

Dynamic Conditioning Monthly – A Progressive 5-Month Workout Plan

Month 5: Maintenance

Dynamic conditioning is a way to reap all the benefits of traditional resistance training, improve your athleticism and have a lot of fun in the process. This month we'll focus on maintaining your strength and power as you begin your road season.

By Dan Kehlenbach, MS, CSCS

Now that the riding season is approaching, you probably won't have as much time to strength train; however, you shouldn't abandon it completely. You don't want to let all of your hard work fade away as you begin your road training, so it's important to come up with a maintenance strategy that won't interfere with your riding.

Remember – making a priority to include strength training year round will not only help your riding, it will go a long way to improve your overall health and well-being.

Month one of this series of dynamic conditioning workouts is the base phase. We introduce (or re-introduce) fundamental exercises to develop a solid foundation that is built upon over the course of the entire program.

Month two is the basic strength phase, in which we further develop your overall strength to provide a solid platform for more advanced power-type exercises.

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Month three focuses on power, particularly functional power. The act of pedaling a bike involves using one leg at a time, so we concentrate on developing unilateral power.

Month four takes the power you developed and converts that to cycling-specific power-endurance, featuring work capacity circuit-style workouts.

Month five, the maintenance phase, covers strategies that will help maintain your strength and power gains as you progress throughout the season without interfering with your on-bike training and riding schedule.

Don't forget – as part of this article series, I am making myself be available for personal consultations via phone, Skype, or FaceTime. If you have any questions at all regarding this workout, or need modifications to any of the exercises, please feel free to contact me at dan.kehlenbach@gmail.com and we'll set up a time to chat.

Maintenance Workout Design

Over the past few months, we've been working with specific workout templates. For the maintenance phase, the template will be exactly the same – the one major change will be the volume of training. As a review, here's what we've been using to design the A and B workouts:

Phase 1
Foam Roll
Static Stretching
Dynamic Stretches/Movement Preparation
Movement Drills
Phase 2
Core/Activation training
“Prehabilitation” (Balance/stability exercises)
Elastic or Power Exercises
Phase 3
Lower-Body
Upper-Body Push
Upper-Body Pull
Phase 4
Post-workout stretching, foam roll, and metabolic flush

With this template, there are virtually unlimited possibilities to come up with an efficient workout that will fit even the most demanding of training schedules. In fact, you can even do different workouts each time (if it will help your motivation) during the maintenance phase as long as you stick to the overall design. It may take a little

experimentation, but following this template will help you maintain all aspects of conditioning that you've been working to develop over the winter.

As you begin your riding, it's important to scale back your strength training to avoid the possibility of overtraining. Over the past several years working with athletes who have competitions or events on the weekends, I have found that two workouts per week (Tuesdays and Fridays) consisting of one or two sets have worked quite well for most athletes. So, here is an example of a maintenance level workout that you can try:

Workout A

Phase 1	
Focus	
Foam Roll	Quadriceps, hamstrings, hips, calves, upper back. 10 repetitions each
Static Stretching	Focus on any particularly tight or problematic areas 30-60 seconds each
Dynamic Stretches/Movement Preparation	Hip flexor, ankle mobility, T-spine mobility, glute activation, inchworms, squat-to-stand, shoulder wall slides, walking knee hug lunge/ stationary lunge, lateral squat/lateral lunge, elbow-to-instep,
Movement Drills	Easy jog, shuffles, skips – 2 times through going 10 yards each with 10 yard jog back to starting area
Phase 2	
Focus	
Core/Activation training	Plank
“Prehabilitation” (Balance/ stability exercises)	3-way cone reach
Elastic or Power Exercises	Jumping jacks

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Repeat exercises in Phase 2 from top to bottom – 1 or 2 times through	
Phase 3	
Focus	
Lower-Body	Dumbbell squat
Upper-Body Push	Alternating dumbbell chest press
Upper-Body Pull	Kneeling lat pulldown
Repeat exercises in Phase 3 from top to bottom – 1 or 2 times through	
Phase 4	
Focus	
Post-workout stretching, foam roll, and metabolic flush	Foam roll on any tight/problematic areas, 10 minute easy walk/cycle to promote recovery

Phase One

The foam roll and static stretching portion of this month’s program will be identical to previous months. As you progress into your season, pay attention to your body – you may notice certain areas needing a bit more attention due to the increase in riding. Foam rolling, static stretching, dynamic stretches, and movement drills can help in minimizing the inevitable soreness that will come with increasing your training base, so try not to skip this section.

