



## How to get more from your Indoor Cycling Class

It may seem at times that your indoor cycling class is just a bit of pedalling to some random music for 45 minutes and working up a little bit of a sweat. To some this is all they really want and nothing more which is fine but for others who really want to get the most out of the class read on:

First things first are you need to know what you want from the class, are you there to burn fat? Or are you there to get fitter? Or both? That decision is entirely yours what I do recommend is you read our [cardiovascular training](#) article to understand how training at different intensities makes it easier to achieve your goals. Once you have read that you will now realise that pedalling hell for leather or making every track as hard as possible wont get you results faster it just makes the class more painful, but again if you prefer that then who am I to say not to do it.

So the class is Indoor Cycling and that is exactly what it is we are trying to replicate an outdoor bike ride by cycling at certain speeds and making sure we put the resistance up for hill climbs etc. We have 4 different positions when on the bike:

**SF:** Seated flat, one question I must ask is when have you ever seen someone out on the road on a bike pedalling faster then the wind? You don't and if you did you would say "put your gears up" and in doing so the person would feel a little bit more resistance against the wheel but have a much more comfortable ride. This is one of the most common mistakes made on an Indoor Cycling class where people are bouncing around all over and allowing the momentum of the weighted wheel do all the work. This firstly is very dangerous, secondly bad for your joints and thirdly ITS NOT A WORKOUT! Its lunacy. You should always have some resistance on and pedal at a sensible flat speed. A lot of instructors work on RPM so between 100-120 RPM maximum. (Two revolutions a second)

**SH:** Seated Hill this is where we really need to crank up the resistance. It's a hill so make it feel like one, wind that resistance up until the pedals nearly stop then grind it out at around 40-60 Rpm (one revolution a second)

**STH:** Standing Hill these are the killers, it's a fact that a seated position when cycling is far more energy efficient so getting out that seat is going to be hard work! Don't worry that is what you are here for. Most tracks will be set to a decent beat so you can adjust your resistance according to the tracks beat. I do see a lot of people

trying to make it easier by having less resistance on but to be honest this only makes it harder. You need to adjust your speed by changing your resistance, if you get it spot on with the beat you will find the hill a lot easier and get far more benefit from it.

**SP:** Sprints! Well not exactly like I said earlier we don't want to be pedalling like mad and nearly falling off so what we need to do is put a lot more resistance on then a SF and still try to pedal up to a maximum of 140 Rpm. Sprints are for very short periods only and the idea is to work hard on the sprint then fully recover by going nice and slow in the rest periods. If you watch a cycling race you will see that when they sprint at the end very rarely do they pedal over 140 Rpm they will always change up a gear instead.

Now we know the different biking positions let's have a look at technique. What we are trying to achieve in the spinning class is either improved fitness or fat burning NOT muscle size gain or loss and I can guarantee you this will not happen so don't be scared to put that resistance up, its there to get you fitter or slimmer so use it. When you are pushing on the pedals you are using your Quads or the front of your leg, so if you put the resistance up these muscles will start to burn a lot. The one problem with this is you can end up slowing down because your muscles are burning not because your heart rate has got high and you feel tired, this is a problem because we need to get that heart rate up!

The way to achieve this is by pulling up on one pedal whilst pushing down on the other this will incorporate your hamstrings or backs of legs to start working in tandem with the front and helps tremendously to reduce the burning feeling and in turn helps you raise that heart rate with a lot less pain. If you concentrate on doing this all of the time the results you get from the class will be far better.

The theory behind any form of exercise is progression, if you go to an indoor cycling class and never push yourself to work that little bit more you will stay exactly the same, if you put a touch more resistance on your body will slowly progress and no matter what your goals you will start to see the results. Like I say **"If you always do what you have always done you will always get what you have already got"** basically you won't change.

One last thing just to help push you on that little bit more and this one will probably strike home a bit more with the ladies then the men. If you thought having a low resistance on your spin bike all the time was going to burn more fat think again. The primary muscles you are using are your legs and bum and that is where your body has to draw energy from. If you keep the resistance low and work at higher speeds all the time class after class after class there are two problems, firstly you are not burning optimum amounts of fat doing this and secondly because of the way you are training your body will become more prone to storing fat in the areas where easily accessed energy is required i.e. your legs and bum! So trust me on this one, putting that resistance up is very very important if you want less fat on your backside!

The simple thing to do to avoid this is: remember the instructor has planned this class very carefully to make sure you get the absolute best results from it, so when you're working on high resistance "**put a high resistance on**" and when you are on a low resistance work at a low resistance, just stick to what the instructor says, go on do it, you may even surprise yourself with the amount of work you can actually do during a spin class!

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