edge training support to help athletes of all levels to perform at their peak and achieve their goals.

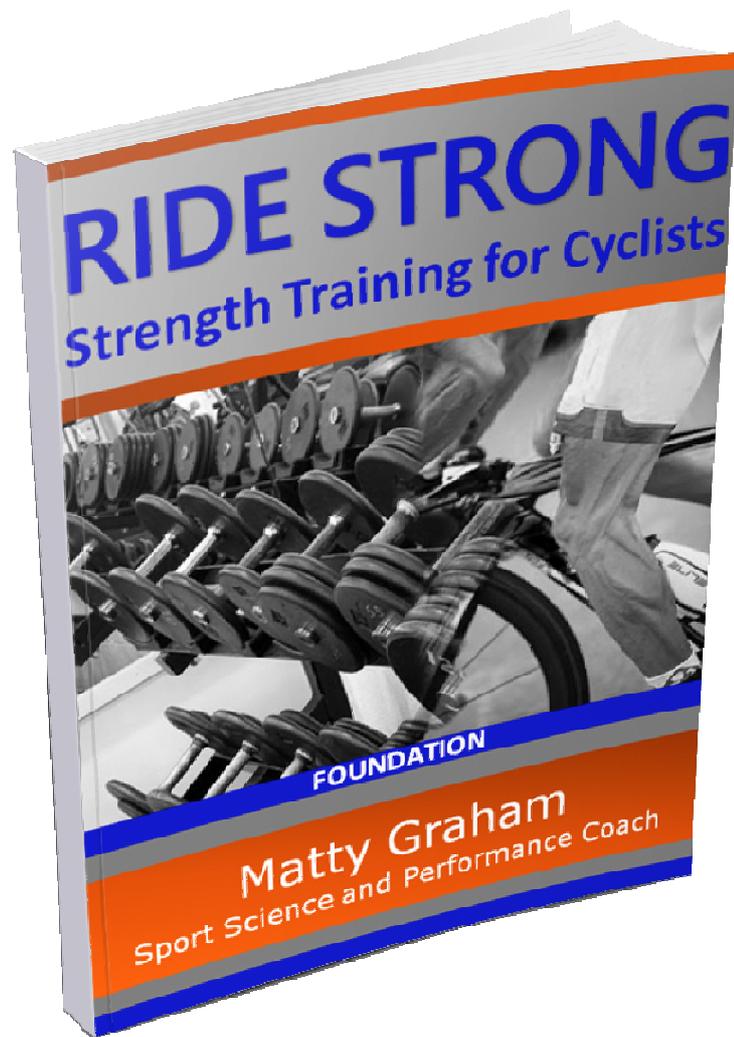
Along with his education, Matty has nine years of experience working with over 300 different individuals in achieving their sporting goals. This includes working with beginners through to elite athletes including Olympic and World Champions in the sports of multisport, triathlon, adventure racing, road cycling, track cycling, mountain biking, kayaking, running and team sports.

Matty has worked as a sport science consultant for Canoe Racing New Zealand and for BikeNZ's elite track cycling programme. Along with this he has also worked as the sport science consultant and strength and conditioning coach for Otago Hockey for the male and female under 21 and NHL hockey teams.

Matty is not all talk though. He has over 11 years of experience competing in endurance sports, mainly multisport, adventure racing along with the individual sports that make up these events. Pushing his physical and mental limits is something he is extremely passionate about and his life goal is to share his knowledge and help as many people as possible to achieve their goals.



If you require more personalised training advice please visit the Exponential Performance Coaching website.
www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com



In this ebook you will learn the anatomical and physiological principles to help you understand the WHY behind your training. This coupled with a fully periodised outline, specific performance tests and nutrition notes equips you with all the knowledge you need to know to get the most out of yourself.

Introduction

Welcome to Ride Strong. Strength training can improve performance in two ways, directly and indirectly. A direct performance improvement is a result of improving the muscles contractile properties and neural activation resulting in a more forceful contraction. Alternatively, indirect training adaptations such as improved posture, core stabilisation and ligament strength make athletes more structurally 'robust'. This increased 'robustness' of the athlete means that they are able to undergo higher training loads on the bike without structurally breaking down or becoming injured.

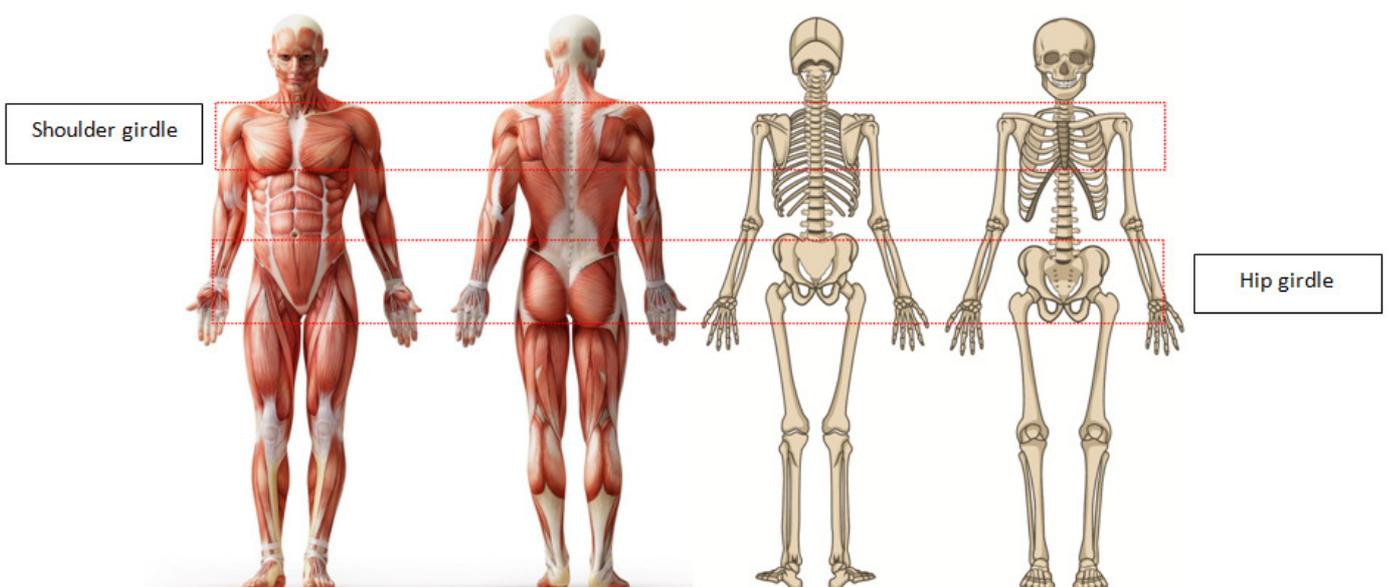
Ideally cyclists need both of these aspects in their training plan to maximise their performance. This training plan integrates both the indirect and direct performance models in a systematic method to maximise your performance.

