



# PERFORMANCE CYCLING CONDITIONING

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO IMPROVING CYCLISTS

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Coaching Education Special Feature From:



## Recovery is Training Too

*David Ertl, PCG Elite Coach, USAC Level 1 Coach, Waukee, Iowa  
Coaching Focus: Road, Mountain Bike, Cyclocross, Time Trial*

*David has been riding and racing bikes for forty-two years now as a master athlete. His focus is on road racing, but has done some mountain biking and has dabbled in track and cyclocross. Since beginning coaching in 2001, he has coached individual recreational cyclists, competitive cyclists, and race teams, and served as a national coach for the JDRF Ride To Cure Diabetes Program and the coach for RAGBRAI®. In addition he has written four books on cycling training. He helps conduct a weight loss/cycling program with my local bike club based on my book, Pedal Off The Pounds.*

### **Major Milestones**

- 13 years of cycling coaching experience
- Connecticut State Road Championships, Junior, 2nd
- Iowa Mountain Bike Championships, 35+, 1st
- Iowa Time Trial Championships, 40+, 2nd

### **David's Prospective**

*"One of the things I noticed was that while I wasn't always the strongest or fastest cyclist, I could often get decent results based on my experience. At the same time cycling coaching began to emerge as an opportunity, so I became a coach to share my lengthy experience with others so they could make faster progress and not have to make all the mistakes I made and learn the hard way as I had to do.*

*"I have noticed several things that are common among most cyclists who seek coaching. First, they tend not to work hard enough on their hard workouts, and then they don't take it easy enough on the easy days, underestimating the need for recovery. They spend too much time in between and stagnate. Most cyclists also have a life to balance with their training; many of us have families and careers and other interests outside of cycling. It can be challenging to undertake a strenuous training program while balancing our other demands, especially the mental and emotional demands. I live that balance myself, and I enjoy working with other busy people who want to fit in a serious training program and progress while keeping everything in balance.*

*"It is also important to make sure that cycling remains fun and rewarding. Most of us don't compete for a living. We compete for personal satisfaction and enjoyment. It is essential that no matter how tough a training program is, we keep it enjoyable. I like*



David Ertl, Ph.D.

*to think of training and cycling as our way to play as adults. The best way to keep it fun is to see steady improvement and success in competition, and I enjoy helping people accomplish this."*

BGN  
INT  
XTP  
MSR  
MTB



The 2016 training and racing season is cranking up, and so is your training. You are accumulating miles, hours in the saddle, and loads of training stress score (TSS) numbers. Your fitness is increasing, and you are getting stronger and faster. You are also getting more fatigued. As a coach, I rarely have to encourage athletes to get on their bike and ride. Most athletes who are motivated to seek out and pay for a coach are also motivated to train hard. More often than not, I have to encourage the athlete to train a little less and spend more time recovering. It's true, the more and harder one rides, the stronger they will get, but only up to a point. If they don't allow their body to recover, their hard work won't get translated into increased fitness. In fact, it will work against them, and drive them into sustained fatigue, which can lead to overtraining if not addressed.

I like to remind people that riding, what people consider training, actually breaks the body down. It creates injuries to the muscles that must heal. It's the rest and recovery that allows this damage to heal. In the process, the healing results in increased fitness. Shortchanging the recovery process shortchanges your training. You need to balance the riding with the resting. In this regard, resting and recovery is an important component of training, as much as the working out. It will serve you well to remember that recovery is as important as riding for increased fitness, and is indeed part of training, as are proper attention to nutrition and hydration. Focusing only on riding will not address all aspects of fitness and training.

The training stress balance metric (TSB) is a way to monitor your fatigue and need for rest when training with power. As you workout longer and harder, your TSS will increase and your TSB will decrease. The lower the TSB value, the more accumulated fatigue you have. In order to get stronger and fitter, you must sustain fatigue and drive TSB into negative territory. But you can't keep it there indefinitely as you pile on the miles. You need to 'come up for air' periodically and allow yourself to recover and get your TSB back above zero. Experiment with your own ability to tolerate fatigue by watching your TSB and discovering the point where you need to rest and recover before piling on more stress.

So as you attack this training and racing season, remember that recovery is just as important as training, and in fact is an equal part of training. 