

The one question I get all of the time is "**What can I do to improve the most?**"

This got me to thinking and I have put together 3 "TOP 3" lists that should help answer this question.

Here are the TOP 3 things you can do that will IMPROVE YOUR CYCLING THE MOST.

Note: This section assumes that you have a Power Meter.

First) Bike Fit. You need to be in the correct position before you can learn to pedal efficiently. You need to pedal efficiently before you can learn how to apply power. Bike Fitting is the first step in the process. A great bike fit will get your feet pointed in the right direction, get your metatarsals and knees directly over the pedal axles, get your lower and upper body angles in the correct positions resulting in greater efficiency, less risk of injury for your joints, tendons and ligaments, and for greater overall cycling enjoyment.

Second) Learn to Spin. Once you have the perfect bike fit, you can learn to spin without bouncing all over the saddle. Spinning allows you to pedal more efficiently, especially when climbing. I have put together a separate article just on spinning.

Third) High Intensity Training Intervals Done correctly, these will single handedly do more to increase your wattage, increase your stamina, lower your resting heart rate, help you lose weight, than any other single workout. The benefits go on and on.



Figure 1 A HAPPY CLIENT WITH HIS PERFECT BIKE FIT

BONUS, here are the **TOP 3 WEAKEST MUSCLE GROUPS** that need the most attention. Strengthen these and you WILL be a lot stronger cyclist. Please see our new EBook that addresses these and more ...

<http://bikefitnesscoaching.com/stretching-core-strengthening-ebook/>

- 1) Core – Cyclists rely on their core as their main support structure. A strong core supports the cyclist. A strong core also helps with the pedal stroke. Don't do sit-ups or crunches but do planks instead.
- 2) Glutes – The glutes are the most powerful muscle group in the body and are the muscle group that affects how much power you can apply to the pedals the most. Remember, weak glutes make for a weak cyclist.
- 3) Shoulder Stabilizers (mid/low traps) –



Figure 2 BASIC PLANK CORE POSITION

As the miles roll on and fatigue sets in, the upper body starts to 'slump' over the bars. A weak core that isn't supporting the cyclist and weak traps that let the midline of the upper body slouch makes a cyclist even weaker. You will know this is happening to you when your shoulders start to cover your ears. This is NOT a very power producing position.

And now, the **TOP 3 TIGHTEST MUSCLE GROUPS** that need stretching for flexibility the most. A tight muscle is a short muscle and a short muscle cannot provide the power that a long muscle can. So, stretch out those muscles

to make them long again. These stretches and more are all listed in our new EBook - <http://bikefitnesscoaching.com/stretching-core-strengthening-ebook/>

- 1) Hip Flexors – When it comes to our daily sedentary lives, these are the most abused muscle group in the body. Sitting on the bike we are hunched over, our hips at 90°, at work we're sitting at our desk our hips are bent at 90°, at the dinner table our hips are bent at 90°, relaxing in our favorite chair, our hips are bent at 90°. It's no wonder we all have very shortened and very weak hip flexors. So, get up and stretch your hip flexors at least once a day. The EBook covers numerous exercises to stretch the hip flexors. How to strengthen hip flexors will be a future article.
- 2) Hamstrings – If hip flexors are the most abused muscle group in the body, then the hamstrings can't be far behind. When the knees are bent, the hamstrings are shortened. Shortened hamstrings are also caused by too many hours seated in a chair. So stretch those hamstrings to help the lower back pain go away and to be able to apply more power to the pedals.
- 3) Calves – The calves also never get stretched much and get shorter and shorter. More than 50% of my cycling clients complain of calf pain, Achilles pain and severe calf cranks at night. Include calf stretches and exercises to make these pains go away.



Figure 3 One of Many Hip Flexor Stretches in the EBook