



Power Training. Powerful Results! **PEAKS COACHING GROUP**

Name of Article: Are You Reaching Your Personal Performance Potential: 3 steps to getting stronger without pedaling

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Why do we cycle? Is it because we enjoy being one with nature? When you're climbing that monster hill with your heart in your throat and the muscles in your legs screaming to ease up - yet you fight to stay on that wheel directly in front of you - are you thinking about how much you love to be outside with the wind flowing through your hair? Doubtful.

We ride our bikes for the challenge of seeing how good we can get. Pedaling a bike twenty-five miles might have been an optimistic goal once, but soon that was achieved. Next came thirty miles and then more until fifty miles every Saturday is nothing more than base miles. Some of us find distance events the call to action; others need the intense pressure of racing head to head to satisfy our inner warrior. The one single thread through all our different motivations is simple; we want to know what we are capable of accomplishing. We want to know how good we can get with the time and resource available.

Unlike traditional team sports, cycling is an opportunity to compare ourselves in 100% real time with others around us. We either keep up or get dropped. If you want to be first to the top of the hill, there is only your strength and your will power to get you there. There is no teammate to pass the ball to, no referee to affect the play, and no fans to cheer you on. It's all about your inner desire to be better than last weekend; better than the other riders in the group.

We've all heard the story of Lance Armstrong weighing his food and shake our head at the attention to detail this exemplifies. Deep down we know this is only one example of how his commitment to details led to great success. We all recognize this as working smarter not harder; yet do you strive for this? While you might not be ready to weigh your food before every meal, why not take inventory of your own lifestyle and consider what details might better support your performance goals, or conversely may be prohibiting them?

Every life form instinctively strives toward its maximum potential. Trees try to grow as big and tall as they can; animals eat and grow as big as they can. Every example in nature follows this plan, except for human beings. Instead we have been either blessed or cursed with the power of choice. If you are seeking to reach your own Personal Performance Potential; then like choosing a tire, a coach or a route, why not choose to increase your attention to detail and better support your own goals. Is this not working smarter?

Einstein's definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over, yet expecting different results. If you want to reach your potential in any area of your life, you must be willing to self-analyze and open your mind to different ways of doing things. Otherwise, how can you expect a different end result? How can you expect to be better than last season?

Here now are three areas that as a coach, I consider foundational places in which most people choose to take a haphazard approach, often through inaction. If you will examine and implement new routines surrounding these important areas- and by that I mean apply the knowledge by taking action - you will find that your potential grows as does your performance.

1. Nutrition: the right fuel for your body

If I use the analogy of going to the gas station in your Ferrari and putting diesel in the tank, you would easily agree that it would not run well. Yet, many head out for a Saturday ride with nothing more than oatmeal, toast and orange juice in their stomach. Is that the right fuel for you? Maybe; maybe not.

Obviously you need food, so if you are to maximize your energy from what you consume, shouldn't the objective be to know what makes you feel good and give you energy and which foods do not support your metabolism and thus curtail your performance potential? Are you in tune with how the foods you do eat leave you feeling, or do you choose oatmeal and toast because you've been eating that way for years? If you ate something on a ride that robbed your energy and made you feel lethargic, would you eat it again? Of course not.

Here's how to analyze your eating. Just like a training diary, keep a food log for three days by listing out everything you eat. Yes, this means every item that goes into your mouth and don't forget to make note of what times you eat as well. For each meal or snack, answer the following questions with a word or two that describes how you feel right before and then again one to two hours after the meal or snack:

1. How is your appetite?
2. Do you have cravings?
3. What is your energy like?
4. What is your mood like?
5. How is your concentration?

Once you answer these questions and look at the patterns, you may be surprised to see how certain foods leave you feeling hungry, unsatisfied and lacking energy. A good meal should give you sustained energy, eliminate cravings, boost your mood and help you concentrate for at least three hours. Either way, this feedback is your body speaking loud and clear, telling you whether or not what you ate was nutritionally adequate. Are you listening?