Foam roll:

If you haven’t done so by now, try and start getting used to rolling one side at a time for hamstrings, calves, and quadriceps. Also, foam rolls are available in different densities, so if you are no longer getting the desired effect, you can use a different foam

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roll. Start with 10 fluid repetitions for each muscle group:



After rolling comes static stretching. For years it was thought that static stretching should be done only at the conclusion of the workout. Today, many soft tissue experts are advocating that muscles must be stretched cold to promote long-term

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elongation. For a more in-depth explanation, please see my eArticle, *Five Minute Warm-ups for Busy Cyclists* (<http://www.roadbikerider.com/e-articles/5-minute-warm-ups-busy-cyclists>). Focus on any problematic areas and stretch to the point of mild discomfort – just like any other facets of training, stretching should be a challenge. You should feel tension in the muscle(s), not the joint. If you don't have any specific problematic areas, nearly all cyclists can benefit from hamstring, hip flexor, adductors (inner thigh) and hip rotators stretches:



Dynamic stretching is where we start taking your muscles through a specific range of motion and getting your heart rate up. If you haven't done these movements (or haven't done them for an extended period of time), don't force the range of motion – it will come in time.

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Hip flexor



Kneel on the floor (a towel or piece of foam can be used if the floor is not padded) as shown. As you stretch your hip flexor, be sure to tighten your glute (in other words, squeeze your butt cheek) on the side that you are stretching. You should feel an immediate deepening of the stretch. Hold for 30 seconds on each side. If you did this earlier, you don't have to repeat it here.

Ankle mobility



Position yourself in front of a wall with one foot forward as shown. Rock back and forth, bringing your knee to the wall paying close attention not to lift the heel that you are

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mobilizing. If you find that your heel is coming up, move your foot closer to the wall. This is not a stretch, so focus on smooth back-and-forth movements. Perform 10 repetitions on each side. You'll probably notice that one side is more restrictive than the other, particularly if you've had past ankle injuries. Your goal is symmetry – don't work the more mobile ankle at the expense of the less mobile one.

Thoracic spine mobility

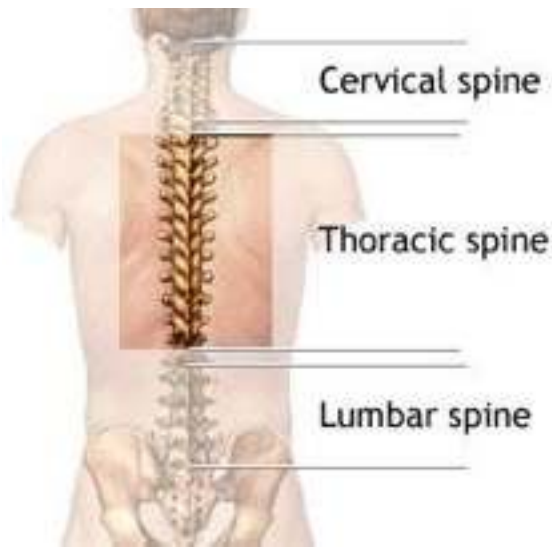


(Image from Adrian Crowe Athletic Training)

For this drill, get a hold of two tennis balls and using athletic tape, tape them together as shown to form a peanut-type shape. Lie down on the floor and place the tennis balls at

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the base of your thoracic spine so that your spine is in between the two balls. An easy way to find this starting position is to place your hand on the bottom of your rib cage and trace a line around to your back. Bend your knees and perform 5 mini-crunches with your hands up at a 45-degree angle and returning your head to the floor with each repetition. Slide down a couple of inches (the ball will move up) and do 5 more crunches. Keep sliding down and crunching until the ball is approximately in between your shoulder blades. Stay away from your lumbar spine (low back) and cervical spine (neck area) – these areas of your spine do not need mobility work. Here is a picture for reference:



Glute activation



Lie on your back as shown with one leg bent and the other leg at your chest. With your toes up, concentrate on activating your glute by pushing through your heel and lifting your hips up. You don't have to lift terribly high with this movement. Perform 6 repetitions per side.

