

By Jennifer Schumm

In the 11 years that I have been riding my bike, I have found cycling to be one of the things I am most passionate about in life! I love where the bike takes me, exploring new roads, and everything this world has to offer, ON MY BIKE! The most amazing scenery one could ever experience happens on a bike. Besides bringing wonderful happiness and passion to enrich our lives, the bike also gives us another tool of exercise that is quite euphoric! It is no wonder so many people love riding a bike!

I have found in all my years of riding and racing, the people who need the most help from a coaching standpoint, are recreational cyclists. Throughout my years of cycling, I have been asked many questions. Things like: "How do I know when to get out of the saddle and for how long?" "How do I shift gears while riding in my drops and when do I shift gears?" "How do I know which gearing to use on different hills and terrain and how do I learn varying techniques and positions for riding this terrain?" "How do I ride with groups and how do I learn the skills required to ride with groups?" "How can I be the most efficient cyclist, all while having fun"?

When I first start working with a recreational rider, we go on a bike ride of their choice. As I am riding with them, I look at many things including: their position on the bike, how their bike fits them, and the style they generally ride, etc. I make recommendations based on what I see, and we go from there. I look at how they ride on the flats, short hills, long hills, sustained climbs, etc. and I make suggestions as to the position they should ride in, gearing they should choose, and how to time it all. Then they practice this on the varying terrain I take them on. As we are riding, this coaching can be as simple as me telling them what gear to be in, what position to be in, and for how long. Then progress to what position to change into, and gearing to change into, as we ride over varying terrain. I also have them work on cadence and effort drills, attacks, sprinting, power efforts, pace lining, descending skills, and skills and etiquette required to ride with other people and in groups.

I basically teach people how to use the tools in their tool box, more efficiently, and help them increase the amount of tools accessible to use. More tools used efficiently= more efficient bike riding = more fun! This will equate to riding better alone, with others, and in groups, over time. These are all skills that need to be learned.

In addition, I teach skills for descending, pack riding, pace lining, sprinting, attacking etc. Recreational riders need to learn these as well, because you never know when someone is going to attack you on a ride, or better yet, you attack them! It's always fun to be competitive and see who will get the KOM, or win the sprint, or make the break on a group ride.

Additionally, I will give them certain drills to work on based on what areas I see are weaknesses that they need to improve upon. These efforts, drills, and skills we will work on together as we ride, where I can correct and critique and they can practice what they've learned, in the future. Its personal training ON the bike!

I also have people say to me, "I just want to be faster on my bike so I can beat my friends in the local century, or get up squaw pass or high grade faster, "I just don't want to be the last person that gets dropped while riding in our group of friends". "I also don't want to be completely exhausted in the middle of the ride either." This is one of the reasons why teaching recreational cyclists varying techniques and positions to ride a bike with varying weather, temp, and wind conditions, is SO important! More like life changing! This knowledge and thus learned skills, allows one to maintain speed, maintain covering distances at a certain speed without getting dropped, and having many positions and techniques to ride the bike: all on the varying terrain Colorado has to offer.

Furthermore, the body needs to be able to recover certain muscles while other ones are being used and vice versa. Thus, being able to change gearing, technique, cadence, and positions on the bike, helps keep the body fresh and keeps those muscles that are working, working! All this keeps fatigue at bay and FULL GAS at large!

Everyone loves the feeling of beating their friends or competitors on any type of terrain whether it's a hill climb, sprint to a stop sign, making the break in the lead pack that you didn't get dropped from, the list goes on. Then there's STRAVA, which takes it up a notch! Everyone likes a reason to compete and likes to show off to their friends, but they also like to compete against themselves and like to see that their times are improving, they're getting more PR's, KOM's?QOM's. These are results that illustrate they are getting faster.

Bikes are like well-manicured high-octane sports cars. You're not going to drive a high end speed machine at one speed and on one terrain. You're going to use all the cool gadgets, gizmos and toys that car is made with. Same thing on a bike. It just takes someone to show you how to use all those toys, gadgets and gizmos to go faster and have more fun while doing it. That is one of the many things I do. I'm here to teach you how to get the most efficient riding out of your bike, as well as the most efficient, aero dynamic, fastest, strongest, and most powerful you out of you! =FUN!