

## Cycling

# RIDE FASTER IN TWO WEEKS

USE THESE SHORT, SHARP, HIGH-INTENSITY SESSIONS TO TAKE YOUR BIKE LEG UP A GEAR IN EVERY RACE

**HIGH INTENSITY Training (HIT)** is a research-proven method of cycle training that can boost your bike fitness in just two weeks. It involves repeated short bouts of all-out effort and recent research suggests that HIT not only prepares you for the high-intensity demands of racing itself, but may also play a role in improving base endurance. An HIT session can be done and dusted within 15 minutes, so you can boost your cycle speed without spending hours and hours on your bike.

Although HIT can save you time, it's important to do it as part of a specific block of training, rather than as part of your day-to-day, month-to-month training regime. This is because the effectiveness of HIT depends heavily on your overall activity and training stress. A block of two weeks is usually the optimal length of time for using HIT, with a full rest day after each session. An athlete tempted to slot in an easy ride between two days of this work can actually jeopardise the desired adaptation.

## HIT SESSION 1

### "Burgomaster" intervals

- Perform maximal 30-second sprints with four minutes total rest between each. Do not pace yourself, this is a sprint effort.
- Start with four reps in the first session, progressing to eight over a two-week period.
- Perform this session every second day, for two weeks. Take a rest day after each one.
- Use an indoor trainer, not the roads.

## HIT SESSION 2

### "Gibala" intervals

- Perform one-minute intervals at your VO<sub>2</sub> max – this is not a sprint effort (unlike the Burgomaster session) but your maximum aerobic effort. If you don't have a power meter, think of the hardest effort you could sustain for five minutes – this is about right for each minute. Have 75 seconds' recovery between bouts.
- Start with eight reps in the first session, progressing to 12 over two weeks.



- Perform this session every second day, for two weeks. Take a rest day after each one.
- Use an indoor trainer, not the roads.

To guarantee the best results you must be prepared to commit to these sessions fully and put the other two disciplines totally on hold for a fortnight. Concentrate on hitting the appropriate intensity and take a rest day after one. This can be challenging for triathletes who need to compete across three disciplines, but there is no artistic licence allowed. If you can't give a two-week block over to this pure approach to HIT you can't expect it to work. Be mindful that while your energy demands are intense in each, they will be significantly lower over the two weeks. To avoid weight gain keep your general nutrition as normal, but cut out energy drinks and gels during the sessions.

## Meet the expert

Helen Carter



Helen is a sport scientist who runs her own cycle coaching business, PBscience

## IS HIT FOR YOU?

Some triathletes will stand to benefit a lot more from these short sharp efforts than others. Here's how you'll know if HIT is for you.

- 1 If you're a triathlete whose performance has been limited by your ability to vary your intensity within a race. For example, if you cannot push up the hills without getting overly tired.
- 2 Anyone who has good endurance, but lacks the high power needed in short races.
- 3 If you've spent a long time in a particular training regime and need a shock to kick-start your fitness.
- 4 If you find you're tight for time, when work and other pressures take their toll.