Inchworm



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From a push-up position, walk your feet toward your hands using small steps, keeping your knees slightly flexed. When you can no longer maintain that slight knee flexion, pause for a 2-count, and then walk your hands out with small steps back to the starting position. Don't get discouraged – many people, especially those who spend long periods of time sitting, have difficulty with this one at first. If you are having a lot of trouble with this one, you can place your hands on an aerobic step (or something similar) and perform the inchworms in place. Perform 6 repetitions.

Squat-to-Stand



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With your feet shoulder-width apart, reach down and grab your toes. If you can't grab your toes, go as low as you feel comfortable with. Drop your hips into a sumo-style position, keeping your elbows inside your knees. Pause for a 2-count at the bottom, raise your hands over your head as best as you can, and stand back up. Perform 6 repetitions.

Shoulder wall slide



Place your feet about one foot in front of a wall. Lean back and make sure your hips, upper back and head are in contact with the wall. Reach up as high as you can and slide your arms down the wall. As you slide your arms down, make sure your elbows and hands (along with your hips, upper back and head) stay in contact with the wall. Go down as far as your flexibility will allow. Perform 10 repetitions.

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Walking knee-hug lunge to stationary lunge



From a standing position, lift one knee to your chest and grasp your knee. Hold for a 2-count and step into a lunge, keeping your knee directly over your ankle. Consciously contract your backside glute. This will also help stretch your hip flexor. With one continuous motion, step forward and repeat with the opposite leg. Perform 3 lunges per leg. After the walking lunges, place your hands over your head as shown and perform 3 alternating stationary lunges per leg.

Lateral squat to lateral lunge



Stand with your feet approximately double shoulder-width apart. Shift your weight to one side and drop your hips down and back, keeping your knee over your toes and your weight over your bent leg. Pause for a 2-count, return to the starting position and repeat on the other side. Perform 3 repetitions each side. Then place your feet together and perform 3 alternating lateral lunges per leg. Be sure to concentrate on your form. It is very helpful if you can do this in front of a mirror. As you lunge, drop your hips down and back just like the lateral squat – this will help keep your hips properly aligned.

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Elbow-to-instep



From a push up position, bring one foot to the outside of your hand. Lift up your hand and drop your elbow toward your instep. Pause for a 2-count and return your hand and foot. Repeat on the other side. Perform 6 repetitions on each side.

Movement drills

For both workouts during the maintenance phase, we're going to keep the movement drills simple with jogs, shuffles and skips. Find an open area and place two cones or water bottles five yards apart. Start by jogging to the opposite cone and back. Then, shuffle down and back to the cone. Make sure you face the same direction so you

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perform a shuffle to the left and to the right. Finally skip down to the cone and back.

Repeat 2 times through.

Phase Two

Plank



Planks are a great movement to train basic core function and stability. Make sure you keep proper alignment throughout the prescribed time. Having a mirror or partner can help with maintaining your form. Hold for the prescribed amount of time.

3-way Cone Reach



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Place three cones or water bottles in front of you as shown. Standing on one leg, perform a slight squat and reach down towards the left cone. Return to a standing position, squat and reach towards the forward cone, then back to a standing position. Finally, squat and reach towards the right cone. Repeat the entire sequence while standing on your other leg. That's one round. Repeat for the prescribed number depending on your week of training.

