

RBR Newsletter

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1. FROM THE TOP -- Views from the Editor

Editor's Note: [Neck & Upper Back Pain and Cycling](#) (eArticle), by **Alan Bragman, D.C.**, goes on sale today. Neck problems are the most commonly reported overuse injury associated with cycling. Dr. Bragman provides detailed guidance across the range of prevention techniques, including bike setup and riding technique, strength and stability exercises for the neck, shoulders and upper back, and trigger point self-treatment exercises, illustrated with 13 color photos. A must for cyclists suffering from neck pain, or for those who wish to prevent it, this is the companion eArticle to Dr. Bragman's [Cycling and Lower Back Pain](#) -- 2011's Best Seller.

September Ramblings

September's going to be a busy month of travel, information-gathering, and riding for yours truly. So I wanted to make you aware of some of our upcoming coverage related to that, and our schedule for next month.

First off, I'll be joining 20,000 other bike-industry folks in Las Vegas on the 14th for Interbike, the largest bike-biz trade show in North America. Here's how they describe it themselves: "Bring 1,000+ brands and 12,000+ buyers from around the world to Las Vegas and you have Interbike -- the ultimate blend of industry leaders and innovative products in the bicycle industry."

Our tech guru, **Jim Langley**, will also be there. We'll be roaming the show floors in search of what's hot, what's new, what's cool, and who's who. For each of the 3 days of the show, we'll post once or twice to RBR's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/RoadBikeRider) to give you a sneak peak of what's going on at the show.

For those of you who don't use Facebook, not to worry. We'll devote significant space in post-show issues of **RBR Newsletter** to the products, gear, accessories, etc., that most piqued our interest, and that we think will most interest you! The Interbike coverage will start with the September 29 issue.

After 3 days of full immersion at Interbike (in Vegas, no less), most sensible people head home to unwind and digest all that they've experienced. I guess I'm not most sensible people! Instead, I'm heading straight to San Francisco to begin the [California Coast Classic](#) the very next day.

Along with 300 other cyclists, I'll be riding 525 miles down the coast to Los Angeles over the span of 8 days. As with Interbike, I plan to post daily updates to Facebook during the ride, and write about my experience in more detail in the newsletter afterward. (Note that we will not be publishing an issue of the newsletter on September 22, as the ride will be ongoing.)

The CCC benefits the Arthritis Foundation "by raising vital funds that enable the Foundation to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control, and cure of arthritis and related diseases. The funds raised also provide educational resources to help adults, parents and children manage their arthritis through community-based services to make life with arthritis easier."

Arthritis runs in my family (as it does in millions of others), and I'm truly happy and excited to be able to ride with so many good people whose lives are affected by the disease in various ways in an event that so positively affects change for arthritis sufferers. I've been told this is a "bucket list" ride, with breathtaking scenery and picturesque towns along the way. I can't think of a better combination of beauty and purpose in one ride.

I look forward to sharing with you my experiences from both Interbike and the California Coast Classic, starting in late September.

P.S. I'm weighing options to ship my bike directly to San Francisco and back from L.A. If anyone has personal experience shipping a bike via FedEx, UPS, or a similar private service, I'd appreciate it if you could share your experience -- positive or negative -- on the [Comments](#) page, or with me directly at RBRPublishing@RoadBikeRider.com. I'll round up the feedback and share with the RBR community. Thanks in advance!

Enjoy your ride!

John Marsh
Editor & Publisher

[Comment](#)

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IN THE RBR [eBOOKSTORE](#)

NEW eARTICLE ON SALE TODAY:

[Neck & Upper Back Pain and Cycling](#) (eArticle), by **Alan Bragman, D.C.** Neck problems are the most commonly reported overuse injury associated with cycling. In his 30 years of practice, and from his own cycling experience, Dr. Bragman has seen and treated thousands of cases of neck and upper back pain. Causes can include riding position, technique and pre-existing anatomical and physiological factors. The keys to prevention are proper bike and equipment setup, proper riding technique, and strengthening and stabilizing the neck, shoulders and supporting upper back muscles through exercise. Another common cause of neck and upper back pain and tightness – trigger points – has its own array of treatment options, including self-treatment. Dr. Bragman provides detailed guidance across the range

of prevention techniques, including bike setup and riding technique, strength and stability exercises for the neck, shoulders and upper back, and trigger point self-treatment exercises, illustrated with 13 color photos. This eArticle is a must for cyclists suffering from neck pain, or for those who wish to prevent it.

You may also be interested in Dr. Bragman's companion eArticle, [**Cycling and Lower Back Pain**](#) – 2011's Best Seller.

GREAT CYCLOCROSS eBOOK:

Subtitled "How and Why to Get Started," [**Cyclocross for Roadies**](#) is a great introduction to this increasing popular cycling discipline. Written by Canadian 'cross enthusiast **Darren Cope**, this eBook packs its illustrated pages with all the essential advice and information you need to understand cyclocross and get started right. Cope explains why 'cross is so beneficial to roadies and what it takes to participate -- equipment, clothing, techniques, training and events. Whether you're merely curious about 'cross or have already decided to jump into the next season, this authoritative eBook (46 pages, with 17 photos) provides an excellent introduction.

