

G'day to all and a very Merry Christmas and despite my best intentions, this newsletter is 2 months late so my apologies for that. As it's Christmas, a time when a lot of cyclists and tri people get fat and lazy, there's a bit of info and diet, posture and bike position following. As well as some updates from the October NL. Read on.

We will close at 6 pm on December 23rd and reopen at 10 am on January 7th. Margaret and I wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.



Teschner Night

The meet Peter Teschner night went down well with those who attended. Pete spoke and answered questions for 2 hours. The highlights were –

Teschner are bringing the production of some of their carbon frames back to Australia from China in '09

Teschner have entered into a partner ship with a large Victorian university to develop new technology (can't say too much) to be applied to frame manufacture. If this is successful, Teschner will produce in Australia, frames that are lighter and stronger than carbon fibre.

Why **Teschners** descend so well. Everyone that owns one will tell you this and the reason is that **Teschner** steering geometry is more stable than that of most large manufacturers. Think about this; bikes are 3 – 4 kg lighter than 30 years ago. Wheels are lighter with less gyroscopic inertia, components and frames are lighter as well, yet most carbon frame manufacturers blindly adhere to the same steering geometry that was common on steel framed bikes in the '70's.

So if you current lightweight flyer is a bit nervous on the descents and many are, a Teschner will solve that problem.



Mad dogs and Englishmen

Kipling said that only “mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.....” when talking of the excessive heat in India in the days of the Raj. There must be something about the water they drink in England. In the last newsletter <http://www.cyclefitcentre.com/Newsletters/Newsletter%20September%202008.pdf>

I mentioned, **Mark Davies**, the gent from Baghdad who had flown to Australia, had me work out a set of frame dimensions and then point him at an appropriate bike. He bought the bike, brought it back to us for a fitting and then flew back to Baghdad to get shot at while training on a \$300 mtb in a secure compound in preparation for the Busselton Ironman triathlon. He arrived back in Sydney 6 days before the race, picked up his bike (which he hadn't ridden other than during a fitting session in the shop) and then flew the 4000kms to Busselton to compete in the Ironman race, his **first** triathlon of any distance!

In Baghdad bets had been laid and had to be paid and Mark got the money by finishing in a decent time. His cheesy grin is below and you can forgive him for pumping out his chest a bit.

Mark's only complaint was the temperature. Everyone else thought that 28C on race day was perfect, but after the 38C to 48C of Baghdad, Mark felt that it was too cold and it took him a while to get going. Mark's training was limited, his bike was unfamiliar and it was his first tri, all of which made him a subject of interest on the local TV news. Mark was asked by the TV reporters how he found the arduous Ironman distance. “Easy really; a bit of a holiday. A piece of p—s after Special Forces training and a lot better than getting shot at. And they give you a medal as well!”

There will be reprise next year.

Now meet **John Ball**. John had previously completed one sprint triathlon in England and thought on the strength of that, that he would enter the Busselton IM race. Most people would think that ambitious. Not ambitious enough for John though. He thought he'd make it more interesting by booking in with us for a Cyclefit in the week leading up to the race. Usually, I'm not keen to touch anyone's position in the 6 weeks prior to an Ironman because it isn't really long enough to adapt to positional changes with a heavy training load. As John had come 20,000 kms I did the job and he left the shop with significant changes to his position. Here's John below. He finished the race and says that he will be back next year with some proper training under his belt.



Posture Determines Strength

Most of you know that I am always rattling on about this. Every action we perform on a bike (or off the bike for that matter) starts with a signal from the brain that is in turn based on a constant flow of proprioceptive feedback from the body. This means that central nervous system function is fundamental to cycling performance. In a general sense, posture determines central nervous system efficiency. Have a look at the link below for one of the best demonstrations of applied posture that I've seen. Amazing stuff. Thanks to Lindsay Harvey and M CCC for sending it in.



[CTRL + click on this text to go to the video page and view the clip: Posture Determines Strength](#)

Comfort versus Performance

We've had a number of triathletes from Canberra booking in over the last few months. Many of them had been positioned previously by a gent in Canberra and had developed various niggles or issues subsequently. When they mentioned this to their bike fitter, each was told "I've positioned you for *performance*, not *comfort*"

That sort of thinking implies that *comfort* and *performance* are mutually exclusive, which they definitely are NOT.

