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Injury Prevention: Indoor Cycling

By Shannon Griffiths-Fable



Some instructors forget that lessened impact does not always mean a decreased rate of injury, says Shannon Griffiths-Fable, an IDEA member since 2003, owner of Sunshine Fitness Resources and group fitness director at Lakeshore Athletic Club in Boulder, Colorado. Yes, it's true that cycling has very few "catastrophic" or acute injuries. Rarely does something scary happen on a bike that isn't going anywhere. But long-term, chronic injuries are pervasive. Many

instructors and participants forgo proper preparation and setup; choose inappropriate skill and drills; and bypass recovery and maintenance. The following tips from Griffiths-Fable, one of the initial Nautilus Institute™ Schwinn® Indoor Cycling master trainers, are by no means a comprehensive look at injury prevention and are meant as a starting point for reference.

Be Strong, Stretched and Centered. To best prevent injury, first strengthen the muscles that are responsible for producing power (hamstrings, glutes and quadriceps), as these are constantly overstretched. Second, stretch the muscles that get chronically tightened or shortened from pedal stroke or body position. Third, introduce centeredness by adding movements that cyclists rarely experience, such as spinal extension, rotation and lateral flexion.

Ensure a Good Fit. Proper saddle height and fore/aft positions are necessary in order to allow maximal range of motion for the hip and knee joints. The saddle height should provide approximately 25-30 degrees of knee flexion at the bottom of the pedal stroke with a neutral foot. Gauge the fore/aft positions by knowing that a plumb line from the most forward knee position should intersect the ball of the foot and the pedal's axle. Set the handlebars at an appropriate height for comfort. The rider should easily be able to reach them and feel adequate upper-body support.

Reduce Careless Injury. Many indoor cycling injuries can be avoided through proper bicycle upkeep and maintenance, cadence control and correct resistance. Check that all bike adjustments are secure before riding, and periodically check pedals and shoe cages for stability. Speeds should be in a safe range that allow riders to maintain and manipulate an appropriate amount of resistance (not too much, not too little).

For more information about this topic, see "Injury Prevention: Indoor Cycling" in the September 2006 issue of *IDEA Fitness Journal* or online in the [IDEA Article Archive](#).

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