RECENTLY ADDED TO OUR COLLECTION:

[**Dynamic Flexibility Training for Cyclists**](#) (eArticle), by **Coach Dan Kehlenbach**, MS, CSCS, and a USA Cycling Level 2 Coach. We've all been told that we should include a stretching regimen in our cycling training programs. Coach Kehlenbach explains that a dynamic flexibility program will help maintain muscle tissue quality and help you gain mastery of movement patterns that can help your performance not only on the bike but in everyday life as well. Flexibility work helps you warm up before a ride and ease into the strenuous physical activity of a ride. It also promotes the recovery process your body goes through after a ride. This eArticle provides 3 full sample workout programs, illustrated with 31 photos to walk you through each movement. In short, says Coach Kehlenbach, dynamic flexibility training should be a part of every rider's overall training program. It's not terribly time-consuming, and it can help both your riding and recovery.

[**Preventing and Treating Cramps**](#) (eArticle), by **Coach John Hughes**. Cramps are something nearly all of us have to deal with from time to time. And summer heat can foster some of the underlying factors that contribute to cramping. Coach Hughes provides a detailed look into the causes of cramps, helping us understand and implement prevention techniques, which he covers in-depth. Finally, he provides tips (both on-bike and off-bike, including photos) for breaking and flushing cramps. The article includes helpful nutritional information regarding food sources for minerals your body needs, as well as the mineral content of sports drinks and supplements, which you can use to ensure adequate replenishment of what you lose through sweat. Following Coach Hughes' recommendations could be the difference between a ride-ending cramp, or another great day on the bike.

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- eArticles:
 - ***Butt, Hands & Feet: Preventing and Treating Pain in Cycling's Pressure Points***
 - **many more new titles**

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2. NEWS & REVIEWS

A recent study showed for the first time that strength training improved the performance of older cyclists.

While it has long been accepted that strength training helps older cyclists stave off age-related loss of muscle mass, this study upped the ante with results that showed an improvement in endurance performance as well.

A recent article in the *The Globe and Mail* discussed the study and its findings. **Jeanick Brisswalter** and his colleagues at the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis and the French National Institute of Sport tested two groups of trained cyclists who were put on a 3-week strength training program for their legs. The young group had an average age of 25.6, and the older group had an average age of 51.5.

After the 3-week strength program, the researchers looked for changes in "cycling efficiency," measuring how much energy it took to maintain a certain pace on the bike.

According to the article, "The results, which were published online in the European Journal of Applied Physiology in June, show a clear difference between the young and old groups. At the start of the experiment, the younger group was stronger and had better cycling efficiency. Three weeks of strength training made little difference to the efficiency of the younger group, but it led to a massive 13.8-percent improvement in the efficiency of the older group, completely erasing the difference between the two."

"Force loss is one of the main problems of aging," Dr. Brisswalter told *The Globe and Mail* in an e-mail. "And force loss will affect pedaling efficiency very quickly."

The article continued: "The results suggest that doing leg weights solved a problem -- muscle wasting -- that the younger cyclists didn't yet have. People typically begin to lose 1 to 2 per cent of their muscle mass each year starting in their 30s or 40s unless they're already doing weights, so the older cyclists had much more room for improvement."

To read the full article, click <http://tinyurl.com/4x93jce>.

Harvey Newton, a veteran roadie and former coach of the U.S. Olympic Weightlifting Team -- and the man who developed the [Strength Training for Cyclists DVD](#) available in the RBR eBookstore -- has offered to answer any RBR reader questions about this study or the benefits of strength training. He's traveling this week but will be able to reply to any posts on our [Comments](#) page when he's back in his office next week.

Quick Tip for Users of Camelbak Bottles:

On our Comments page, an RBR reader named Lane didn't like that Camelbak's "jet valve" nozzle "molds faster than a politician can lie." Now that's fast!

The good news is that the rubber cap that houses the valve can be pried off and cleaned out. Use hot water and a dish cloth. Yes, it's not a perfect design, but I've used those bottles for years, and the leak-proof, no-nonsense valve is hard to beat. -- **J.M.**

The League of American Bicyclists has several [League Cycling Instructor \(LCI\)](#) seminars this fall for League members interested in becoming certified to teach Smart Cycling to children and adults.

To qualify, you must be a League member, an experienced and knowledgeable cyclist, and have taken Traffic Skills 101. The LCI training seminar is normally one evening and two full days. The registration fee includes the League Guide to Safe and Enjoyable Cycling book, Enjoy the Ride DVD and Smart Cycling instructor materials.