What you want to do is eat according to what your own body needs to be fueled correctly. This is called eating according your Metabolic Type¹. If you eat a meal and feel hungry and craving sweets within an hour, you might look at the balance of carbs, fats and proteins. Once you review your logs and realize a meal has left you short, think about how you can change the proportions of macronutrients (carbs, fats and proteins) and try it again. Whatever you do, listen to you own body, not one-size-fits-all recommendations from a book or magazine. Remember, everyone is metabolically as different on the inside as they are physically different on the outside.

Does this sound like a lot of work? Truthfully it is not at all, but let your competition think it is. This is one area that substantial gains in health and performance can be made, but only if you take action.

2. Water: the easy ergogenic aid

You've probably heard that your body is 75% water and your brain is 80% water. Are you aware that the discs between your vertebrae are about 80% water? How about that water is critical for vital physiological functions such as digestion, and is essential for nutrient absorption and elimination. It aids circulation, helps control the body's temperature, lubricates and cushions joints, keeps the skin healthy, and helps remove toxins from your body. As an athlete supposedly in tune with your body, can you see how paying attention to your hydration directly affects your performance?

It is one thing to drink fluids during a ride that have an extra boost of hydrating minerals, but what about the rest of the day? Do you start the day with coffee and then have a soda at lunch and beer with dinner? Drinking enough plain water all day so your body can function optimally 24/7 is one way to ensure you're ready for that next ride and not starting at a deficit.

The general rule of thumb we follow at CHEKWellness is that you should drink one-half your body weight, in ounces. This means that if you weigh 150 lbs, you would want to intake seventy-five ounces per day. Note that this is a non-workout day. Drinking a couple of pints about one to two hours before a workout is considered adequate hydration for preparation and on the bike, a bottle an hour is a good rule of thumb.

You can check to see if you are drinking enough by weighing yourself before and after a ride. Your weight should remain stable if you've consumed enough room temperature water. If you've lost a pound or more you need to drink a pint for every pound lost.

Here's how to test to see if more water would increase your performance. For one to two weeks, cut out 90% of all other fluids except for water. Start your day sipping three cups, a few sips each half hour and get in the goal of one-half your body weight in ounces. Pay attention to things like how you sleep, how your energy is mid-day, and of course, how your rides go. Even watch your weight. You might be pleasantly amazed at how much of an impact this simple change makes to your health and performance.

3. Sleep: when you actually become stronger

Did you know that each night your body goes through two sleep cycles? The first physical repair cycle begins around ten at night and goes until about two in the morning. Then the psychogenic repair cycle begins and ends around five AM. If you do not sleep during your natural repair cycles, you may not be fully recharging your body. If you stay awake until midnight staring at the computer screen, your body won't jam in what it needs in a shorter amount of time, instead this is like repetitive strain or injury to your hormonal system.

The solution then is to wind down during the evening and get to sleep by 10:30pm. Yes, I'm giving you a bed time! If you don't sleep through the night, research why that could be and begin experimenting with changes. Unplugging electrical appliances near your bed and darkening the

windows are a start. Skip sugary desserts after 7pm to avoid revving up your metabolism and sending it for a crash before the nighttime fast. Ever wake up drenched in sweat? This usually means you're detoxifying the sugar and chemicals from all the energy drinks; try water and a pinch of organic sea salt in your bottles instead. If you want to maximize your performance potential, you need to extract as much fitness out of each training session. Since you grow when you sleep, it is during sleep that your actual physical improvements are made.

Conclusion

If you want to be better than you were last week or last year; if you want to have a chance to reach your Personal Performance Potential then you must pay attention to details. I've given you three critical areas that most people fail to analyze and change when necessary. If you are serious about your desire to improve, then you must take time to consider the details that contribute or impede your potential. What you eat, what you drink and how you sleep are three foundational details that will support the journey toward reaching your Personal Performance Potential. These are three details that if attended to, will see you become stronger and go faster, all before you've turned a crank.

Notes:

1. For more information on Metabolic Typing, visit www.chekwellness.com
2. *The Guide to Adrenal Health. San Diego, CA: Bio-Health Diagnostics, Inc., 2002*

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