Indirect Performance

Indirect performance improvements through strength training are primarily gained through the development of the athletes' core stability, leading to improvements in postural control, alignment and an increased injury resilience. Numerous studies have been conducted investigating core strength development and performance. Core fatigue has been found to result in altered cycling mechanics that exposes the knee to greater stress that can lead to injury, while core specific strength training has been found to allow athletes to tolerate higher training loads while staying injury free.

The core is the critical link that connects the two areas of major force generation (the pelvis and shoulder girdle) in the human body. When you look at the human skeleton, the spine is little more than a precariously stacked 'Jenga tower' that the shoulder and hip girdles are hinged off (see figure 1). The only thing stabilising this stack of vertebrae are the muscles, tendons and ligaments of the core. Like spokes in a bike wheel if any of these 'spokes' are over-tight or loose then you end up with a wheel that does not run true. Due to the nature of cycling, athletes end up with tight and over developed muscle groups with others become weak and 'stretched' out. This imbalance in the 'spoke' tension causes misalignment of the athletes' posture which over time can lead to injuries through excessive loading of structures that are not designed to be loaded in such a way or direction.

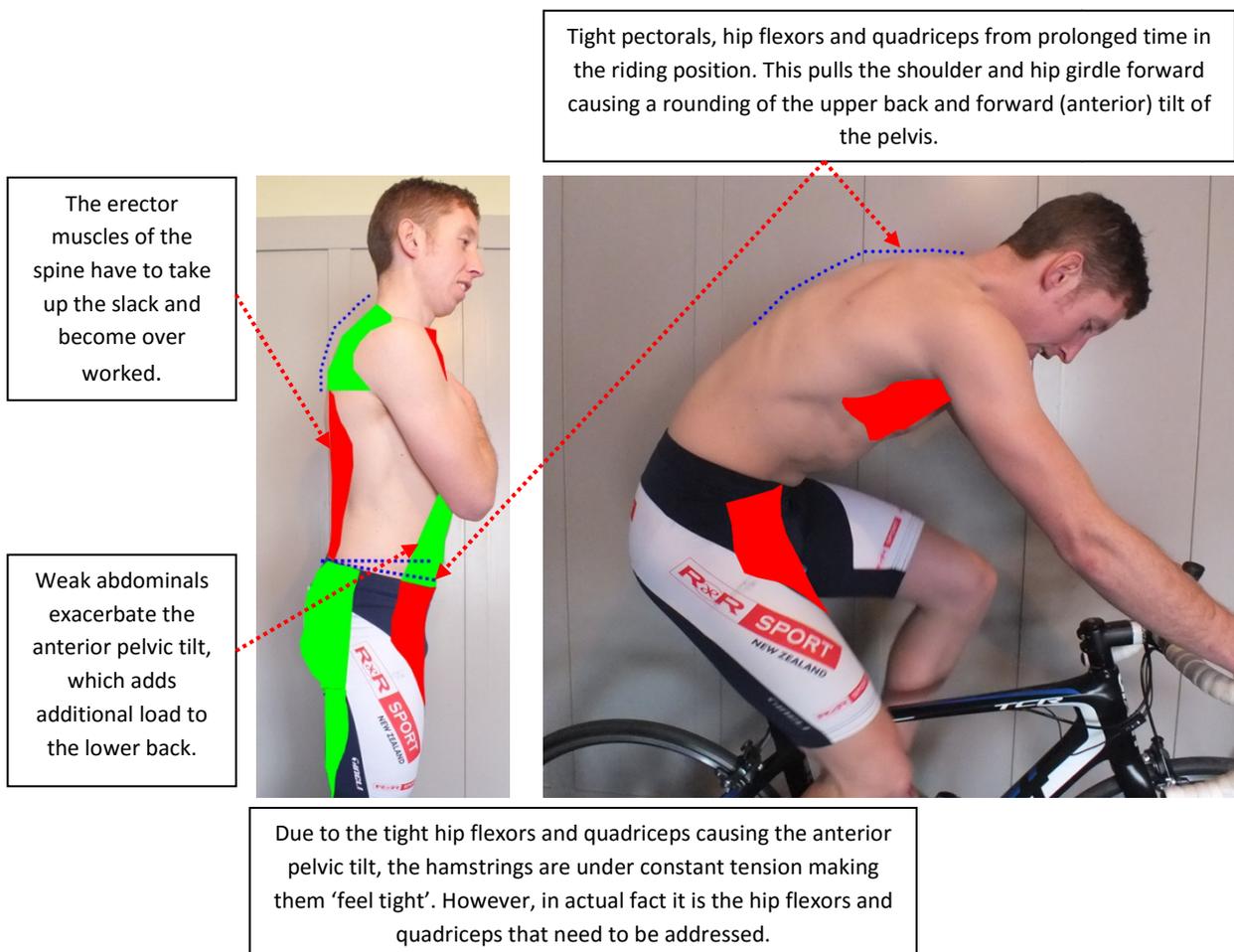
Figure 1: Muscular and skeletal diagram outlining the shoulder and hip girdle.



STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

In figure 2 you can see a classic example of a cyclist's imbalances in the shoulder and hip girdle. Large amounts of time riding, cause the muscle groups highlighted in red (pectorals, hip flexors and erector muscle of the spine) to become very strong and tight. These then pull on the shoulders, rounding the spine and tilting the pelvis forwards. The weak/ 'stretched' muscles of the upper back, abdominals, glutes and hamstrings are not able to counteract this constant tension and it is often these areas in which injury occurs or 'tightness' is felt. I.e. sore shoulders/ back or 'tight' hamstrings. These imbalances are exacerbated during day to day living in the modern world through prolonged sitting, computer work and driving, which further rounds the shoulders, tightening the hip flexors and weakens the abdominals. If an athlete is unable to perform the relatively simple task of maintaining correct posture, then they are going to struggle in the long term to perform optimally on the bike not to mention their ability to live a long pain free life off the bike.

Figure 2: Example of strong 'tight' muscle groups in red and weak 'stretched' muscle groups in green.



Direct Performance

When muscles contract more forcefully the outcome is a potential increase in power production, due to power being a function of force and velocity. Think of force as how hard you push on your pedals. On the other hand velocity is how fast you spin your pedals or your cadence. The combination of these two is power (Power = Force x Velocity). By training the muscles to contract more forcefully there is the ability to produce higher force for longer, with the end result of going faster on the bike.

To directly improve your cycling performance in the gym it seems logical that you would perform high repetition exercises with a low weight, after all cycling is an endurance sport right? In actual fact it has been found that low repetition, high weight strength exercises and high velocity plyometrics produce the best gains in cycling performance. Research indicates that this type of training improves cycling economy, efficiency and time to exhaustion without any increase in body weight (i.e. they did not 'bulk up') or decrease in $VO_2\max$ (they did not lose aerobic fitness). This improvement in performance is due increases in neuromuscular function. Meaning that more muscle fibres are recruited and activated more forcefully allowing more force to be applied to the pedals.

The aim of this complete training plan is to guide you through a periodised strength training plan so you can optimise both the indirect and direct performance improvements you get from your time in the gym. By progressing through the different training phases in the correct sequence you will be able to develop good baseline structure and function that will support the direct performance improvements of the more intense work in the later training phases, with the end result of tearing the legs off your competition this season.



STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

Training Periodisation

As with your on the bike training how you structure and progress your strength training is critical of optimal results. To get the best performance gains from your strength training it is important that you structure your training to allow your body to progressively adapt over time. If you start straight into the power phase of the direct plan you may see a quick improvements in your performance but these will soon plateau or you will get injured.

To get the best results from your strength training, follow the periodised outline that is detailed below. This will allow you to progress your body through the different training phases, allow optimal adaptation and avoid injury.

Minimum Weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Type of performance gains	Indirect performance gain												Direct performance gains											
Training phase	Introduction												<p style="text-align: center;">To get your full view and maximise your riding</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Get your full copy of Ride Strong now at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">http://www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com/ridestrongnow</p>											
Training plan	Baseline movement						Introductory																	
Weeks on plan	4-8						4-6																	
Number of sets per exercise	2-4																							
Repetitions performed*	5-20																							
Subjective weight description	Light																							
Speed of movement	Slow - Moderate																							
Rest between sets	Short (30 s - 1 min)																							
Training focus	Development of technique, movement patterns and stabilisation																							
On bike training focus	Winter base Training																							

*In key exercises

Integrating strength training in your programme

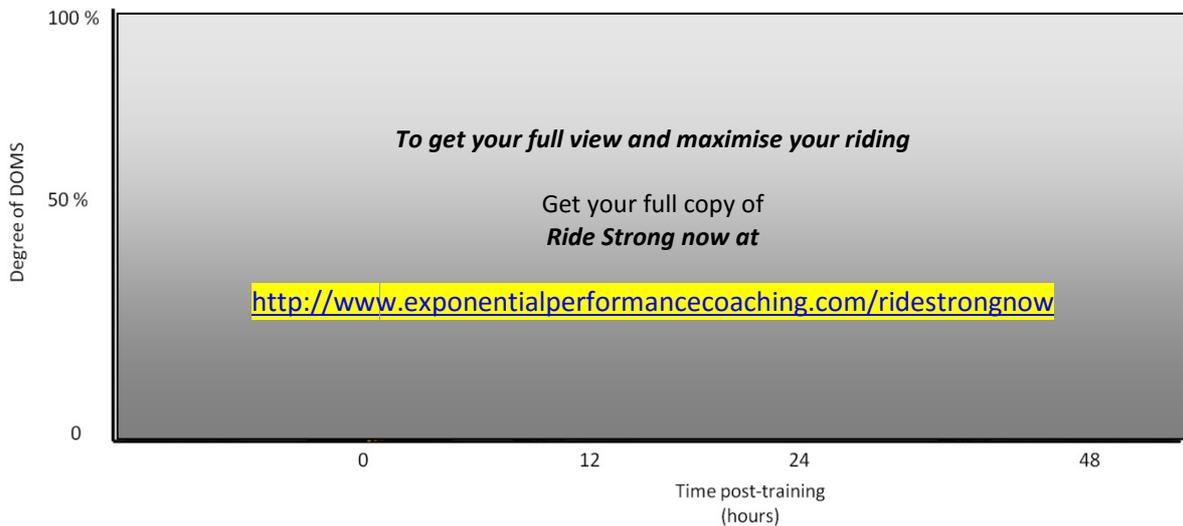
It is important that your gym based strength training and on the bike training are carefully balance to ensure that neither are negatively affected by each other. Heavy and/ or intense strength training causes micro damage (small tears) to your muscle fibres which can result in delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) 24 – 48 hours following the session due to the inflammatory process required for the adaptation of the muscles. This DOMS can negatively impact your on the bike training the following day if the session is high intensity training aimed at developing speed and power.