Fall seminars

New Brunswick, N.J. 10/7-10/9
Beaverton, Ore. 10/14-10/16
Indianapolis, Ind. 10/21-10/23
Bethlehem, Pa. 10/21-10/23

The bike-banning saga in Black Hawk, Colorado, continues.

According to Bicycle Colorado, that state's advocacy organization for cycling, "the Black Hawk bike ban case has been presented to the Colorado Supreme Court for consideration by the justices to hear the case following a district court ruling against the three cyclists originally ticketed for riding their bicycles through the town. The Colorado Supreme Court requires that all cases be presented for consideration and review prior to case selection. A decision on whether or not the case will go before the court is expected in the next several months."

Here's a quick backgrounder on the ban from the League of American Bicyclists: *The bicycle ban, which the town initiated in 2010, prohibits bicycle travel on most Black Hawk roads and cuts any paved bicycle connection between Central City and the Peak to Peak Highway. The ban also severs an Adventure Cycling route, with the nearest detour increasing the distance by approximately 27 miles.*

More info can be found on Bicycle Colorado's website, <http://tinyurl.com/2e64ynz>.

It's a radical new bike design that inventor Lou Tortola must hope will run circles around the competition.

His RoundTail replaces the traditional rear triangle with a circle. It has to be seen to be understood. (See the photo on our website at <http://www.roadbikerider.com/news-roundup>.) To get the full story behind this wildly different new bike design, visit the RoundTail website, <http://roundtail.ca/>.

Overheard:

--- *"I am very proud to win the race, especially this year; it has grown up a lot. It has become a UCI race. I think that today is worthy of what we call a Grand Tour stage in the mountains, like what you see in the Alps, Pyrenees, or Dolomites. Climbs (in Utah) are hard, and high altitude is what makes it harder."*

-- RadioShack's **Levi Leipheimer**, after defending his Tour of Utah title. Leipheimer, who went to high school in Salt Lake City and trains in Utah parts of the year, finished 23 seconds ahead of **Sergio Luis Henao Montoya**, of the Gobernacion De Antioquia-Indeportes Antioquia team, despite not winning a stage.

--- *"I feel like I made a lot of mistakes and if I'm really honest I was really lazy in the first part of the season. That's where all my injuries came from. I was being stupid. I wasn't jumping off cliffs but I wasn't training properly or eating properly. I was out, buying nice clothes and I thought I was being it. But now I've realized I'm a pro and that's how I have to live."*

"I'll be going to the Vuelta. I'm excited, for sure. It's really just came down to me talking to the team and trying to decide between the Tour of Colorado and the Vuelta, and I feel like this is a great opportunity to go to a grand tour in my first year. I had a rocky start and at the start of the year I definitely would not have been confident enough to take on a full grand tour, but I feel like where I am now, I'm pretty happy with how my fitness is in both my head and my legs."

-- 21-year-old **Taylor Phinney**, admitting in an interview with *Cyclingnews* that his first year as a pro was hampered by his own lack of commitment and tasting the spoils of his professional status.

As many others do, Phinney believes the Vuelta will be wide open. With no real GC contenders in the mix, teams are expected to let their riders take their shot as individuals until the results start dictating teams' support strategies. The Vuelta a España runs August 20 – September 11.

--- *"I'm very motivated for the race. Just finishing my first Tour de France, I couldn't tell you exactly how I am going to feel in the race. I don't know physiologically what will be going on with my body in August. Mentally, I am fired up and motivated. I love racing in Colorado and in the U.S. To be called one of the favorites is an honor, and I hope that I can put that weight on my shoulders and perform highly in my home state. When I heard the announcement of the USA Pro Cycling Challenge, immediately it was on the back of my head and I got so excited. Here I am in my cycling career and I always dreamed of doing a hometown race, a big race. The feeling that I get from competing on my home roads, on the terrain that I am built for, high-altitude climbing, I love it. When we started talking about it over the winter and fall I made it a target on my calendar. I didn't know what path I would take to get to the race but I wanted to make sure that I arrived in the best possible condition.*

"Finishing ninth overall at the Tour de France and the top American couldn't have been a better run-in to the USA Pro Cycling Challenge. I feel really motivated, had the best season in my career so far. It was a dream come true to race the Tour de France, and being one of the best riders in the world there. On that note, I am looking forward to this race and I will give it everything I have."

-- Garmin-Cervelo's **Tom Danielson**, on the upcoming USA Pro Cycling Challenge, to be held from August 22-28 in Colorado. In his first Tour de France, Danielson finished 9th in the GC as the top American rider.

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Dan Goldberger succinctly shared his opinion of the Premium Site:

"I love the updated website. Best bike info on the planet!"

Richard Radcliffe had this to say about his Premium Membership:

"I've been a member for a couple of years and really enjoy the site. It motivates me and provides a lot of good information on cycling-related issues. Keep up the good work!"

Jeff Hayes wrote:

"I really enjoy the updated format, new ideas, and different perspective you've brought to RBR. Keep those fresh ideas and changes coming!"

