

Week 5

Note: This week used to appear in a different part of the plan so just ignore it if it refers to a different week etc.

Session 5:1 – Hill climbing

Goal: Build muscular strength and technique for pedalling at lower cadences

Again, I'd suggest turning off ERG mode so you're in control.

Whilst the skill of holding a higher cadence is invaluable, and generally when on the flat I'd advise holding around 90-100rpm, sometimes we will need to cycle at a lower cadence, usually when going up hill or into a strong wind. And so we need to train for that.

Session plan:

First interval

- 2 mins seated – low cadence – 60 rpm
- 1 min – recovery, self-selected (higher) cadence
- 1 min standing – low cadence - first interval 60 rpm
- 1 min – recovery, self-selected (higher) cadence

Then

- 2 mins seated – low cadence – second interval 65rpm/ third interval 70 rpm / fourth interval 75 rpm
- 1 min – recovery, self-selected (higher) cadence
- 1 min standing – low cadence - second interval 65 rpm etc/ 70/ 75
- 1 min – recovery, self-selected (higher) cadence

Notes:

- Bike set up important – bad set up at low cadence can lead to knee pain, if it hurts tweak set up/ abandon drills for now (try rolling, S&C etc, and then try again)
- Even with a good set up you're putting more load through your joints on each pedal stroke, so if you're new to low cadence drills you may find that your legs are getting more tired or certain muscles getting tight. Don't over do it! Just do one round of the low cadence drills today, and then come back to them another day.
- This is more about building technique and ability to put out force on the bike. To build stronger legs per se, off the bike training (squats, lunges etc) is far better
- In the real world – don't grind up a hill, use your gears (yes, over geared efforts are definitely a useful training tool, exactly as we're doing now, but if you're grinding up hills and slowing more and more over the course of the ride, it's only training for being unnecessarily slow. Training must also include getting used to using your gears so you don't even think about it on race day).
- The goal is constant power, not constant speed or cadence, so get used to using your gears
- Don't stand unless you need to (or as a training drill), it's useful to shift position every now and then on a long hill, and if you run out of gears or want to sprint, then standing is great for that extra power, but your HR will go up for the same effort, so don't stand unless you need to.

Session 5:2 – Sweet Spot

Repeat hill climbing drills at the higher power. This is your last Sweet Spot coaching video! Don't forget to keep applying the learnings from what you've learnt in future sessions.