To get your full view and maximise your riding

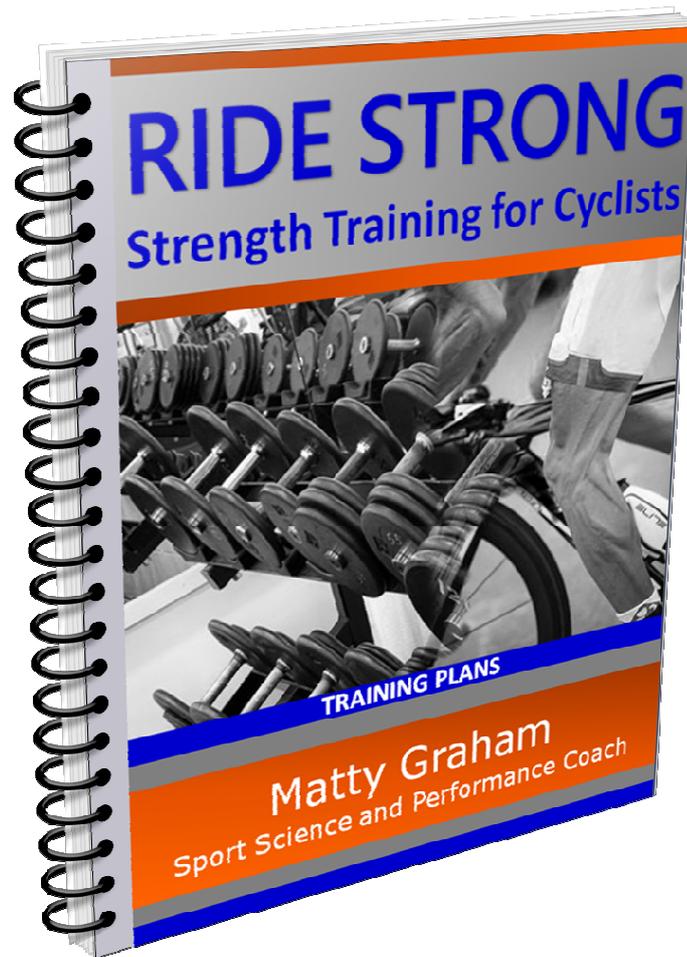
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Figure 3: Diagram of how to structure your strength and on the bike training to avoid any negative effects of delayed onset muscle soreness. **This is not intended to represent a typical day of training instead an option of how to structure different types of sessions around a typical DOMS profile.**



*If you are new to strength training you may experience DOMS that last longer than 48 hours. As your training progresses and your body adapts the duration of your DOMS will reduce. It is a good idea to factor some additional recovery time into your training programme when starting a strength training plan. This would likely be during your off season so should not impact your overall training greatly.



Six comprehensive easy to follow training plans that provide step up step instructions so you can approach your strength training with the confidence that you are doing the best training possible.
Scroll down to see some more detail.

Training Plans

In this programme you will find 6 different strength training plans that will guide you step up step through your training to maximise your on the bike performance. Each plan is outlined below.

Training plan 1: Baseline Movement

The aim of training plan 1 is to develop your baseline movement patterns and technique. If you are new to strength training then this plan is going to be key for your development and you should spend 6-8 weeks performing this training. If you already have some strength training experience then you can spend 2 -6 weeks on this plan as you revisit the key baseline movement patterns and techniques.

Training plan 2: Introductory Function

The aim of this training plan is to develop the technique of your key lifts (front squat and dead lift) so that when you reach the later training phases you are able to lift heavier weight with good form. Along with this technique focus there is a big emphasis on developing your functional movement and core stability over this time. This training plan should be performed for 4-6 weeks before progressing on to the Advanced Function plan.

Training plan 3: Advanced Function

The aim of this training plan is to progress you to a moderate weight in your key lifts and advance your core development by including more unstable exercises and a higher training load. This training plan should be performance for 4-6 weeks before progressing on to the Anatomical Adaptation plan.

Training plan 4: Anatomical Adaptation

The aim of this training plan is to progress the strength of your muscles, tendons and ligaments from the Advanced Function training plan and getting them ready for the higher loads of the upcoming phases. This training plan should be performance for 4-6 weeks before progressing on to the Direct - Maximal Strength Plan.

Training plan 5: Maximal strength

This training plan focuses on improving the contractile strength and recruitment of your muscle fibres to improve the amount of force they can produce (remember the $\text{Power} = \text{Force} \times \text{Velocity}$ equation mentioned earlier). This training plan should be performance for 4-6 weeks before progressing on to the Power plan.

Training plan 6: Power

This training phase is where you stand to gain the biggest improvements if you have performed the subsequent phases according to the plan. The power plan is about developing the rate (or velocity) at which your muscles are able to generate their force. This training phase can be performed for 4-6 weeks leading into a peak event or it can also be turned into a hybrid type phase depending on the length of your season to also develop your anaerobic threshold.

Training plan 1: Baseline Movement

Plan 1: Baseline Movement	To be performed: 1-2 x per week
Programme aim: Development of baseline movement patterns and technique	
Warm up: Easy 5-10 min ride on indoor bike	
<p><i>To get your full view and maximise your riding</i></p> <p>Get your full copy of <i>Ride Strong now at</i></p> <p>http://www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com/ridestrongnow</p>	

Key focus points:

- Really use this time to work on developing your technique
- Rest between sets: 30 s - 1 min
- Speed of lifts: Slow - moderate
- Weight used: Light or body weight

Training plan 2: Introductory

Plan 2: Introductory Function	To be performed: 1-3 x per week
Programme aim: Development of technique, function and core stability	
Warm up: Easy 5-10 min ride on indoor bike	
<p><i>To get your full view and maximise your riding</i></p> <p>Get your full copy of <i>Ride Strong now at</i></p> <p>http://www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com/ridestrongnow</p>	

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Training plan 3: Advanced Function

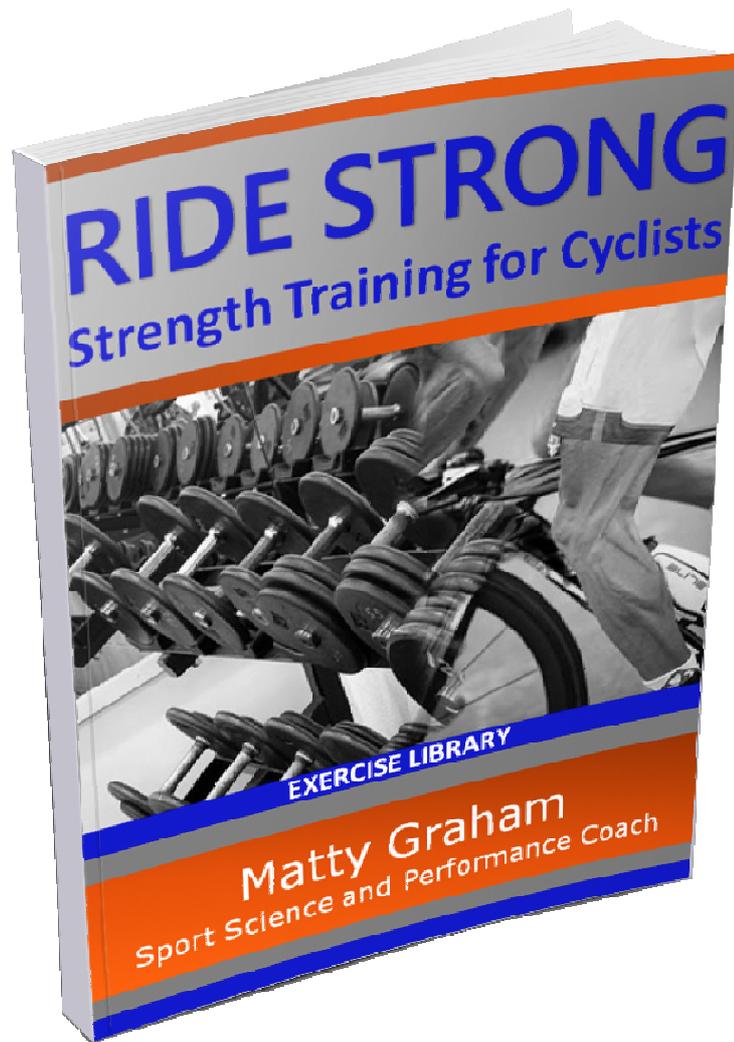
Plan 3: Advanced Function	To be performed: 1-3 x per week
Programme aim: Progression of training load for key lifts + core development	
Warm up: 2x10 walking lunges, 2x10 press ups	
<p><i>To get your full view and maximise your riding</i></p> <p>Get your full copy of <i>Ride Strong now at</i></p> <p>http://www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com/ridestrongnow</p>	

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS



Training plan 6: Power

Plan 6: Power	To be performed: 1-2 x per week
Programme aim: Explosive power development and functional core maintenance	
Warm up: 2x10 KB swing, 2x30 sec primal squat stretch	
<p><i>To get your full view and maximise your riding</i></p> <p>Get your full copy of <i>Ride Strong now at</i></p> <p>http://www.exponentialperformancecoaching.com/ridestrongnow</p>	



Technique in the gym is critical for safe and effective strength training. With over 65 photos and clear technique cues, this exercise library outlines the exact exercises you need to perform in all of the training Ride Strong plans.

Scroll down for an inside look.



Ride Strong

Exercise Library

Find photos and technique focus points for all of the exercises outlined in the plans organised in alphabetical order.

Alternating SB Superman

Focus points:

- Lay face down on the Swiss Ball (SB) with an even weight distribution over your feet and hands.
- From this position push up taking your weight on alternate hand and foot.
- With the 'un-weighted' hand and foot, reach forward and kick back as far as possible holding for 1 second before returning with control to the starting position.



Banded Side Step

Focus points:

- Place a resistance band around your feet as pictured or wrapped a smaller 'physio type' band around your ankles.
- Take small side steps while maintaining tension on the band throughout the movement.



Box Jump

Focus points:

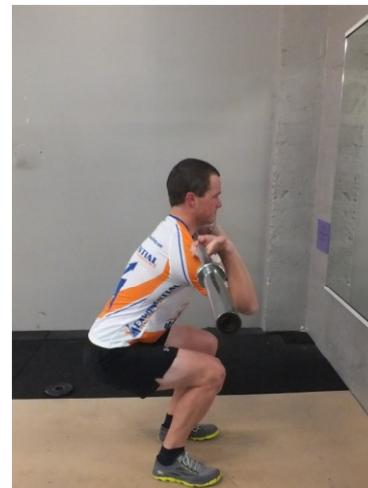
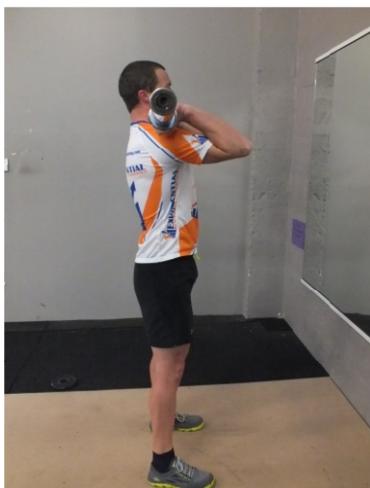
- Set yourself up in front of a box or step with your feet shoulder width apart.
- From this position perform a counter-movement jump (move down and then up) including your arms to hop on to the box or step.
- Once on the box, step off easily and repeat.
- Focus on explosive power at the start of the movement.