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3. QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Would You Strength Train to Boost Performance *and* Maintain Muscle Mass?

Answer at <http://www.roadbikerider.com/question-of-week> , where you can also find an archive of previous poll results.

Highlights of your responses to last week's Question: Have You Ever Thought of Trying Cyclocross?

- **30%** said "I have thought of trying it, but I am still undecided."
- **30%** said "No. I would rather stay on the road through fall."
- **26%** said "No way. Cyclocross does not appeal to me in the least."

[Comment](#)

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4. ASK COACH FRED -- Training & Nutrition Tips

Am I Doomed By My Age and Work Schedule?

Question: I work four consecutive days of 13 hours each, then have 4 days off when I have unlimited time to ride. I usually do 2-4 hours, but especially on the first day I feel sluggish. I just turned 50 and my fitness and endurance seem to be on the decline. How can I turn things around, given my weird work schedule? -- **Rick T.**

Coach Fred Matheny Replies: Your question really has two parts, Rick. Let's look at each.

First, what training technique is best when you work four days on/four off?

A schedule like yours lends itself to "block training." When you have several days with unlimited training (and recovery) time, you can train hard on three consecutive days and recover during your non-riding work days. Cycling coach **Dean Golich** is a proponent of this system. He says that because consecutive days of racing often lead to greater fitness, we should take advantage of this phenomenon in training.

Here's how you might go about it:

Day 1: Ride about 90 minutes at an easy-to-moderate pace. Just get in the miles and recover from the sluggishness caused by your long hours at work.

Day 2: Short, intense intervals. Do sprints and jam short hills for 90 minutes or so.

Day 3: Longer ride with longer but less-intense intervals. Ride lengthy hills and go at time-trial pace for periods of 3-15 minutes.

Day 4: Group ride or moderate pace for several hours to build endurance.

Notice that rides on days 2, 3 and 4 get longer but less intense. You do the really hard stuff on day 2 when you're recovered from work but not tired from longer intervals.

Second, does turning 50 mean a decline in performance?

Turning 50 isn't fun, but it could be worse -- like turning 65, which I did last September. However, 50 isn't a major performance barrier. In fact, I set several personal records after I reached the half-century mark, including in the 40K time trial, an event I'd been riding for more than 20 years. And with three other 50+ friends, I helped break the senior record in the Team Race Across America. So it can be done.

Here's what all of us your age need to remember:

You need more rest. Recovery takes longer as we grow older.

Resistance training must be included. We begin to lose muscle mass at a faster rate after the mid 50s.

Nutrition and hydration are crucial. To recover better, choose your foods and drinks intelligently both on and off the bike.

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-- [RBR-logoed Jerseys](#) - Made from high-tech fabric for superior comfort and wicking. Three rear pockets. Raglan-style with separate side panels. In club cut (loose American fit), with a full-length zipper. **All sizes currently in stock!**

-- [RBR-logoed JerseyBins](#) - 8-gauge vinyl storage pouches that keep your mobile phone and other valuables dry and safe on rides

-- [RBR-logoed Podium Hats](#) (**free RBR water bottle with each hat purchase!**) - black mesh baseball-type hats with one-size-fits-all velcro fastener are perfect for before and after rides

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5. CLASSIFIEDS

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6. JIM'S TECH TALK -- Mechanical & Product Advice

Shifting Primer

This week's column was sparked by some if-you-can't-find-it, grind-it action on a group ride I was on recently. As we approached a short climb, I heard crunch, pop . . . slam! as the rider in front shifted to a smaller chainring and then changed up a couple of cogs in back, too.

I know most of you are expert shifters who smoothly operate your derailleurs, but as I witnessed on the ride, I also know there are some pretty advanced cyclists who skipped Shifting 101 and could benefit from a few important basic tips. I'm here to help.

Have no gear fear

Road bikes today can have a whole lotta gears, like 20, 22 or even 30. This can be intimidating. You might wonder whether you need that many gears, or how to find the "right" gear when you're riding, or even, with so many gears, if you're going to break down all the time?

Whether you need all those gears is a matter of opinion. Some of us old-timers did just fine on 10-speeds. But since today's bicycle standards have changed to include more and more gears, I believe most of us have adapted and appreciate having more to choose from. I know I have and that I would miss them if I had to go back. So my advice is to be happy with however many gears your bicycle has.

Having more choices actually makes it more likely that you'll be able to find that "right" gear when you're shifting. But keep reading for more about that concept.

And, apart from the lack of compatibility across brands that we used to have, the added gears haven't proved to be problematic. It was always important to take care of your drivetrain -- and that hasn't changed.

You still don't want to drop your bike on its right side, lay the drivetrain in the sand when fixing rear flats or just toss your bike in the back of your car any old way. But, even 30-speed drivetrains work so similarly to the old 10-speed ones, that maintenance and repair isn't much more complicated.