Lack of comfort on a bike means that muscles are being enlisted for purposes that they weren't designed for or periods that they can't cope with. When subject to pain (lack of comfort) past a certain point, an organism will always self protect. While competing or training, the only self protection mechanism we have is to enlist postural musculature in an effort to change our bodies relationship to the bike and ease the discomfort.

On a bike, muscles acting posturally allow us to hold a position. An absence of unnecessary tension in postural muscles also allows us to breathe to our fullest extent. In contrast

muscles acting phasically propel the bike. The way that we are wired up means that the brain and central nervous system will always give priority to muscles acting posturally. This can only be done by robbing blood flow and oxygen from the power producing phasic muscles. So in fact, *optimum performance depends on being comfortable!*

The longer the period spent on the bike, the greater must be the emphasis on comfort. Compare this – a road racer is constantly shifting their position and changing the intensity of their efforts in a long road race. Hands on the hoods, in the drops, on the tops of the bars etc. Pace goes up, pace drops and then quickens again. By comparison, an Ironman triathlete does not experience the same changes of intensity but remains in more or less one position for *long* periods of time. Here is an example of what comfort looks like (or more properly, this athlete's version of comfort because we all sit on a bike differently depending on our structure, proportion and functionality)



[CTRL + click on this text to go to the video page and view the clip: Comfort vs Performance](#)

This gent, whose name is Lucas, can maintain this position for the 5 hours of an Ironman bike leg and get off in good condition for the run.

Comfort + Efficiency = Performance



Sea to Summit

Julian Townsend recently rode with a group of others from sea level at Merimbula to the top of Mt Kosciusko in a single day for a charity. That's 270kms and most of it up hill! Pics below of the boys standing on the highest point in Australia

Jindalee Wine

Stan the Man Genakis has a new job. He is promoting Jindalee Wines, a small vineyard in Mookanbool, Victoria. Margaret has tested the '08 Merlot and the '07 Shiraz and gives both of them a bit of a wrap. These are not expensive wines but drink well and repay 45 minutes or so of breathing time prior to drinking. If you are looking for some Christmas cheer and see Jindalee on sale, know there is a cycling connection.

Torso flexion versus extension

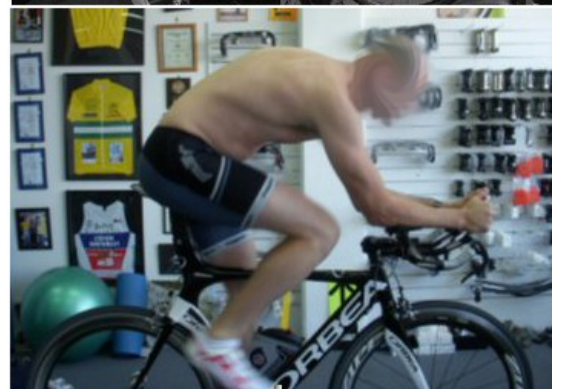
When you lean forward to the drop bars or aero bars on a bike, your pelvis needs to rotate forward, your lumbar spine rotate forward and your thoracic spine needs to extend. How well you can do this depends on how flexible you are in the hips, back and pelvis. The greater the 'effective' torso length of a given rider, the more room their lungs will have to expand into when they are under high load, high heart rate conditions.

The more bowed or humped your spine, the less room your lungs have to expand into and so the lower your 'effective' lung capacity. Keep this thought in mind when ever you think that stretching isn't 'real' training. Have a look at the pics below and determine which of these gents can breathe to their fullest potential under load.

That should have been easy. I would rate them in reverse order of breathing efficiency from top to bottom with the 1. being the worst and 3. being the best.

The basic message is this. There are several aspects to fitness – muscular strength, cardiovascular efficiency and degree of structural fitness. Most of us give the first 2 the highest priority in terms of time and importance whereas structural fitness is really the most important. When people book in for a fit, I always ask what issues they have on the bike. Never has anyone told me that their legs are too strong or their lungs too efficient. Problems on a bike are only ever caused by one of two things.

