

Bike Specific Strength Workouts by Ian Murray, USAT Elite Coach

Resistance workouts in the gym or with tubing can help your cycling power but my favorite approach is to build muscle endurance on the bike is through two similar workouts. Both the "BHR - Bike Hill Repeats" and "Tension Sets" employ a low cadence of 55-65rpm but keep in mind that a more appropriate cadence on race day would be 90+rpm.

BHR - Bike Hill Repeats. Start with a warm up of 20min on flat with easy circles and finish that warm-up with 4x30sec at 100+rpm w/ 90sec easy spin. Then place yourself at the base of a steady climb. It can be a minor incline or steep - that parts less important, what matters most is that is steady and will provide a consistent pitch for 4-6 minutes of riding. Climb seated at a comfortable, aerobic effort (this is not a hill repeat that results in vomiting at the top). Climb in a gear that is too big for the hill so that you are steady at 55-60rpm. Keep your mind focused on perfect circles so you are pushing down through the power phase (2-5 o'clock), scraping along the bottom of the circle (5-7 o'clock), pulling up along the back side (7-11 o'clock) and then topping off the circle (11-2 o'clock). At the top make a safe u-turn and spin easy down for 60-90 seconds of recovery. Start with 3-4 repeats of 5min minutes and build progressively over a month to do 6-8 repeats of 5min. Finish this workout with 20min of easy riding on flat with a normal spin of 85-95rpm.

Tension Sets. Start with the same warm up noted above in the BHR workout. Then ride on flat in very tall gear (50x14 or 53x17) so that cadence is between 60-70rpm. Mash and grind that big gear so that muscles are working to make each circle and keep your mind focused on those perfect circles to enhance the neuro-muscular fitness, muscular recruitment. Build endurance by starting with 3x8min of Tension w/ complete recovery (recovery by spinning easily to flush leg muscles) and build over a month to 5x12min w/ complete recovery. These efforts should be aerobic and not high in intensity Be sure to conclude this workout with a cool down like the one noted in BHR.

Most athletes find that these two workouts - because they are still aerobic - will leave them feeling pretty fresh for rides and runs the day following the efforts.