



Abusing Power!!

POWER! It means different things to different people, but rest assured if you want to be a better cyclist you need to have more power. Yes, endurance work, planned recovery, lactic acid work, and VO2max efforts are all important components of a complete training program, but in the end power is what drives the bike forward. In assessing your power you must ask yourself these questions:

1. How much power do I have? We offer a couple of options to assess your current power
2. Where is my power best? Flats? Steep climbs? Downhill at high rpms?
3. Where is my power worst? Focus on improving these areas first
4. How do I get more? Read on faithful scribe...

Watch top World Cup riders in both Cross Country and Downhill. They rely on and deliver power with amazing grace and blistering efficiency. They apply power throughout the pedal stroke, at all different RPM's and across all conditions. They have mastered the technique with brutal effects. To help you develop this type of focus try these three easily adaptable techniques:

**Note: If you haven't done the requisite base training then don't attack power efforts with too much vigor in the early season or you will pay for it through injuries and overtraining.*

1. **Big Gear Efforts:** Riding a big gear at high RPM is probably the single best way to increase power. First, get comfortable turning a big gear at low RPM's. Try 50-65RPM in your largest or second largest gear for 2 minutes. Focus on applying pressure throughout the pedal stroke in a smooth and circular manner; literally pedal circles. These efforts help you improve your muscle fiber recruitment and increase the total number of muscle fibers involved in each effort, making your pedal stroke more efficient. Once you've developed base level competency at low RPM, it's time to work with higher RPM efforts. Start with 30 second to 1 minute efforts at 80-90 RPM (RPM efficiency varies from rider to rider but is usually highest around 90 RPM). Use manageable gears to begin with (53x19 road, 46 or 48x17 MTB) and work up from there. Spend a few weeks adapting to this new form of training and begin increasing the duration of your efforts. You only want to attempt focused power intervals 1x per week, although you can incorporate power into much of your regular riding too.
2. **Rider/Bike Connectivity:** This is the relationship between you and your bike. Sorry, but you won't need to buy it new tires and a bell to get it. What you need to do is ride your bike. Learn how it reacts to your inputs and commands. Practice riding your bike with little or no upper body movement. Watch your favorite professionals, emulate their strengths and overcome your weaknesses. When climbing click up one gear before you stand, this helps you maintain the same rhythm and speed. Practice riding wheelies, jumping objects and skidding the front and rear tires (yes, you can skid the front tire). All of these techniques will make your application of power more supple and responsive. Get to know your bike and feel you are part of the same symbiotic relationship, because you are.
3. **Ride with Stronger Cyclists:** If you can't find anyone to ride with who really pushes you, get out and broaden your circle of riding partners! Seriously though, riding with people stronger than you helps develop power across a spectrum of conditions and tactical situations. Hard accelerations uphill, long gear wind-ups for the finish line, sprints to single track, all of these tax your power systems in different ways. When you're with stronger riders, attack them! Don't be afraid to go hard because you might "blow up." What's the worst that can happen? You blow up, get dropped and have to ride the rest of the 50 miles home into a fierce headwind by yourself? Hey, great opportunity to work on your low RPM power!

That's It For Now!