Jumping Jacks

The power/elasticity exercises during the maintenance phase should be kept fairly basic – your goal should be to preserve the neuromuscular enhancements you achieved throughout the winter without causing unnecessary fatigue. By performing power/elasticity exercises throughout the season, you will avoid having to re-learn and re-adapt to the exercises later on in the season. I'm a firm believer in addressing all aspects of conditioning year-round. We're not going to be doing a lot of power training, but a little can go a long way in preserving your gains. So, Workout A will be jumping jacks done for time.

Note: In the workout template included with this article, just like the previous months, you'll notice that the exercises in Phase 2 are labeled A (plank), B (3-way cone reach), and C (jumping jacks). When you do the workout, start with Planks, rest, move to the 3-way cone reaches, rest, and then move on to jumping jacks.

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Phase 3

Dumbbell Squat



Hold a pair of dumbbells as shown with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. As you descend, drop your hips down and back. Imagine that you are trying to sit down into a chair that someone is slowly pulling away from you. The lower you go, the further back your hips should go. There's no one-correct squat depth – everyone is different and your hip structure and flexibility/mobility levels will determine the depth of your squats. Don't force it. As your mobility and strength improves, you'll become more comfortable. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions.

Note Regarding How Much Weight to Use: I often get questions regarding how much weight to use, particularly with new exercises and workout programs. The general rule of thumb is that the last couple of repetitions of an exercise should be challenging to complete. If you have absolutely no difficulty completing the prescribed number of

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repetitions in a set, it's too easy. On the other hand, if you can't complete the repetitions *utilizing proper form, technique and control*, it's too heavy. **Always, always, always** put form, technique and control first.

Alternating Dumbbell Chest Press



The alternating dumbbell press is going to challenge your shoulder stability more than the conventional press. Start by holding a pair of dumbbells above your chest as shown. Lower one dumbbell at a time, keeping the other dumbbell up. Return to the starting position and repeat with the other side, performing the prescribed number of repetitions.

Kneeling Lat Pulldown



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Kneel in front of a cable column as shown. Grasp a traditional pulldown handle with an overhand grip slightly wider than shoulder width. Keeping your torso upright, pull the bar down to your collarbone and slowly return to the starting position. Repeat for the desired number of repetitions. Kneeling on the floor forces your core and postural muscles to engage throughout the movement as opposed to a traditional lat pulldown machine where you're locked into place with little core and postural involvement.

*Note: Rotate through exercises A, B, and C just like the previous workout.

Phase 4

Like last month, phase 4 will start the recovery process. Now that the exercises are more challenging, don't neglect this part of your workout. Remember – there is no standard post-workout protocol. I usually prescribe 5-10 minutes of light cardiovascular activity as a metabolic flush, some foam rolling and some static stretching.

Workout B

Phase 1	
Focus	
Foam Roll	Quadriceps, hamstrings, hips, calves, upper back. 10 repetitions each
Static Stretching	Focus on any particularly tight or problematic areas 30-60 seconds each

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Dynamic Stretches/Movement Preparation	Hip flexor, ankle mobility, T-spine mobility, glute activation, inchworms, squat-to-stand, shoulder wall slides, walking knee hug lunge/ stationary lunge, lateral squat/lateral lunge, elbow-to-instep,
Movement Drills	Easy jog, shuffles, skips – 2 times through going 10 yards each with 10 yard jog back to starting area
Phase 2	
Focus	
Core/Activation training	Lateral plank
“Prehabilitation” (Balance/ stability exercises)	Mini-band walks
Elastic or Power Exercises	Squat jumps
Repeat exercises in Phase 2 from top to bottom – 1 or 2 times through	
Phase 3	
Focus	
Lower-Body	Lunge
Upper-Body Push	Single-arm press
Upper-Body Pull	Single-arm row
Repeat exercises in Phase 3 from top to bottom – 1 or 2 times through	
Phase 4	
Focus	
Post-workout stretching, foam roll, and metabolic flush	Foam roll on any tight/problematic areas, 10 minute easy walk/cycle to promote recovery

Phase 1

To keep things simple, this sequence will be exactly the same as Workout A

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Phase 2

Lateral Plank



Like the forward plank, this is a fundamental exercise for the lateral core musculature and is a great exercise to continue throughout the season. A foam pad or towel under your elbow can make this exercise much more comfortable.

