



The Chain Gang (Through-and-Off)*

Two lines of riders with roughly equal numbers in each line. One faster line will be the pace setting line (**line 1 - right**). The slower line we will call the recovery line (**line 2 - left**).

The chain goes clockwise or anti-clockwise depending on the wind direction, to give shelter to the faster line. A club/group ride would typically have the outside line as the faster line, as this works better in traffic

You change speed when you reach the recovery line (**line 2**) – slowing down slightly once you've changed lines at the front, and you accelerate slightly when you pull out to re-join the pace setting line (**line 1**) at the back.

How to get it right.....

- Take a nice *shallow* line from **line 1** into **line 2** so that the lead rider can latch onto your wheel easily. A sharp line across will put you into the front wheel of the preceding rider... you don't want that! Don't increase your pace or accelerate, just ride through maintaining the pace of the line. Increasing the pace at the front is strictly a no-no, all it will do is disrupt or split the group. It helps if the lead rider of **line 2** calls "clear" when it is safe to come across.
- Ease off slightly at the front when you have changed from the faster **line 1** to the slower **line 2** – don't brake or stop pedalling, just take the pressure off the pedals *slightly* and continue to pedal. The next rider coming through in front of you should not need to increase pace to come past you! If you ease off too much the rider behind will have to take avoiding action and maybe brake sharply - you don't want that - also the rider at the back of the line will have to accelerate hard to get back into **line 1**... so just ease off slightly.
- Don't increase the pace in **line 2** - the only acceleration is at the back of the line when joining back into **line 1**. **Again... the only acceleration is at the back of the line, from line 2 back into line 1. Don't surge at the front.**

When you have re-joined the pace setting line (**line 1**), the last rider in the pace setting line should call "last wheel" as they are about to pass the last rider in the slow lane. This prepares the rider to start moving across and get onto the wheel by accelerating slightly.

Don't 'zone out' at the back, if you miss the last rider and have to *jump lanes and accelerate* to close the gap - then everyone behind you will also be making a needless effort - and you'll end up having to buy the coffees at the end of the ride.

Any rider that is struggling with the effort on the front should skip a turn or two and sit on the back of the line – stay in **line 2** and allowing riders to join the end of **line 1** in front of them. Don't feel the need to prove anything with a full turn if you're struggling. The important thing is for the group to maintain its momentum, and to communicate with the riders around you.

It may this sound complicated, but it actually isn't. It's great fun, and if you put this advice into action you'll soon be part of a smooth, fast working group.