Front Squat

Focus points:

- Your feet should be shoulder width apart with toes facing forward, or slightly out.
- The bar will rest across 3 points of contact. The shoulders, collar bone and hands. Note that the hands are relaxed and the bar is only resting on fingertips. If you keep gripping the bar you will not achieve an effective front squat position.
- Initiate the squat by pushing your hips backwards and think “knees out”. Your knees should not travel in front of your toes.
- Travel down to the limit of your flexibility, or when the hip crease passes 90 degrees.
- Your lower back should always be straight or slightly curved. Keep your elbows up to prevent your chest dropping and back rounding.



Laying Scorpion

Focus points:

- Starting on the ground laying face down.
- From this position reach with one foot over to the opposite side lifting your hips off the ground.
- Then return to the start position in a controlled movement.
- It can be good to set yourself up up ~ 1 m away from a wall or object that you can 'reach for'.



Leg Lowers

Focus points:

- Lay on your back with both legs in the air at a 90° angle.
- Lower one leg slowly to the ground, STOP when you start to feel your lower back lifting off the ground and return your leg to the start position and repeat with the opposite leg.
- Focus on pushing your lower back to the ground by squeezing your abs.



Med Ball Figure 8

Focus points:

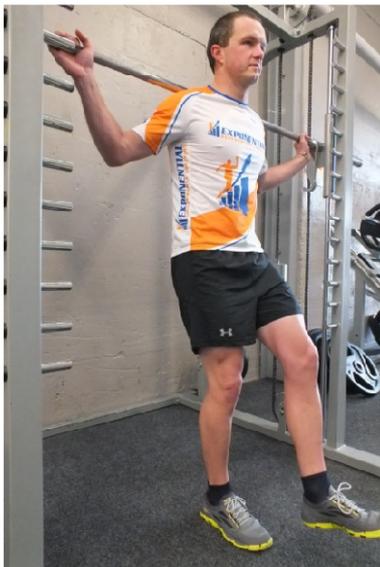
- Start in a ½ squat position with a med ball or weight held out in front of you.
- From this position SLOWLY move the ball in a 'figure 8' movement maintaining straight arms and performing the movement from your core.



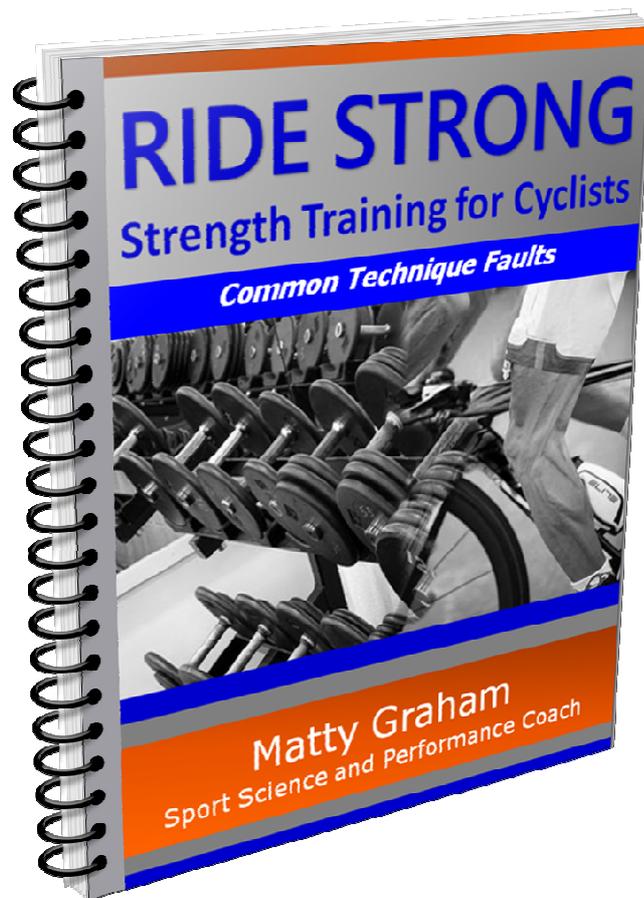
Smith Machine Single Leg Squat

Focus points:

- Set yourself up in a smith machine standing on one foot.
- From this start position push your hips back and squat down focusing on keeping your hips square and not letting your knee cross over your toe.
- You may need to adjust your position on the bar to allow this.



**** WAIT ****
If You Take Action Today
You'll Also Get the Following
BONUS!



This report tackles the most common technique faults in the gym and teaches you how to correct them to make your time in the gym safer and more effective.

Dead lifts

Common Faults:

- Rounding of the upper and/or lower back. This is extremely dangerous for your spine while lifting anything.
- Toes pointed out. This creates an unstable ankle and will cause your knees to cave inwards.
- Feet too far away from the bar. Your feet should be under the bar with your shins nearly touching it.

'Fault'



'Correct'



Bent over row

Common Faults:

- Rounded back. Both upper and lower back need to be straight. To solve this, think about puffing your chest out, and pushing your hips backwards.
- Shoulders rounded forward. Keep your shoulders in the back of the joint by puffing your chest out and pulling shoulders back.

'Fault'



'Correct'



Squats

Common Faults:

Body Weight Squat

- Toes pointing out and knees caving in. These often go hand in hand. Toes pointing too far out, is often a way for making up for a lack of mobility in the hips. This can cause your ankles to cave in, and put a lot of stress on the knees.

The Fix: Make sure your toes are either straight ahead, or just slightly turned out.

- Chest dropping down causing rounding of the back. This usually occurs when the athlete has very tight hip flexors. These muscles literally pull the rib cage down causing a rounded back.

Don't try and squat beyond the limitations of your flexibility.

