Dynamic Conditioning Monthly – A Progressive 5-Month Workout Plan

Month 1: Base Conditioning

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 first article in the series provides an introduction to the dynamic conditioning template and an easy-to-follow workout program that will be built on over the next four phases.

By Dan Kehlenbach, MS, CSCS, USA Cycling Level 3 Coach

As you wind down the majority of your road riding, it's time to start thinking about supplemental conditioning to prepare for next season. This five-part series of articles will provide you with a complete conditioning program spread out over five months to help increase your functional strength and power.

Before we get into the specifics of the program, take some time and reflect on your performance this season. What went well and what didn't go so well? What would you have done differently? Keep these points in mind as you progress through your program, since time spent in the gym can help not only with your riding, but with your overall health and fitness, as well. Also, if you had any injuries, consider a post-season physical or consultation. This is a great time to network with other sports medicine professionals (physicians, physical therapists, athletic trainers, etc.). Very often they may be able to provide some helpful advice that can be integrated into these workouts.

One other note, especially to those of you might have done some of the workouts from my earlier eArticle, <u>Designing Your Own Dynamic Conditioning Workout</u>: These workouts will start off being fairly easy. Avoid the temptation to increase the volume

and intensity too quickly – there will be plenty of time for that later on. Let this phase be basic and develop your foundation gradually.

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

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

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

In **month four**, we'll take the power you developed and convert that to cyclingspecific power-endurance featuring work capacity circuit-style workouts.

Month five, the maintenance phase, we'll go over some 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.

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 regarding this workout program, 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.

Review of Basic Concepts

In the earlier eArticle, I discussed the benefits of a dynamic conditioning workout and how it differs from traditional weight training protocols. I used the example of kids playing on the playground. What do they do? They run, jump, swing, climb, balance, © Copyright 2013 by Dan Kehlenbach. This article may not be reproduced or retransmitted in any form.

and quite simply have fun! You'll never see them do something 10 times and rest for 45 seconds – they are always on the go, moving their bodies like they were designed to move. Many gym workout routines lack that functional factor and unfortunately can sometimes lead to boredom or perhaps even eventual dropout. A dynamic conditioning program integrates balance, flexibility, stabilization, power, and movement drills, along with traditional strength training exercise, to provide a comprehensive approach to physical conditioning. Plus – it's a blast!

Here's one other key point: Even though this program is organized a bit differently than other workouts, it will still follow the basic concepts of resistance training as outlined by the National Strength and Conditioning Association: specificity, overload, progression, individuality, and recovery/adaptation.

Workout Description

Throughout this series, we're going to have two different workouts – workout "A" and workout "B". Here is workout A:

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, 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, low skips – 3 times through going 10 yards each with 10 yard jog back to starting area

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Phase 2	
Focus	
Core/Activation training	Plank
"Prehabilitation" (Balance/stability exercises)	3-way cone reach
Elastic or Power Exercises	Jump to box
Repeat exercises in Phase 2 from top to botto	om – 2 or 3 times through (depending on training week)
Phase 3	
Focus	
Lower-Body	Split squat
Upper-Body Push	Push-up
Upper-Body Pull	Single arm row
Repeat exercises in Phase 3 from top to botto	om – 2 or 3 times through (depending on training week)
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

^{*}For set and repetition info, please see template included with this article

Phase One

Now let's go through the workout in further detail. **Phase One** is designed as a comprehensive warm-up, although it may feel like a workout in and of itself when you first get started! We're going to start with foam rolling different muscle groups commonly affected by cycling: quadriceps, hamstrings, hips, calves, and upper back. For your lower body, try to work on getting comfortable with rolling one leg at a time. It will probably feel uncomfortable at first, but you'll get a deeper and more substantial effect.

In the previous article, I included the lower back in the foam roll section. However, currently there is some discussion and debate among practitioners regarding safety and efficacy of foam rolling and the lumbar spine. If you have any low back pain and/or concerns, consult a sports medicine specialist for some advice. Start with 10 fluid repetitions for each muscle group:





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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 elongation. For a more in-depth explanation, please see my eArticle Five-Minute Warmups for 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.

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.

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







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, 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.

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Squat-to-Stand







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.

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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.

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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

Okay, now it's time to get moving! Find an open area and place two cones or water bottles five yards (about 4m) apart. If you are doing this workout in a gym, ask the staff if you can use an empty aerobic room or basketball/tennis/racquetball court. Here we have three activities: Jog, shuffles and low skips. 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 perform a shuffle to the left and to the right. Finally, skip down to the cone and back. Remember skipping? It's a great activity for ankle strength, but it may take a while getting used to. Repeat 2 or 3 times through (depending on your week of training).

Phase 2

Forward Plank



For the first core exercise, we're going to start with the forward plank. Pretty basic, but it will serve as a starting point for future exercises. 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.

