

Trek Bicycle Store Victoria

How to cycle efficiently

80% of going fast is based on aerodynamics, so get into the best streamlined position you can. This primarily involves getting your shoulders lower to the handlebars. There are two ways to achieve this position. The first position is to use the hoods and bend your elbows to lower your shoulders almost resting your wrists on the handlebar. The second position is to use the drop (the lowest part of the handlebar). Make sure to get your hands deep into the bend of the bar so you can still access your brakes and your gears. Getting your hands deep into the drops gets your shoulders lower therefore making you more aerodynamic.

The goal in cycling fast, other than the obvious, is to go as fast as possible without spending too much energy. In other words, you want to keep your wattage down (this is the power you generate while pedaling). This goal is achieved through efficient pedaling, which means knowing your optimum cadence and heart rate. You want to keep your heart rate lower while you cycle faster, but you want to keep your cadence up. However, you don't need a plethora of bike computer gizmos (although you can buy them from your friendly neighbourhood Trek shop!) in order to discover what your optimum rhythm is. Do the following: start in an easy gear, as soon as you hit the peak of that gear without spinning out, change into a lower gear. Keep doing this. As you hit the peak of each gear, change into a harder gear. This process can be very fast (i.e. you will be going through the gears quite rapidly). When you hit the gear that slows down your cadence, that feels kind of like you are hitting a wall, you've passed your optimum gear. At this point, go back to the last gear, and chances are you are in your zone for going fast. Compare this process to that of driving a manual shift car. You start in first gear, as the car accelerates and the revolutions go up, you change into the next gear, and so on. You are in effect doing the same thing while cycling and accelerating, so use those gears efficiently and wisely.

Tips: Now that you understand the physics, here are a few tips to help you make the most it.?

Don't forget that it is important to maintain good lower back flexibility (can you touch your toes? Good, now stretch so you can reach further) and a strong core. A strong core means that your body is holding itself up and not your arms holding your upper body up. A strong core and good flexibility will likely result in you being able to achieve a more aggressive posture on the bicycle, thus improving your aerodynamics and helping you to go faster.

Try to use the full revolution of each pedal stroke to its maximum. This means that when you push down you are really pushing down, and then think of grabbing the insole of your shoe with your toes as you pull the pedal back. As you pedal through the upstroke of the revolution think of getting the weight of your then raise your heel (just enough) to improve the strength and efficiency as you pull the pedal up. Inefficient pedaling simply wastes energy.

Use your arms. Pull towards your body as you pedal to increase the transmission of body strength to the bicycle and thus help boost your speed.

Sprinting is hitting the peak of your optimum speed and then going beyond that point. To sprint you want to be in the drops, and it is very important to use your arms, and use them a lot. When sprinting you'll probably also want to stand out of the saddle and push harder (which you can do out of the saddle). Also, in sprinting you will really rock your bicycle from side to side as you pedal and pull with your arms. Do this all very vigorously (remember, you are sprinting!) and don't be afraid to go lactic.

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