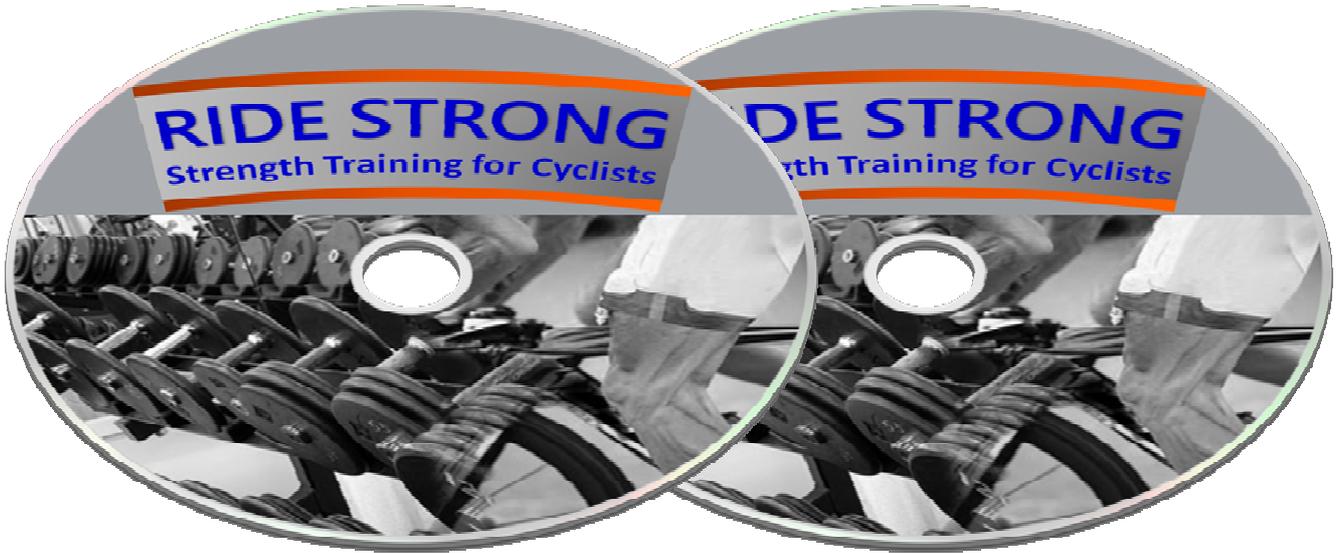
'Fault'



'Correct'



Ride Strong Video Presentations



Video 1: How to get the most out of Ride Strong

- In this video presentation you will learn how to get the most out of the Ride Strong training system depending on your experience and training history. Understanding where to put your focus will allow you to personalise your training approach and boost your performance.

Video 2: How to integrate Ride Strong into your training

- In this video presentation you will gain the knowledge to effectively integrate the Ride Strong training system into your current training plan so there is minimal interference with your on the bike training and you get maximal performance gains.



TOP SECRET

File: Indoor Cycle Training

Matty Graham
Sport Scientist and Performance Coach
Exponential Performance Coaching

Caution: Contents will result in pain and excessive sweating when used properly!

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

Welcome to Exponential Performance Coaching Indoor Cycle Training file. Indoor cycle training is a highly efficient way to train as well as being a safer and often more comfortable alternative to training outdoors during the cold, wet and dark winter months.

The winter phase of your training should be focused on developing your base aerobic endurance. Traditionally this was done via long slow distance training which is not often practical for busy athletes balancing work and family commitments. Recent research indicates that many of the cardiovascular and metabolic adaptations associated with improved aerobic function can be obtained from short duration, high intensity training (i.e. you can get the same benefits from shorter harder sessions). A number of the training sessions included in this library are based on this research so you can maximise the time you spend on your indoor trainer.

Peddalling efficiency is important to maximise the transfer of your energy from your lower body into your pedals and finally into forward momentum. For this development to occur the neuromuscular pathways from the brain to the muscles need to improve so the correct muscles are fired in the correct sequence over and over again. Winter is the ideal time to give your pedalling technique a revamp on the wind trainer. In this file you will also find a technique session that focuses specifically on the development of your pedalling efficiency. These concepts should also be applied across all of the sessions.

Along with these physical training benefits one factor that is often overlooked that indoor training can help develop is mental toughness. Developing the ability to 'suffer' on the bike is something that indoor training is great for. You, your slowly ticking watch and the deep burning in your legs as you grind past the half way point in another interval is something that when used properly can build an athlete's mental toughness. I have included some 'top secret' tips to help you develop an iron mind this winter.

The training sessions outlined in this file should be integrated into your current training schedule to replace similar planned on road sessions when time is short, during adverse weather or when it is too dark to safely ride outdoors. They can also be used to supplement your training to work on those specific aspects that are often missed in base development programmes. It is still recommended that your long rides are performed on the road rather than indoors as repeated prolonged indoor training sessions can lead to staleness and burnout. However, I have outlined a number of sessions that can be used as a long ride alternative for certain situations.

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

Indoor Cycling Tips

- The lack of air flow during indoor cycling often results in athletes perceiving their work rate greater/harder than it actually is. A good fan and ventilation is important to minimise overheating and a decrease in work rate.
- During the hill climbing sessions elevate your front wheel (~5 - 10 cm) using some blocks of wood. This angle helps recruit muscles specific to hill climbing that are not activated the same when on the 'flat'.
- To change your training load or resistance during your session use a combination of your gearing and trainer resistance. Different indoor trainers will have varying degrees of adjustability so use the first few sessions to work out the best way to adjust the resistance during your sessions.
- To help develop your pedalling technique set your trainer up next to and/or in front of a mirror. Using this visual feedback can be extremely beneficial to making changes to your pedalling technique.
- The high sodium concentration in your sweat makes it extremely corrosive. Insure that after each session that you give your bike a wipe down so any metal components do not start to corrode. Using a specialty wind trainer tyre will last longer than using a standard road tyre. Also putting a mat or towel under your trainer is a good idea so that your carpet does not get covered in sweat, worn rubber from your tyre or lubricant from your chain.
- Every five minutes change your position by standing for a few seconds, moving in your saddle or adjusting your hand grip to relieve any pressure points developing.
- Due to the lack of traffic lights, down hills, tail winds and freewheeling indoor training time is on average ~ 20% less time for the same training benefits as outdoor training for the same session. With this in mind you can take any programmed outdoor session and move it indoors altering the time (see table 2). While this can be useful to help get in those steady sessions it is recommended that you limit your time to a maximum of 2 hours to avoid staleness and burnout.

