



# Power Training. Powerful Results!

## PEAKS COACHING GROUP

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**Author:** Marlon Familton, CSCS, USA Cycling Expert Coach

Phew, it's been a long season that most likely started last fall. Time to take a break and do some noodle rides; right? Not if you want to make year-to-year gains.

Most riders hit their peak in the summer and then back off so much in the fall that winter-time is all about trying to get back to where they were last year at the same time. If you follow the traditional program of backing way off in October, start with 'easy' miles in November, 'ramp up' in December and then start working in January, you're doomed to hopefully match last year's output.

Am I suggesting that you should not take a break or that there isn't an off-season? No, everyone needs some time off to rest and decompress. However, there are plenty of things you can do off the bike that will make you stronger on the bike. Here are five steps to strategize your off season to preserve your gains and build a stronger foundation for next season.

1. Ride hard into Fall. Okay, I know this is on the bike, but you were going to ride no matter what I said, right? Just don't think you have to do 5-minute intervals, shoot for specific power targets and do hill repeats. Instead, ride as you feel but hey, you're a cyclist! That means pushing yourself to the limit now and then.

While you're out riding, think about staying in touch with your different training zones. Climb a hill for a few minutes hard and then enjoy an easy section. Hammer along a favorite stretch of road, then noodle for a while. In the back of your mind you are trying to carry as much of your fitness through to the winter.

2. Plan your season start and take two weeks off prior. Two weeks will degrade your fitness, but if you've followed step one you won't lose all that much. After two weeks you'll be chomping at the bit to get back on the bike. It's a perfect time to look at your posture and stretch only where you are tight in order to rebalance your body. This is important: you must stretch only where tight and avoid full body stretching routines that will maintain muscle imbalances you might have

3. Get thy body into the gym! Stay away from machines and don't let your body builder buddy teach you how to isolate your muscles to make them bigger. That will only make them dumber. Learn some multi-joint, multi plane, multi movements. Cycling is an endurance sport that puts you into a flexed position for hours at a time. You need extension exercises to work the other sides of muscles and joints. You need core work to make sure your transverse abdominis is working, NOT abdominal crunches.

4. Find a coach or trainer who understands how to give you exercises that will help you balance your body. How do you find one who understands this concept? Ask them what off-season exercise they suggest for cyclists. After they tell you one, ask why. Exercises should be given for a reason based on your activity or body's needs, not because they read that Lance Armstrong does them.

5. Take inventory of your life. The less intense time of the year is the best time to review your goals, think about how to reduce the stress in your life, consider making nutritional changes and adjust your sleep schedule. Make changes during a time when you can focus on them so they become a habit.

Follow these suggestions and your off-season can launch you higher than last year. Hire a coach who can create an annual schedule that gets you working at the right time and at the right intensities to see year-to-year gains. Don't just be as good as last year; go faster!

*Marlon Familton coaches with The Peaks Coaching Group out of Bedford, Virginia and offers cutting edge power based cycling coaching. He is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist through the National Strength and Conditioning Associate, a USA Cycling Expert Level Coach and a C.H.E.K. Certified Golf Biomechanic.*

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