1. Poor position – I can fix that.
2. Poor degree of structural fitness; i.e, limited and asymmetric posture and flexibility. I can work around that to varying degrees but only **you** can fix the problem.



Diet

Some of you have asked me how I eat so much and stay so lean. Genes may play a part but looking at the rest of my extended family, I'm not so sure. I think the most important factor is what I put in my mouth and in what combinations. To that end I have written out a few simple rules that I follow below. No guarantees, but if you follow this for a few months, you might be pleasantly surprised.

Eating Simply

1. Eat simple meals with one major food at a single meal.
2. Don't mix any of the following at the same meal –
 - Sweet fruits
 - Acid fruits
 - Proteins
 - Starchy foods
 - Fats and oils
 - Milk and milk products
 - Nuts
 - Starchy vegetables
3. Eat a large salad once a day lightly dressed with extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice. No need for supplements. If eating the salad with other foods, don't use dressing. It's fine to eat an undressed salad with any of the food groups in 2.
4. Eat unprocessed foods wherever possible. If a food has been processed to the point where it isn't obvious what it derives from, don't eat it except as an occasional treat. That means largely steer clear on processed carbohydrates and refined sugars.
5. Satiety is governed by protein intake and time. If after eating a meal you're still hungry; wait 20 minutes. Most of the time your hunger will pass as there is a delay between consumption and feeling adequately full.
6. On long rides, instead of relying on energy drinks, bars and gels, experiment with dried figs, fresh dates, bananas and similar. On 6 hour plus rides, a single dried fig or fresh date every 15 – 20 mins should be enough for energy requirements.
7. Drink filtered water in the main and drink plenty of it. Don't drink for 30 minutes before or after meals.
8. If you drink alcohol, don't drink to excess and drink quality. Better to spend the same amount of money, drink better quality, enjoy it more, but consume less.
9. Eat fruit every day.
10. Each week, try to eat from the greatest variety of food types and food colours as possible.
11. Make your own lunch and take it to work.
12. Any more than 2 coffees a day is excessive and it may be that you are trying to perk up because of lack of rest or poor nutrition.
13. For snacks between meals, eat any one of nuts, fruit or a piece of cheese at a time.
14. With the exception of extra virgin, cold pressed olive oil, don't use vegetable oils of any kind for cooking or for dressing salads. That means safflower, sunflower, canola or blended vegetable oils. Don't buy products that list 'vegetable oil' amongst their ingredients. That means that most cakes and biscuits are out.

Vegetable oils are polyunsaturated which means that when processed they are unstable. By the time you buy vegetable oils, they have been exposed to heat, light and processed to the point where they are a free radical heaven. Use them for frying and it is worse still. Vegetable oils are fine in their natural condition which means in seeds and nuts. Processing turns them into something akin to a low level poison. For frying use modest amounts of lard, palm oil, peanut oil or coconut oil as they are much more stable when exposed to heat. When frying, if your oil starts to smoke because it is overheated, dump it, clean the pan and start again at a lower heat. Extra virgin olive oil is fine for salads.
15. Above all, don't be manic about this. The previous points are good ones but if you are out with friends in a restaurant for instance, be selective, but eat what is in front of you. Just eat more frequently at home than you do out.

Gunnedah

Gunnedah is 450 kms north west of Sydney in the Namoi Valley. We get a lot of cyclists and tri people from Gunnedah booking in for a fit, for which I can probably thank New England Institute of Sport coach, John Hickey. For a town with a population of 10,000 or so, Gunnedah would have the highest per capita ratio of World, National and State champions across a range of sports that I've heard of. Must be something in the water there as well. One Gunnedah athlete is professional triathlete and part time farmer Peter Loveridge. Here is a link to Pete's blog which gives an insight into the life of a Gunnedah boy.

<http://www.peterloveridge.blogspot.com/>

Thank you to all for your attention and your custom during the year. We'll be back in '09. Stay upright and ride with the wind behind over the break.

Merry Christmas

Margaret and Steve