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3-Way Cone Reach





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

Jump to Box

Jumps to a box are a great way to introduce power exercises. Since your landing spot is elevated, it will greatly reduce impact forces and allow you to gradually adapt to the forces imposed on your muscles and joints. Choose a 4-inch or 6-inch (10 - 15cm) box – you don't want to go too high, and for safety's sake, choose something sturdy. The purpose of the box is to reduce landing forces, not to increase the difficulty of the exercise. Try to make your landings as quiet as possible – this will ensure that your muscles are absorbing the majority of landing forces. This is a tough exercise to depict with still pictures. Here's a link to a video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGLctzQM_Xo

Note: In the workout template included with this article, you'll notice that the exercises in Phase 2 are labeled A (forward plank), B (3-way cone reach), and C (jumps to box). When you do the workout, start with planks, rest about one minute, move to the cone reaches, rest, and then move on to jumps. Repeat in this fashion until your targeted number of sets is completed.

Phase 3

Phase 3 is where we integrate more traditional strength-training exercises. You'll perform a lower body exercise, an upper body push, and an upper body pull.

Split Squat





Stand with a split stance as shown. The distance of your stance will vary depending on your hip flexibility. Drop down into a split squat position, keeping the knee of your lead leg behind your toes. Focus on your lead leg doing the work as you stand back up. You'll probably feel a stretch in the trailing leg – that's okay. When you add weight with this exercise, hold the weights as shown. When you hold dumbbells at shoulder level, your center of gravity is raised, requiring more control and stability. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions and switch legs.

Push-up





The old-fashioned push-up is not only a great upper body exercise; it's a great core exercise, as well. If push-ups are too difficult for you, place your hands on a workout bench as shown above. Avoid doing the so-called "modified" push-up (from the knees vs. the toes) as it doesn't challenge your core as much compared to the traditional positioning. Even if your hands are on the bench, your core is forced to engage more than the "modified" push-up. If the stated numbers of reps are too easy, here are a couple of ways to increase difficulty:

- Elevate your feet with a bench, physioball, suspension trainer (TRX, Jungle Gym, etc.)
- Stack your feet one on top of the other
- Raise one leg off the floor
- Place your hands on an unstable surface (foam pad, BOSU)
- Place one hand on a medicine ball

<u>Note:</u> If you have any shoulder concerns, you may want to consider limiting the range of motion of your upper body pushing exercises to a 90-degree bend in your elbow. This can help minimize undue stress on your shoulders.

Single arm row





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.

*Note: Rotate through exercises A, B, and C just like you did in **Phase 2**.

Phase 4

This phase will start the recovery process. Some days you might be tempted to skip it, but try not to – your body will thank you for it, especially as the workouts increase in difficulty. There's no one specific way to incorporate post-workout recovery, so don't be afraid to experiment a bit. I've found it helpful to prescribe some light cardiovascular exercise (5-10 minutes) as a metabolic flush, some foam rolling and some static stretching.

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Workout B*

This workout will feature some different exercises but the organization will be the same as the previous workout. For set and repetition info, please see template included with this article.

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, glute activation, inchworms, squat-to-stand, shoulder wall slides, walking knee hug lunge/stationary lunge, lateral squat/lateral lunge, elbow-to-instep
Movement Drills	Jumping Jacks, 4-way hops, Jump rope
Phase 2	
Focus	
Core/Activation training	Lateral plank
"Prehabilitation" (Balance/stability exercises)	Mini-band walk
Elastic or Power Exercises	Explosive push-up
Repeat exercises in Phase 2 from top to bott	om – 2 or 3 times through (depending on training week)
Phase 3	
Focus	
Lower-Body	Dumbbell squat
Upper-Body Push	Single-arm press
Upper-Body Pull	Kneeling pulldown
Repeat exercises in Phase 3 from top to bott	om – 2 or 3 times through (depending on training week)
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

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Phase 1

The foam roll, static stretching and movement preparation in this workout is exactly the same as Workout A. The movement drills are where we change things up a bit. Here we're going to do some callisthenic-types of exercises to help prepare your muscles and joints for other power exercises in later months.

Jumping jacks

Nothing special – pretty straightforward here. However, while you are doing these activities, try and focus on landing softly. Think "quiet feet." This will help to ensure that your muscles are absorbing the bulk of landing forces as opposed to your joints. Perform the prescribed number of repetitions

4-way hops

Imagine that you are standing in the center of a clock face. Jump forward (about a foot or so to get started) to the 12 o'clock position and jump back. Jump to the 3 o'clock position and jump back. Jump back to the 6 o'clock position and jump back. Finally jump to the 9 o'clock position and jump back. That's 1 repetition. Repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions. Here's a video for reference:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=px_bHWkZtNs

Jump rope

Here's another basic movement drill that you've probably tried at one time or another. If you can't seem to get the coordination, just pretend you have a rope and do ankle hops instead.

Phase 2

Lateral plank



Like the forward plank, this is a fundamental exercise for the lateral core musculature and will help you develop the strength and endurance for more dynamic core exercises. 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.

Explosive push-up

An upper body plyometric exercise for cyclists? You bet! Cycling, particularly road cycling, contributes very little to upper body strength and virtually nothing for power.

Also, keep in mind that an exercise program should benefit your overall health and wellbeing, not just your riding. So if you like to play other sports or participate in other activities, upper body power is important. For the first two workouts, we're going to use a workout bench so that your upper body can gradually adapt. Start as if you are going to do a push-up, lower your upper body until your arms are approximately 90 degrees and then explosively push off the bench. Carefully catch yourself (like lower body plyometrics, try and cushion your landing with your upper body), and repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions. This is also a tough exercise to depict with pictures.

Here is a video using a bench: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-h6-hQjEI0

Here is a video using conventional technique:

http://www.coreperformance.com/knowledge/movements/push-up-plyometric-continuous.html

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

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 level 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.

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Single-arm press





This exercise is the opposite of the one-arm row from Workout A. 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) and repeat for the prescribed number of repetitions.

Kneeling pulldown





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

Post-workout foam rolling, stretches and metabolic flush similar to Workout A. Again, don't be afraid to experiment.

Workout Organization

Attached at the end of the article are two templates with six workouts for Workouts A and B, along with blank logs that you can use for tracking your workouts. If you don't use these log sheets, that's okay, but try and develop some sort of system to track your workouts. There are many different apps available for tablets and smartphones, you can come up with your own spreadsheet, or you can use a blank notebook. I often have clients keep track of their workouts and their nutrition in a notebook. That way, on any given day, I can look at their current and past nutrition and training side-by-side to track their progress, identify positives and negatives, and adjust their training programs accordingly.

Try and perform these workouts three times per week on non-consecutive days (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays or Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, etc.). Here's what a month-long program will look like:

Week #	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3
1	A	В	A
2	В	A	В
3	A	В	A
4	В	A	В

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Concluding note

I often get questions regarding how much weight to use, particularly with new 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 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. Since this is the base month, use this phase to get familiar with the workout and its organization. Let this phase be somewhat basic – that's what it's designed to be.

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About the Author

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<u>5-Minute Warm-ups for Busy Cyclists</u> and <u>Designing Your Own Dynamic Conditioning</u>

<u>Workout</u>.

Workout A

	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5	Workout 6
Movement	2x	2x	2x	3x	3x	3x
Drills	through	through	through	through	through	through
Phase 2						
A.	2x15	2x20	3x15	3x20	3x30	3x40
Plank	seconds	seconds	seconds	seconds	seconds	seconds
B. 3-way cone reach	2x3	2x4	3x3	3x4	3x5	3x6
C. Jump to box	2x5	2x6	3x5	3x6	3x7	3x8
Phase 3						
A. Split squat	2x8	2x10	3x8	3x10	3x12	3x15
B. Push-up	2x10	2x12	3x10	3x12	3x12	3x15
C. Single-arm row	2x8	2x10	3x8	3x10	3x12	3x15

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Workout B

	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5	Workout 6
Movement Drills*	15 JJ, 2H, 20 JR 2x through	20 JJ, 3H, 25 JR 2x through	20 JJ, 4H, 25 JR 2x through	15 JJ, 3H, 20 JR 3x through	20 JJ, 4H, 25 JR 3x through	20 JJ, 4H, 25 JR 3x through
Phase 2						
A. Lateral plank	2x15 seconds	2x20 seconds	3x15 seconds	3x20 seconds	3x30 seconds	3x40 seconds
B. Mini-band walks	2x5	2x6	3x5	3x6	3x7	3x8
C. Explosive push-up	2x5 (bench)	2x6 (bench)	3x5	3x6	3x7	3x8
Phase 3						
A. Dumbbell squat	2x8	2x10	3x8	3x10	3x12	3x15
B. Single-arm press	2x10	2x12	3x10	3x12	3x12	3x15
C. Kneeling pulldown	2x8	2x10	3x8	3x10	3x12	3x15

^{*}Symbols for movement drills:

JJ – Jumping jacks

H - 4-way hops

JR – Jump rope

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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. Jump to box						
Phase 3						
A. Split squat						
B. Push-up						
C. Single-arm row						

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Blank Template – Workout B

	Workout	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4	Workout 5	Workout 6
Movement Drills		_	-		-	
Phase 2						
A. Lateral plank						
B. Mini-band walks						
C. Explosive push-ups						
Phase 3						
A. Dumbbell squat						
B. Single-arm press						
C. Kneeling pulldown						

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