Table 2: Approximate conversion of outdoor to indoor ride time

Outdoor time	Approx indoor time
1 hour	45 minutes
1.5 hours	1.25 hours
2 hours	1.5 hours
2.5 hours	2 hours

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

Technique development session 1

Warm up: 10 min easy riding

Drill 1: High cadence 110 rpm+ focusing on holding a strong core to minimise upper body movement. Perform 3x30 sec blocks with 15 sec recovery between using a low/ easy gear.

Drill 2: Shoe scrapers.

- Imagine you are scraping mud off the bottom of your shoe. Activate your hamstrings and glutes pulling through the bottom of your pedal stroke

Drill 3: Kicking the door.

- Imagine you are kicking a door shut. At the top of your pedal stroke work on keeping consistent pressure on the front of your shoe, as you kick over the '12 O'clock' position.

Drill 4: Eyes closed.

- With your eyes closed pedal with a focus of applying pressure throughout the full pedal stroke holding a strong core, pulling through the bottom and kicking over the top.

Perform each drill for 2 min with 1 min easy riding between each and repeat 2-5 times depending on your ability and time availability.

Warm down: 5 min easy

Get your hands on the full Top Secret indoor cycling file for 10 more specific sessions:

Session 1: Sweet Spot intervals: Designed to improve your threshold without the punishing Zone 4 intervals

Session 2: Short of time 1: Research proven time effective session

Session 3: Short of time 2: Research proven Tabata based session

Session 4: Threshold maintenance: Come out of winter without losing the precious threshold gains from last season

Session 5: Technique development session 2: Build your pedalling efficiency and maximise your power development.

Session 6: Long 'split' ride: To wet and cold for a long ride on the road? This session allows you to clock up some good base mileage without losing your mind.

Session 7: Suicide pyramid: Be prepared to suffer on this session!

Session 8: Hill climbing interval ladder: Aimed to develop your strength endurance through simulated hill repeats

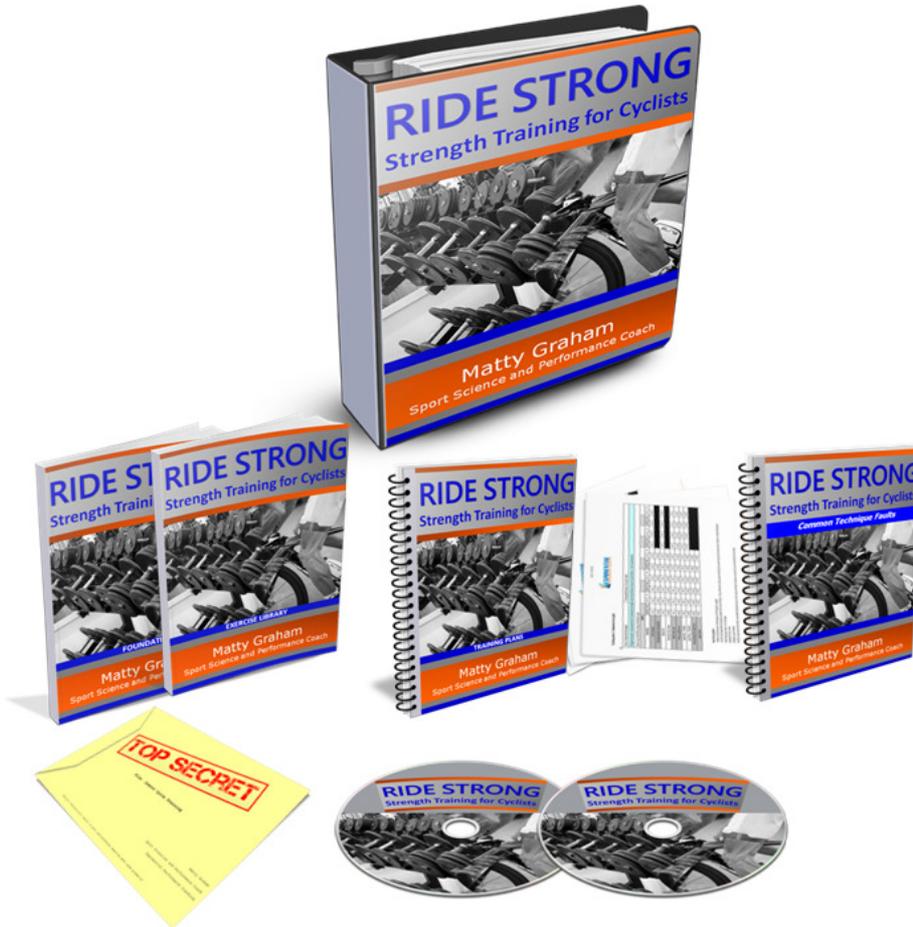
Session 9: TV 'break-away' ride: A fun way to get in some VO₂max sharpening intervals

Session 10: Endurance ride with cadence and resistance ladders: Develop your endurance while breaking up the monotony indoor training.

If you were to get this information, training sessions and tips outlined in this training system + the bonus material

personally from Sport Scientist and Performance Coach Matty Graham through Exponential Performance Coaching

the cost would be in excess of \$1500.



However, you will not pay anywhere near this.

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