

Get the Most from Indoor Trainer Sessions

As daylight grows shorter with each passing day, and the temperatures dip continually lower, it's time to move our training indoors! Since most of us spend the bulk of our time training indoors during the inclement winter months, here are some ways to focus this time for improved performance benefit:

Improving Power Production

Making the most of what you have, or in other words, pedal technique improvement. Making efficient use of all available muscle groups in your pedaling cycle will contribute to both force production improvement and endurance. The trainer is the perfect setting in which to develop more consistent power application throughout all 360 degrees of your pedal stroke without the distraction of on road concerns. [1], initiate you're the downward portion of your stroke at the 12 o'clock position and push down to the 4 to 5 o'clock position. Here you'll be engaging primarily your gluteals, quadriceps and calves. [2], before you reach bottom dead center of the stroke at 4 to 5 o'clock position, begin to engage the hamstrings by slightly dropping your heel below the pedal axle and driving your heel toward the back of the bike, keeping your foot horizontal to the floor for as long as possible. This should feel like a bicep curl for your hamstrings. [3], as move toward the 9 o'clock position, crank arm horizontal to the floor and at the back of your bike, begin to pull your knee up toward your elbow or handlebar from about 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Here you'll be engaging your hip flexors, primarily your Psos group and Anterior Tibialis or the muscle in the front of your shin.

If you haven't worked on drills like this it will feel strange. The idea is to work on perfecting it until it doesn't. It takes a lot of time to perfect...sometimes years. Believe me though it will pay big dividends.

Increasing torque is a major winter priority. Start by building strength in either the weight room or by focused body weight drills then add strength transfer training. This transfer process is accomplished by lower cadence, 40 to 60 rpm with moderate to moderately high intensity in a hard gear or resistance. This will help increase watts per pedal stroke building power.

Add in cadence drills, or high-speed sessions between torque intervals to work on neuromuscular development, metabolic waste removal and aerobic function.

Later on in the winter, add in cruise intervals or steady state threshold intervals once or twice a week. These will help increase your threshold or your ability to work at higher levels, longer. They are done by working at or just below your aerobic threshold for 4 to 6 minute intervals with one to two minute recovery periods between, increasing work periods or reducing rest periods as you progress.

Finally, increasing your VO2 Maximum. These sessions have to be timed properly based on when you want to peak for a special "A" event this coming season, and should be done sparingly. Efforts of 30 seconds to 3 minutes at a 100% effort; you'll be working at an effort you can sustain for a six-minute period. Work/rest rates are 1:1. For harder, shorter anaerobic interval sessions, less than 2 minutes, allow a full recovery between efforts.

We work on all these aspects of training in my indoor cycling classes through the fall and winter months.

Endure, Work Hard, Enjoy. Spring is will come again!
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