Tip: To simplify and not be intimidated, rather than thinking of your drivetrain as having a zillion different gears, try thinking of it as a range of gear selections, from easy, for getting up hills, to medium, for flat-to-rolling terrain, to hard, for downhills and when a tailwind is pushing you along. However many actual gears you have, it just means you have more individual choices within your overall gear range.

Easy does it

That grinding, crunching and slamming on that group ride I mentioned was caused by what is probably the most common mistake when shifting: not easing up on the pedal pressure. The thing to realize is that when you shift, the derailleurs must move the chain sideways.

If you keep pushing on the pedals the chain is so rigid that it doesn't want to move sideways and you are essentially forcing it to, which grinds it into gear. It can also prematurely wear drivetrain components and cause shifting glitches.

The proper and safest way to shift is to pedal very gently every time you shift. On hills, this means that you need to anticipate shifts so that you can hit the easier gear before it's too steep to ease the pressure off the pedals.

Likewise, shifting the front derailleur demands finesse because there's such a large difference between the size of the small and large chainrings -- especially on a compact crankset.

Tip: Another hill technique is learning to pedal forcefully for just a few strokes to pick up enough speed so you can ease off the pedaling (almost coasting for a second) and then make the shift.

The right gear

New cyclists often expect there to be a right gear for a flat road or a certain type of hill. Or, just like they have learned to shift from low to high gear as they accelerate in their cars, they often expect to shift their new bicycle from 1st to 20th in order, too.

But on a bicycle, shifting is very different, and the "right" gear is determined simply by what feels right to you for wherever you are riding. When you're learning, it takes practice to find the right gear as the terrain changes. Use the feeling in your legs and lungs as your guide. Experiment by shifting until you find the gears that let you pedal comfortably at an effort level that will let you finish your ride.

A good way to do this is to try to maintain a pedaling cadence of at least 60 revolutions per minute (counted on one side) and then shifting into a different gear every time your cadence speeds up or slows down. In this way you can maintain a steady pace, which is the most efficient way to cover distance and best way to prevent pushing yourself too hard.

Tip: Some cyclists hardly shift at all, especially if they live where it's flat. But even there, it's helpful to shift regularly. Because, by changing gears, you work different muscle groups. It also lets you put more pressure on the pedals and take some weight off your seat and handlebars to make your "pressure points" feel more comfortable.

Avoid crossover gears

It's good to understand that there are 2 gear combinations that should be avoided when you're shifting. They're called "crossover" (sometimes people say "cross chain"), because the chain is at an extreme angle.

One of these is when the chain is on the large chainring and also on the largest cog on the cassette. If you shift into this position while pedaling by hand, and look at it, you can see that the chain is completely stretched out, and worse, it's angled from the far right in front to the far left in back. This angle can cause the chain to wear the derailleurs, cogs and rings more quickly, and also cause pedaling to be rougher.

The other crossover gear is when the chain is on the smallest chainring, and the smallest cog. This doesn't look so bad, but it's still an extreme angle and can lead to rough, noisy pedaling and more rapid wear and tear on the drivetrain. It's best to avoid these two crossover gears as much as you can.

Tip: Don't panic if you mistakenly find that you've shifted into a crossover gear. Just shift the right lever to move the chain onto a smaller or larger rear cog as appropriate. Note that if you're on the large chainring/large cog combination, if you shift the left lever to move the chain onto the smaller chainring, this is one of the shifts that has the potential to throw the chain off. That's why it's best to shift the right lever first, instead.

I hope these basic tips are helpful. If you have additional questions please post them on the Comments page so that RBR readers (and I) can offer more tips.

[Comment](#)

Jim Langley has been a pro mechanic and cycling writer for 38 years. At **RBR** he's the author of [Your Home Bicycle Workshop](#) and moderator of the technical forums on the [Premium Site](#) . Check his "cycling aficionado" website at <http://www.jimlangley.net> , his [Q&A blog](#) and updates at [Twitter](#) . Jim's streak of consecutive cycling days has reached 6,429.

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7. NO PROBLEM!

The Right Way to Fix a Flat, Part 2

We started this 2-part column in last week's [No Problem](#) . We'll finish up today with a complete rundown of the steps providing you detailed guidance on how to fix your flat.

Also, we've included a few nice tips that RBR readers provided after last week's column. Share your own flat-changing tips on our [Comments](#) page.

These steps will help you replace a tube quickly and not make mistakes that might soon result in another flat.

1. Ride safely off the road. You can't pick where you're going to get a puncture, but if you aren't losing air too fast keep riding until you reach a grassy shoulder or sidewalk. Don't do the repair job on a paved shoulder -- it's too dangerous. Ideally, the location will provide a way to hang the bike, perhaps on a fence or a low branch.

Reader Tip! Try to find a patch of shade in which to make your repair if it's a hot, sunny day. Dripping sweat all over everything only slows down the process.

