

Riding Indoors: Keeping It Fun

by Mikael Hanson

The arrival of the first snowfall marks the official start of winter in my book. We can now look forward to sub-zero temperatures, blowing winds, and frequent snow flurries - thus it is easy to get depressed when considering your winter training options (unless of course you are a skier). Yes, there is always the gym, but for a cyclist, time on the bike is important. However as the weather deteriorates and darkness reigns, I find that many cyclists actually dread climbing on their trainer, stating that riding indoors is about as exciting as watching paint dry. Perhaps these people suffer from a lack of imagination, as I for one look forward riding indoors. For those who would class themselves in the latter category (dread), there are several things one can do to make riding indoors more enjoyable.

1. Proper environment

First of all, your environment is a huge factor in how comfortable you are while riding. For me, the closed confines of a NYC apartment can lead to some stuffy riding conditions. The first thing one should invest in (after a good bike trainer that is) is a fan. Even on the coldest winter days, I crack the window a touch and aim the fan at my chest, thus keeping the overheating to a minimum. Make sure you have a towel draped over the handlebars and for those of you with hardwood floors, put another one on the ground around your bike, as you will sweat (trust me on this one!).

2. What to do for entertainment?

Assuming we all don't own Compu-trainers, we will need to do something other than watch the walls. Listening to music is always an option, but this only helps out one of our senses. I need more stimulation. Riding indoors for me means a chance to catch up on some quality TV. Why not ride while watching your favorite football or basketball team play? Or better yet, how about watching Lance win one of his five Tour de France titles on tape? For me, my favorite source of TV entertainment is a good old James Bond flick (I own every Bond movie). If movies or sporting events aren't for you, there are a host of training videos to invest in. Spinervals has several videos all with different workouts, intensities, and durations.

3. Keep it fun!

Sure, watching Brett Favre or James Bond will help pass the time, but you still have to think about your workout. Try adding some spice to your indoor ride, while keeping in mind we are still in the off-season. Do a modest interval or hill climb whenever your team has the ball, throw in a 30 second sprint for every touchdown or turnover, do a large-gear seated climb for the duration of every car chase James Bond finds himself in. Just use your imagination and I ensure you will see the time fly by, and you'll get a great work out on top of it.