Mini-Band Walk



This is a great exercise to work the muscles that surround your hips. Place a light-resistance band around your legs as shown. Position your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width and keep your hips slightly bent. Walk forward, back, left and right for the prescribed number of repetitions. Watch your posture with this exercise – always

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keep your torso upright and toes pointing straight ahead. The movement should come from your hips, so avoid using momentum while you step.

Squat Jump

A good way to visualize this exercise is to imagine that you are jumping up to a basketball rim to dunk a basketball (yeah, right!). Jump and reach as high as you can, land softly, stabilize and repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions. This is difficult to depict with still pictures. Here is a link to an EXOS video: <http://www.coreperformance.com/knowledge/movements/drop-squat-to-jump-and-stabilize.html>

Phase 3

Lunge



The lunge is one of my favorite exercises for cyclists since it works on eccentric strength.

When you lunge forward, the muscles of your hips, trunk and thigh have to decelerate and stop the motion of your body before pushing back to the starting position. This

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motion is referred to as an *eccentric action*, in which your muscles are lengthening while developing tension. Cycling has virtually no eccentric action, so the inclusion of this type of exercise can drastically improve your overall lower body strength. Hold a pair of fairly light dumbbells as shown and take a long step forward into a lunge, keeping your knee behind your toes and avoid having your knee collapse to the inside. Push back to the starting position and repeat with your other leg for the prescribed number of repetitions.

Single-Arm Press



Stand facing away from a cable column as shown with your feet shoulder width apart and your hips slightly bent. Press the handle straight out in front of you. Return to the starting position (remember to limit your range-of-motion if you have any shoulder concerns). Perform the prescribed number of repetitions and switch arms.

Single-Arm Row

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Stand in front of a cable column with your feet about shoulder width apart and hips slightly bent. Grab a handle and perform a standing row while keeping your body as still as possible. Avoid the temptation of leaning forward and back to lift more weight.

Perform the prescribed number of repetitions and switch arms.

Phase 4

Post-workout foam rolling, stretches and metabolic flush similar to Workout A. Again, don't be afraid to experiment and find what works best for you.

Workout Organization

As stated earlier, I have had much success implementing two workouts per week with in-season athletes (Tuesdays and Fridays) to preserve strength and power gains. However, everyone is different and some of you may want to do more and some of you may only be able to get one workout in per week. Don't be afraid to experiment to come up with a schedule that complements your riding. Here are some general guidelines:

- Do your workouts on non-consecutive days.

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- Perform 1-2 sets of each exercise.
- For repetitions:
 - Core exercises – 8-12. For timed exercises (planks, etc.) – 30 seconds.
 - Balance/prehabilitation exercises – 10-15.
 - Power exercises – 6-8.
 - Strength exercises – 8-12.

Concluding Points

There's no one-right way to implement an in-season maintenance strength training program. Here are a couple of final points to keep in mind as you start your riding season:

- Keep your program simple. A simple workout that you do on a regular basis is better than a more intricate program that is too much trouble to do.
- Your foam roll can be your best friend as the season progresses and your intensity increases to help reduce soreness and promote recovery.
- Movement preparation/dynamic stretches can be done anywhere and can also help you prepare for your ride.
- Remember that strength training will not only help your riding, it will improve your overall health and fitness, and should be an integral part of your training and conditioning.

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Blank Template – Workout A

	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5	Workout 6
Movement drills						
Phase 2						
A. Plank						
B. 3-way cone reach						
C. Jumping jacks						
Phase 3						
A. Dumbbell squat						
B. Alternating dumbbell chest press						
C. Kneeling lat pulldown						

Blank Template – Workout B

	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5	Workout 6
Movement drills						
Phase 2						
A. Lateral plank						
B. Mini-band walk						
C. Jumps						
Phase 3						
A. Lunge						
B. Single-arm chest press						
C. Single-arm row						