2. Remove the wheel. If it's a rear flat, shift to the smallest cog before you stop pedaling. This makes it easier to remove the wheel because the derailleur is out of the way. Hang the bike by the nose of the saddle or have a friend hold it. Open the hub's quick-release lever and pull the derailleur back with your right hand. Then grab the wheel with your left hand and push it forward and out, hitting it with your palm if necessary.

Reader Tip! For newer riders, don't forget to open your brake calipers to provide clearance for the wheel when removing it. Then, after you've reinstalled the wheel, close the calipers again.

3. Get out your supplies. Open the seat bag and set out the spare tube and levers. Pull your pump off the frame or the CO2 inflator from your pocket or bag.

4. Find the culprit. Don't simply take out the punctured tube and stick in a new one. If a thorn, piece of glass or radial tire wire caused the original flat, it's probably still embedded in the tire, ready to cause another flat as soon as you begin riding. To find it, take the tire off the rim and gingerly run your fingers inside the casing around the diameter of the tire. Keep track by starting and ending at the tire label. You'll feel something sharp if it's still there. If you're worried about getting pricked, you can use a wadded up cycling glove. Wipe it in both directions to see if it snags. If you find something, use your fingernail, knife or tip of a small screwdriver to get it out -- completely.

Reader Tip! We usually suggest carrying your spare tubes in plastic baggies with a little talcum powder to keep things from sticking. A reader suggested wrapping the spare tube in a bandanna to provide protection against other gear in your seatbag -- with the added benefit of having a handy rag to wipe sweat from your face and grime from your hands when finished.

5. Install the tire. Put one side of the tire on the rim. Put just enough air in the new tube to make it round. Put the valve stem through the valve hole (but don't pull it down yet) and tuck the tube into the tire all the way around, making sure there are no folds.

6. Have a seat. Leverage is better when you're sitting. Hold the wheel on your lap, valve near your waist. Begin to seat the second side of the tire at the point on the rim farthest from the valve. This guarantees that you won't pinch the last bit of tube because the valve helps hold it in the rim bed.

7. Complete the installation. If you're having trouble getting the last several inches of tire on the rim, release some air. Then start at the opposite side of the wheel and pinch the tire so its edges go to the deep center of the rim. This should give you the slack needed to pop the stubborn section up and over. Once it's on, push the valve stem up so its base is inside the tire, then pull it down. Finish by going around the wheel one last time to pinch the tire away from the rim so you can see if the tube is still under an edge. Lift and wiggle the tire to get the tube inside.

8. Inflate to half pressure, check, then finish. When you reach 50 psi or so, check to see if the tire is seated properly. A bulge at the rim tells you the tube is underneath an edge. If all looks right, finish pumping to an inflation pressure suitable for riding. About 95-100 psi in front and 100-105 psi in back should give you the best ride and handling. However, if you have a weak pump or mini pump, consider stopping at around 85 psi. That's enough to ride home without risk of a pinch flat. Then use your floor pump to top off the pressure.

Tip! If you use a hand pump to fill the tire, here's how to make sure you don't accidentally bend or break the valve stem while you're stroking away: Hold the wheel in one hand, valve and pump at the top, so the wheel dangles freely. Then inflate, using the other hand to pump. Letting the wheel hang like this assures that there won't be undue strain on the valve stem as you pump.

9. Pack up. Gather your tools and put them in the seat bag. Don't leave a spent CO2 cartridge or punctured tube in your wake. Stick these things in your seat bag or jersey pocket and dispose of them properly, or patch the tube to use again.

10. Install the wheel. Remember, a rear wheel goes back in with the chain on the smallest cog. After installing the wheel, hold up the bike, shift the lever and then spin the crank until the chain climbs up to a larger cog (lower gear) so you can get going again.

Say your prayers. As you ride down the road, try a cyclist's version of Pascal's wager: Say a short prayer to the puncture gods even if you don't believe they exist. If they're lurking in the roadside ditches waiting to place, by miraculous agency, a thorn or tack under your tires, the prayer guarantees that you're covered. If not, your supplication didn't do any harm.

[Comment](#)

Adapted from [Coach Fred's Solutions to 150 Road Cycling Challenges](#) , a helpful eBook especially for cycling newcomers.

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8. SCOTT'S SPIN

Crispy Critter

We're slouching toward the dog days of the cycling season here in the northern hemisphere, where getting up at 3 a.m. and driving 4 hours to a race or century doesn't seem quite as frolicsome as it did back in May.

In fact, just looking at a bike right now can make you break into a rash and start sobbing uncontrollably -- though the same can happen with exposure to the U.S. political scene.

Regardless, there are many trusted ways to beat bicycle burnout, some of which actually work. To help you determine what's right for you, I analyzed the pros and cons of these toasted chestnuts:

Buy a New Bicycle

Pro: Nothing spells motivation like a 13-pound carbon wonderbike.

Con: Divorce costs more. Way, way more.

