

## SPINNING - SOME TIPS

### Bike Set Up

1. Seat Height - your leg at the bottom of the pedal stroke with the foot flat, should give a bend at the knee of 30 - 35 degrees.
2. Distance of seat from the bars - with your feet on the pedals parallel to each other, you should be able to look down on your leading knee, and see that it is directly over your pedal spindle. If you dropped a plumb line from the knee, it would touch the spindle. This is especially important when you are pushing large resistance, as sitting too far back can cause damage to the knee structures.
3. Bar Height - my belief is that we are cyclists rather than gym 'spinners', and therefore should be trying to get as close to real bike position as possible. For that reason I try to get my bars pretty low compared to other spinners.
4. Spin 'Moves' and terms - I have been doing spinning for several years, and have worked with one or two excellent instructors. However, many can also be very vague in their instructions, and quite a few have obviously spent very little time on a proper bike. Further, few of them intervene to correct bad bike position or technique, so here are a few thoughts and clarifications.
5. Adding Resistance - when an instructor says "add a turn" do they mean a FULL turn or a PART of a turn? This is important because I have estimated that a quarter turn on many spin bikes can be equal to roughly 15 watts. That makes a full turn worth around 50 - 60 watts. That's quite a bit to add at one time. Our instructor last Wednesday was casually telling us to add up to 5 full turns at one point - that's up to 250 additional watts! No wonder some people simply were unable to turn their pedals at all, which is no use to anyone! My advice, for what it's worth, is to follow instructions to add resistance - BUT - to add it in quarter or even half turns, rather than in huge amounts. This leads us to 'Cadence'.
6. Cadence - your normal cadence should be at least 80 revs per minute. ( count your turns on one leg for 15 seconds and multiply by 4). In sprints with light resistance that can rise to 100 - 120 or even higher. However, using heavy resistance, cadence can drop to 45 - 50 rpm. Any less than that is too little in my opinion. In that case, reduce resistance until you can turn your legs a bit more easily - that still can be a real effort, and worthwhile for your fitness.
7. 'Hover' - this means being in stand up position on the pedals, with just enough resistance to force your bum up off the seat. Your butt should just touch the seat and no more.
8. Holds on your bars - Getting low and pushing your butt right back engages and works your hamstring and glute muscles. On the other hand, when you are asked to stand up straight in the pedals, hold the bars right up at the ends to get full benefit, and not closer to the handlebars as you would when climbing on a real bike.
9. Spinning with low resistance - be careful doing this too hard at the start of the session, even if the instructor is egging you on! You can damage the tendons behind and at the sides of your knees by pushing too hard/fast against limited resistance before you are properly warmed up.
10. Heart Rate - two or three years back, heart rate was everything in a spin class. Now it is never mentioned! In fact in most spin classes there is absolutely no statistical feedback. I still believe that HR has an important place in effective training. All that is needed is a simple HR Monitor which can show your HR and IF you know your actual maximum HR, what percent the shown rate is of that maximum. That way at least you get some idea of how hard you are working.