

# Benefits of Yoga for Cyclists

A huge part of your fitness level is flexibility. And when is the last time you thought about your flexibility on your bike? Chances are you could be getting more out of your workout by what you do OFF the bike. Complimenting your ride with an asana (yoga) practice can improve your power, strength, speed and endurance.

Cycling is a fabulous way to maintain health through low-impact aerobic exercise to get that blood pumping, tone up and shed unwanted weight. But it can also lead to limited range of motion and decreased flexibility if proper stretching isn't done prior to your workout. Most avid cyclists suffer from a lack of upper body strength, poor posture, knee problems, tight hips and tight hamstrings which can lead to all sorts of problems both on and off the bike.

As a cyclist, you want to have good form, first and foremost, but that won't save you from tightening up after a ride. It is important to limber up the muscles which worked so hard to get you moving through all those sprints and climbs. That is where yoga comes in.

Not only do you receive the benefits of glorified stretching through proper alignment, but it gives you a chance to focus on the breath and how it moves through your body and calms your mind. You can then apply that breath-work to the way you breathe on the bike, creating more oxygen intake for you to move through those mountains. This encourages more body awareness which will bring you more coordination. Balancing postures help to increase your own balance on the bike bringing more agility and ease of movement as you ride.

Yoga aids in a disciplined mind and relaxed mental state, which in turn, relaxes the body. Many sports psychologists suggest competitive athletes only focus on the present moment, not anything which has happened up to that moment, only knowing you are trained and prepared. Yoga teaches the same thing; to live in the moment and just observe your past has brought you to where you are. This is relevant to all fitness levels not just elite athletes, whether you are coming off an injury, have health problems or found a new love for fitness.

Yoga is a great way to develop a strong core, which drives a lot of a person's power on the bicycle. A strong core also leads to less back pain and prevents strain. Upper body strength increases as yoga works as weight-bearing exercise and so many modifications can be taken no matter what your fitness level.

Through more flexibility, a stronger core and upper body and an awareness of how you use your breath, you will find more power, strength and stamina in your ride.

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