

TTIPS VOL. 42/22 – TECHNIQUES - Staying Motivated in the Cooler Months -



Riding on an Indoor Trainer

(Sometimes called: “doing time in the pain cave”)

Introduction

Well, the weather is colder in the low country, and there is less daylight. Darn. Those conditions can keep riders off their bikes even when they have the desire to ride. You gotta bundle up. Your fingers and toes get cold during the ride. There’s more laundry to do after the ride. Yep, winter can really dampen your motivation to go two-wheelin’.

Do you feel less motivated to ride right now? Feel like staying between the warm covers instead? Well take a look at the article below. Not everything in the article is applicable to us, but there are a few good ideas that might help you put on the Lycra and saddle up.

10 Tips to Stay Motivated Through the Winter

How to Drag Yourself Out of Bed and Keep Riding Through Winter

Bikeradar.com / Charlie Allenby/December 24, 2021

Riding your bike in the winter months is hard. It can be cold, wet, windy – often all three at once – and that’s before you factor in occasionally cycling in the dark. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t worth it.

Training throughout the winter is a great way to keep your base fitness ticking over, while also preparing you for next spring and summer and any exciting goals you’re looking to achieve on two wheels. What’s more, getting outdoors and staying active through winter is good for the soul.

Here are 10 ways to stay motivated through the winter, to help you through those moments when it can seem easier to stay in bed...

Have a Goal



Setting goals will give every training session a purpose. ClarkandCompany / Getty Images

“The main thing for anyone is having a goal,” explains Matt Bottrill of Matt Bottrill Performance Coaching. “You’ve got to have a motivation. It could be something that’s happened to your family, your health, lose weight. Whatever that is, you need that goal.

“If you’ve got that in place, every time you do a training session you’ve got a reason for doing it – you’re not just going through the motions. You then feel good about it because that stepping stone is working towards your big goal.”

A great way of determining goals is to create a training plan. Just make sure you don’t make any winter mistakes.

Have the right Kit



Having the right kit can be a real psychological boon in the colder months. Russell Burton / Immediate Media

Heading out into the cold is made a lot easier if you've got the right winter gear in your wardrobe, especially if you're riding in the rain.

It can be hard to get motivated if you're imagining the next few hours to be as cold as sitting in a fridge, and staying in bed is going to be a lot more attractive.

Investing in foul-weather kit, whether that's a good waterproof jacket or a pair of overshoes, will turn a training ride from unbearable into enjoyable, and will have you jumping out of bed and onto your bike.

Check out our guide to the best winter cycling clothing for an in-depth look at what to wear when it's less than appealing outside.

Buddy Up



Buddy up to stay motivated through winter. Robert Smith / Immediate Media

Struggling to get motivated to head out on your own? Find another rider who is keen to get some winter training in and buddy up, instead of trying to tackle the elements solo.

Not only will it make the miles whizz by as you chat away between stops, but it's a lot harder to bail when you've got someone stood on your doorstep all kitted up and ready to go.

Join a Club Run



It's always good to have people to chat to on long winter rides. Joseph Branston / Immediate Media

If your cycling buddies are now in hibernation until the spring, then it might be an idea to join a club run.

Many cycling clubs run a range of rides at the weekend that vary in pace, while some offer early-morning, pre-work sessions in the week for the extra keen.

Try Something New



Could a gravel bike help keep you riding through winter? Simon von Bromley / Immediate Media

Even if you consider yourself a road cyclist, that doesn't mean you have to live and die by the sword of tarmac. Winter is a great time to try off-road pursuits that will not only help with your training but could also be beneficial to your overall riding technique, too.

Equally, if you're a mountain biker looking to improve your endurance, could you be tempted out onto the road this winter?

For both roadies and mountain bikers, gravel riding offers a happy medium. Gravel bikes combine speed on the road with the ability to venture off the beaten track – ideal for steady winter miles.

Another great thing to try out is cross training, which will inject a dose of variety and fun, as well as making you a stronger cyclist without a pedal stroke.

Join the Rapha Festive 500



The Festive 500 challenges riders to tackle 500km between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Mick Kirkman / Immediate Media

Is your winter training just not, well, challenging enough? Try your hand at the Rapha Festive 500.

The Strava challenge has become a legendary way for riders to up the endurance (and test the patience of family members) over the festive period, with participants set the task of riding 500km between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

It's not 500km or nothing, however. Strava has a number of December challenges, such as a 400km distance challenge and a 7,500m climbing challenge.

Train Inside



Use a smart trainer and the wet and cold don't have to enter the winter-training equation. BikeRadar / Immediate Media

Whisper it, but it is possible to train over the winter period without subjecting yourself to the harsh conditions that come with it. Invest in one of the best smart trainers and swapping one outdoor ride per week for an indoor workout can revitalise your training and help keep you motivated.

Plus, interval training and sweetspot training are actually more time-efficient when done indoors – ideal if you're juggling riding with family, work and social commitments.

Still not convinced? We've put together a list of indoor cycling benefits. ((Next Week's TTIPS will feature the benefits of indoor cycling.))

Listen to Music



Listening to music can make up for the lack of visual stimulation when you're training indoors. Warren Rossiter / Immediate Media

If you do opt to train inside this winter, there are things that can soon start to irritate you during a session – most notably the lack of visual stimulation that you get when out on the road. But there are ways of overcoming this.

“I always listen to music,” says Bottrill. “I listen to dance music and I love the rhythm of it. I match my pedal stroke to the beat of the music. You can break it down to phases, so ‘this song is four minutes, I’ll listen to two songs and then I’ll look at the time’. It’s a great way of zoning out.”

Try a Training App



Trade the great outdoors for a virtual world. Zwift

Another way of livening up your workout is to use a training app. We’ve got a round-up of the [best indoor cycling apps](#).

The interactive worlds of [Zwift](#), [Rouvy](#) and [RGT Cycling](#) can turn your indoor ride into the closest thing to heading out on the road, without leaving the house.

You’ll have the virtual world to keep you occupied, while it’s also possible to join a group ride, complete structured workouts or embark on a fully fledged training plan.

Remember to Reward Yourself



Winter training? A piece of cake. *Immediate Media*

It's all very well having goals and motivating yourself to train throughout the winter months, but you need to enjoy the rewards, too.

"You need to reward yourself," Bottrill says. "It will make you want to achieve it more."

So whether that's an extra slice of cake at the cafe stop, or a new bit of kit in the new year, don't forget to treat yourself along the way.

Okay riders, bundle up and get out there. Go for a ride! Next week we'll cover the benefits of indoor training a bit more thoroughly. Until then,

Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl