



ASK THE BIKE FITTER

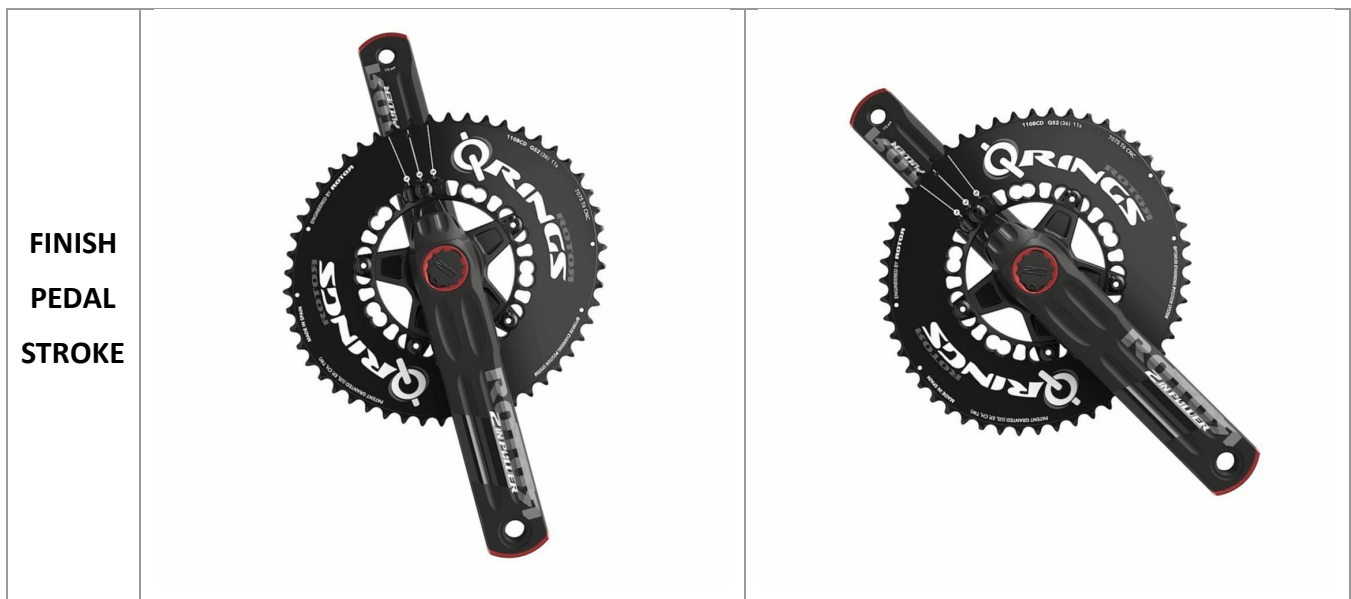
PEDAL LIKE A PRO

Ever wonder why the pros are so fast? One of the many reasons is that they pedal differently than you and me. Whether on an indoor trainer or on a low-traffic road outdoors, you can practice the below listed drills that will help to improve your riding so that you're ready to put your improved pedal stroke to work at the start of next season. World Tour Pros start applying power to their pedal stroke much earlier than the rest of us. They also 'power off' much later than the rest of us do. They don't 'stab' at the pedals, they push a high power through the pedals for as long as they can. Looking at the example below, pros will start their pedal stroke around 1:30 and finish around 5:30. This equates to starting the pedal stroke at 45° and finishing at 165° which is a full 33% of the total pedaling circle. Most cyclists I have done analysis on, start applying power around 3:00 and end around 4:30 which nets only 45°, or 12.5% of the total pedaling circle.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? Pros are pushing hard on their pedals for 120° of crank arc, a full 33% of the total pedaling circle. The rest of us only about 45° of crank arc.

Note: this does not even take into consideration that pros also pull up hard on the upstroke. In other words, pros are pushing on their pedals for an additional 75° which is about 167% more than the rest of us.

	PROs	THE REST OF US
START PEDAL STROKE		



SO HOW CAN I DO THIS TOO? There are lots of drills that the rest of us can do to help with this. I recommend starting off using one leg at a time so it easier to concentrate on. You will want to concentrate on one leg pedaling the whole 120°.

Start by concentrating and pedaling for 2-3 minutes - one leg at a time. Ramp up this drill to a full 5 minutes. During this initial phase, you are building muscle memory. Once you can do this easily, go back to pedaling 2-legged. At first you will need to concentrate even more, but you will eventually “feel-it” kick in. If you have a power meter, you should be able to see a higher number once you start pedaling smoothly for the entire 120°.

When training outdoors, unclip one foot from the pedal and pedal with the other foot. Switch by clipping in the foot/leg you were resting and unclipping the foot/leg that was doing the work. Continue switching back and forth.

When training indoors, set a step stool up next to your trainer so that you can easily rest your “off leg” on the stool, out of the way of the crankarm and pedal. This will allow you to concentrate on the leg that you are training.

Once you have mastered this, it will be time to concentrate on the back- or up-stroke where you can gain even more free wattage.

Coach Rick Schultz is an avid cyclist who trains, races and coaches in Southern California.