Ride Your Favorite Routes Backward

Pro: Scenery, topography and everything else seem fresh. Mean dog has to cross an extra lane to bite you.

Con: It is very difficult to ride a bicycle backward.

Take Time Off

Pro: Recharges batteries, enables sore muscles and niggling injuries to heal, helps you recall first names of spouse and kids.

Con: Smart-mouth riding partner who never takes time off.

Go Off-Road

Pro: Explore new terrain, work on different skills, wear shorts that do not make people laugh at you.

Con: Must get tattoo(s), learn difference between "pre-load" and "damping," break multiple body parts.

Do Different Sports

Pro: Cross-training keeps you fit, builds neglected muscles, introduces you to new friends.

Con: You got into cycling because you have no social skills or hand-eye coordination, remember?

[Comment](#)

If you enjoy reading **Scott Martin**, the eBook [Spin Again](#) contains 181 of his witty, sometimes wacky, and occasionally heart-felt observations on road cycling.

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9. CADENCE: YOUNG GUN

Pro/Am

A professional athlete is someone who is paid to achieve excellence in a given sport. An amateur can be defined as anyone else who engages in that sport without pay. Then, there is someplace in between amateur and professional. This gap that must be bridged is known as pro-am.

Much like working your way through college or starting a business on the side, bike racing as a professional amateur can consume your life. Nearly every waking hour is dedicated to achieving your goals, and you almost always spend more money than you make. Sometimes, all that keeps you going is the laser focus on bridging that gap.

The term professional-amateur refers to a special kind of purgatory in our sport. You are a professional because you train and race like it is your job, and an amateur because you are not yet making a living at it. Like the college student or entrepreneur, I too have to make ends meet by working a part-time job. If I am not training or working, then I am probably

sitting down to make travel plans, communicate with and thank my sponsors, or figure out how to stretch every dollar as far as I can.

In this whole process I have come to realize that the No. 1 thing I can do to make my life easier -- and get closer to achieving my goals -- is to be completely organized. I have a feeling that great organization can benefit anyone. Consider that most recreational roadies have a full-time job where you work 40 or more hours a week and try to train for 10 or more hours each week. As a pro-am cyclist, I am training 20-30 hours per week and trying to work another 15-20 hours a week. Notice that symmetry, in reverse?

Although it can be incredibly painful at times, I am slowly getting a handle on this whole organization thing. Mental fitness is as important as physical fitness. If you feel guilt or external pressures when you are training, then it becomes a source of stress. Keeping my life well-orchestrated means I can focus on my performance while not neglecting family and friends that matter most.

Here are the main things I've learned that help me keep my pro/am life in order:

There needs to be an ON/OFF switch. Being the most hardcore dude 24/7 might seem like an attractive image. But If you don't know the difference between 100% and 0%, then you sort of just get lost in the middle. This is more than just training and resting. Visualize a switchboard on your whole life. Your job, the bills, house work, yard work, fitness, nutrition, and parties. ON or OFF.

Understand your time commitments. Whatever the planned duration of your ride, you can almost always add another 60-90 minutes where you won't be able to commit to anything else. Training partners might be late, maybe you flat or break down, afterwards you need time to shower, eat, stretch, do yoga, core work, etc. Riding time only accounts for about 75-80% of total training time.

Always plan ahead. This is so all-encompassing, it hurts. One example that makes my life feel so much smoother is to cook enough to last for days, not just one meal. Although I have only one roommate, I will often cook for eight. This way, there is always food in the fridge when I come back from training -- and it's one less thing I have to waste mental energy on.

Never Idle. This is different from multitasking. Multitasking can divide your attention. Instead, just don't stand still; make the most of every minute and get things done. If you ever find yourself patiently waiting -- say, in line at the Post Office -- there is probably something you can knock off the to-do list, like clearing your email from your phone. It's amazing what little time some chores require.

Relax when you can. If you really do have time to twiddle your thumbs, do it. Don't force yourself to be busy. Remind yourself to relax and breathe. Don't feel guilty when you use the OFF switch.

Finally, prioritize. For me this means: 1. Family/friends. 2. Training. 3. Travel plans and funding. 4. All the rest.

You might be surprised that a 22-year-old thinks this way. But I understand that organization is an absolute must in order to achieve my main goal of crossing the chasm from Am to Pro.

[Comment](#)

Cuylar Conly is an Elite Canadian Espoir bicycle racer. After finding the sport as a senior in high school, he has since left home in pursuit of the professional peloton. In 2011 he is racing for the under-23 team Fresh Air Experience/Ottawa Bicycle Club. Follow Cuylar's

wheel on his blog (www.cuyilar.blogspot.com) or on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/Cuyilar>). **Young Gun** will run each month in **RBR Newsletter**.

