

Cycling

Always recover after an event. Do this by consuming a high-glycemic sports drink or a Recovery Shake within 45 minutes of jumping off the saddle.



By Dan Young

CYCLING

Ask any one who knows me, I'd rather have my feet in a pair of Vasques leather high-tops with a pack strapped to my back over a pair of Nike's clipped into my Cannondale any day; but I do ride. In fact, when I ride, it is usually to compete, but I spend very little time conditioning myself.

In fact, last year, a friend of mine asked me to join him in a charity 500 mile bike ride. "What the heck," I said; it's for a good cause. I'll tell you one thing, they don't make a seat that is comfortable after 100 miles let alone 500; but I digress. I did very little conditioning for this ride, yet I performed extremely well. I never left my saddle. How can that be you ask? Well, simply I had Nutrition down to a science.

Whether you are an avid mountain biker, long distance cyclist or simply a week-end warrior, you are using any one of a combination of internal energy systems. For instance, if you are a mountain biker, chances are your energy comes primarily from the immediate and glycolytic energy systems because you are using short-term energy requiring explosive-strength output and in addition, medium-term energy for



repeated near-maximum exertion. If you are an endurance rider, you need to focus the bulk of your nutrition and training efforts on building up your oxidative energy reserves because your energy comes from oxidized long-chain fatty acids, protein, and glucose. Week-end warriors may require all internal energy systems, depending on your activity and time.

What does this all mean? Simply, you must plan your nutritional intake from both whole foods and supplement sources if you are going to excel. The timing and quantities of these calories and nutrients before, during, and especially after your event is crucial to your success. As a rule, 55-25-20; that's Carbs, Protein and Fat, respectively, is an ideal target for your diet for most cyclists. If you are a true endurance cyclist, tweak your carbs up to 60% and protein down to 20%, making your sports specific diet a 60-20-20 ratio. During the first one and a half to two hours of cycling, both glycolytic energy and body fat are the primary sources of energy. After this, fat becomes the primary source but no more than 75% of total energy; so the remaining 25% of energy needed still comes from glycogen. While body fat is now the primary source of energy, it cannot be used efficiently unless some glycogen remains in the muscles and liver. Therefore, even endurance athletes must make sure to always keep their glycogen stores filled. So make sure your diet includes those carbs or you will be ripping down your muscle.

YOUR DIET TWEAKED

All athletes, cyclists included, must eat 5-6 smaller meals a day. This will ensure stable blood-sugar levels

throughout the day. Try to time a low-glycemic meal 2-3 hours before your ride. Do not consume food or caloric beverages from between 15 minutes and two hours before an endurance ride; this will cause the insulin level to rise, which in turn interferes with the energy dynamics during exercise and can induce early onset fatigue. Consuming carbs immediately before and during your ride is okay because exercise slows the release of insulin, so the ingestion of carbs spares glycogen in your muscles, helping to yield longer endurance.

All athletes should eat high quality protein throughout the day for effective recovery and adequate repair of muscle tissue. In addition, all athletes must eat low-glycemic carbs throughout the day as well, to ensure an adequate supply of energy and to maximize your hydration. Remember with every gram of glycogen stored, you store 2.7 grams of water; so the more glycogen the more hydration. Cyclists should keep dietary fat to a minimum, 20% or less because consuming large amounts of fat can lead to frequent urination which increases the loss of minerals essential to healthy heart action.

SIMPLE RULE

Remember, always recover after an event. Do this by consuming a high-glycemic sports drink or Recovery Shake within 45 minutes of jumping off the saddle. Your glycogen stores will re-volumize with necessary sugars and water, helping you to save muscle, rehydrate and have greater endurance for your next cycling adventure.

Eat well and remember, you are what your food eats!

Dan Young is President and CEO of Performance Food Centers, Corp. He is certified in personal training, sports nutrition and is a triathlete. He has competed in Body Building as well as Endurance Sports Activities. Accomplished in juice bar concept and design, he applies this knowledge to whole-foods nutrition and the efficiency to serving them.