



Presents

# **COMPLETE CYCLIST STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE**



## Welcome

This guide is built around one core idea: strength training is not a supplement to cycling — it IS cycling. The best riders in the world aren't just logging miles. They're building the muscular foundation that lets those miles translate into speed, power, and resilience on the bike.

Inside you'll find everything you need to start, structure, and progress a strength program that actually works for cyclists.

**DISCLAIMER:** Please note that the information provided in this guide is for information and entertainment purposes only. The information in this guide is not a replacement for professional medical advice and guidance. Always consult your physician before undertaking any physical activities. Seek immediate medical attention if any discomfort arises from any exercises.

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## Why Cyclists Need Strength Training

Most cyclists avoid the weight room for three reasons:

- Fear of bulking up and gaining weight
- Not knowing which exercises actually help on the bike
- Thinking more miles = more improvement

The research tells a different story. Studies consistently show that strength training:

- Improves cycling economy (how efficiently you use oxygen)
  - Increases peak power output and sprint capacity
  - Reduces injury risk by correcting muscular imbalances
  - Delays fatigue on long climbs by training slow-twitch endurance
  - Enhances neuromuscular coordination between muscle groups
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## The Big 5 Muscle Groups for Cyclists

### 1. Glutes

Your primary power engine. Weak glutes = wasted watts. Every pedal stroke should be glute-dominant. If your quads are doing all the work, you're leaving power on the table.

Key exercises: Hip thrusts, Romanian deadlifts, single-leg squats, cable kickbacks

### 2. Quadriceps

The secondary driver of the push phase. Important for climbing and accelerating. Need to be strong but balanced with hamstrings.

Key exercises: Goblet squats, leg press, step-ups, Bulgarian split squats



### 3. Hamstrings

Critical for the pull phase of the pedal stroke and injury prevention. Most cyclists have weak hamstrings relative to quads — this imbalance causes knee problems.

Key exercises: Nordic curls, Romanian deadlifts, lying leg curls, good mornings

### 4. Core

Your power transfer system. A strong core keeps you stable on the bike, prevents back pain, and ensures every watt generated by your legs reaches the pedals.

Key exercises: Plank variations, dead bug, Pallof press, bird dog, hollow holds

### 5. Upper Body & Posterior Chain

Often neglected but critical for climbing, sprinting, and bike handling. Strong back and shoulders reduce fatigue on long rides.

Key exercises: Pull-ups, rows, face pulls, Y-T-W raises

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## The 3-Phase Training Year

### Phase 1: Off-Season Foundation (October – December)

Goal: Build a strength base with heavy compound movements.

- Frequency: 3x per week
- Focus: Compound lifts, high volume, moderate intensity
- Sets/Reps: 3-4 sets of 8-12 reps
- Cardio: Low intensity, 2-3 rides per week

### Phase 2: Pre-Season Build (January – March)

Goal: Convert strength into cycling-specific power.

- Frequency: 2-3x per week
- Focus: Power movements, heavier loads, lower reps
- Sets/Reps: 4-5 sets of 4-6 reps
- Cardio: Increasing ride volume and intensity

### Phase 3: In-Season Maintenance (April – September)

Goal: Maintain strength gains without interfering with riding performance.

- Frequency: 1-2x per week
- Focus: Movement quality, injury prevention
- Sets/Reps: 2-3 sets of 6-8 reps, moderate weight



- Cardio: Full race/training schedule
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## 12-Week Beginner Program

Perform this 3x per week with at least one rest day between sessions.

### Weeks 1-4: Foundation

Workout A (Monday)

1. Goblet Squat — 3 x 10
2. Romanian Deadlift — 3 x 10
3. Dumbbell Row — 3 x 10 each side
4. Plank — 3 x 30 seconds
5. Hip Thrust — 3 x 12

Workout B (Wednesday)

6. Step-Up — 3 x 10 each leg
7. Nordic Curl (assisted) — 3 x 6
8. Push-Up — 3 x 10
9. Dead Bug — 3 x 8 each side
10. Single-Leg Glute Bridge — 3 x 12 each side

Workout C (Friday)

11. Bulgarian Split Squat — 3 x 8 each side
12. Pull-Up or Lat Pulldown — 3 x 8
13. Face Pull — 3 x 15
14. Pallof Press — 3 x 10 each side
15. Calf Raise — 3 x 20

### Weeks 5-8: Progressive Overload

Add 5-10% more weight to each exercise compared to Weeks 1-4. Reduce reps to 6-8 for main compound movements and increase sets to 4.

### Weeks 9-12: Power Phase

Introduce plyometric elements. Add box jumps, jump squats, and explosive step-ups to convert strength to power.

## Progressive Overload: The Non-Negotiable Rule

Progressive overload means consistently challenging your muscles beyond what they're accustomed to. Without it, you stop adapting.

The simplest method: add 5lbs to lower body exercises and 2.5lbs to upper body exercises every 1-2 weeks when you can complete all sets with good form.

**PRO TIP:** Track every workout. Write down the weight, sets, and reps for every exercise. You cannot progressively overload what you don't track.

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## Recovery: The Missing Variable

- Sleep 7-9 hours. Non-negotiable. Most adaptation happens during sleep.
  - Eat enough protein: 1.6-2.2g per kg of bodyweight daily
  - Don't strength train the day before a key ride or race
  - Foam roll and stretch after strength sessions
  - Deload every 4-6 weeks: reduce volume by 40-50% for one week
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## Want More?

Use the free Strength Workout Builder at [pedalmyway.com](https://pedalmyway.com) to generate custom workouts based on your equipment and goals.

Download the PMW FIT app (Google Play) for guided offline workouts.

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