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NEW eARTICLE ON SALE TODAY:

Neck & Upper Back Pain and Cycling (eArticle), by **Alan Bragman, D.C.** Neck problems are the most commonly reported overuse injury associated with cycling. In his 30 years of practice, and from his own cycling experience, Dr. Bragman has seen and treated thousands of cases of neck and upper back pain. Causes can include riding position, technique and pre-existing anatomical and physiological factors. The keys to prevention are proper bike and equipment setup, proper riding technique, and strengthening and stabilizing the neck, shoulders and supporting upper back muscles through exercise. Another common cause of neck and upper back pain and tightness – trigger points – has its own array of treatment options, including self-treatment. Dr. Bragman provides detailed guidance across the range of prevention techniques, including bike setup and riding technique, strength and stability exercises for the neck, shoulders and upper back, and trigger point self-treatment exercises, illustrated with 13 color photos. This eArticle is a must for cyclists suffering from neck pain, or for those who wish to prevent it.

You may also be interested in Dr. Bragman's companion eArticle, **Cycling and Lower Back Pain** – 2011's Best Seller. From his vast experience both professionally and personally as a sufferer of lower pain, he has developed a comprehensive understanding of how to diagnose, treat and prevent lower back pain in cyclists.

GREAT CYCLOCROSS eBook:

Subtitled "How and Why to Get Started," **Cyclocross for Roadies** is a great introduction to this increasing popular cycling discipline. Written by Canadian 'cross enthusiast **Darren Cope**, this eBook packs its illustrated pages with all the essential advice and information you need to understand cyclocross and get started right. Cope explains why 'cross is so beneficial to roadies and what it takes to participate -- equipment, clothing, techniques, training and events. Whether you're merely curious about 'cross or have already decided to jump into the next season, this authoritative eBook (46 pages, with 17 photos) provides an excellent introduction.

RECENT eARTICLES:

Dynamic Flexibility Training for Cyclists (eArticle), by **Coach Dan Kehlenbach**, MS, CSCS, and a USA Cycling Level 2 Coach. We've all been told that we should include a stretching regimen in our cycling training programs. Coach Kehlenbach explains that a dynamic flexibility program will help maintain muscle tissue quality and help you gain mastery of movement patterns that can help your performance not only on the bike but in everyday life as well. Flexibility work helps you warm up before a ride and ease into the strenuous physical activity of a ride. It also promotes the recovery process your body goes through after a ride. This eArticle provides 3 full sample workout programs, illustrated with 31 photos to walk you through each movement. In short, says Coach Kehlenbach, dynamic flexibility training should be a part of every rider's overall training program. It's not terribly time-consuming, and it can help both your riding and recovery.

Eating & Drinking Like the Pros (eArticle), by **Coach John Hughes**. Coach Hughes researched what Team Sky, Garmin-Cervélo and RadioShack riders consume before, during

and after a stage and discussed the results with cycling nutrition experts. The answers may surprise you in terms of the variety and seemingly unusual nature of some of the food and drink. But the findings hold lessons and benefits for cyclists at all levels. We all require energy and replenishment of lost minerals and nutrients when we ride. Eating and drinking like the pros offers us the same nutritional benefits, which we can customize to our own needs – typically at a fraction of the cost of commercial sports food and drink, if we choose to make our own. Coach Hughes also worked with a professor of nutrition and an expert on hydration and electrolytes (both experts are cyclists) in creating recipes for both sports drinks and food.

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Hundreds of your fellow RBR Readers have purchased our eArticle, [Preventing & Treating Cramps](#). Get your copy today to help deal with an affliction we all suffer from time to time.

Another great resource for these hot summer riding months is [Hot-Weather Cycling](#), by Dr. Alan Bragman.

RECENTLY ADDED TO OUR COLLECTION:

[Preventing and Treating Cramps](#) (eArticle), by **Coach John Hughes**. Cramps are something nearly all of us have to deal with from time to time. And summer heat can foster some of the underlying factors that contribute to cramping. Coach Hughes provides a detailed look into the causes of cramps, helping us understand and implement prevention techniques, which he covers in-depth. Finally, he provides tips (both on-bike and off-bike, including photos) for breaking and flushing cramps. The article includes helpful nutritional information regarding food sources for minerals your body needs, as well as the mineral content of sports drinks and supplements, which you can use to ensure adequate replenishment of what you lose through sweat. Following Coach Hughes' recommendations could be the difference between a ride-ending cramp, or another great day on the bike.

[Mastering the Long Ride](#) (eArticle), by **Coach John Hughes**. The final eArticle in **Coach Hughes' trilogy** on distance riding, **Mastering the Long Ride** is a follow-on to [Beyond the Century](#) (how to train for distance events) and [Nutrition for 100K and Beyond](#).

[Equations for Cyclists: How to Calculate Intensity, Wattage and More -- Without a Power Meter](#) (eArticle), by **Coach Fred Matheny**.

[Swift Cycling: A 12-week program for increasing your cruising speed](#) (eArticle), by **Coach David Ertl**.

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Consult your physician or dietician before beginning any diet or consuming any product discussed in this newsletter or on www.roadbikerider.com.

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