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## Real Men Join Spin Classes

Posted on Nov 8th 2010 11:00AM by [Kyle Stack](#)

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Stan Honda, AFP/Getty Images

If riding the exercise bike isn't giving you the [cardiovascular edge](#) you need, there's another form of cycling that can. Spinning classes, available in most gyms, are renowned for their intensity. They're also a good way to strengthen your lower body, according to Avery Washington, a spinning instructor at [The Sports Club/LA](#) in New York City.

Washington notes that more men are joining [spinning classes](#), comprising roughly 25 percent of the classes he leads. Many come over from the basketball court, but plenty more men -- and women -- join a spinning class with various levels of physical fitness. Their shared goal is typically to challenge themselves as much physically as they do mentally.

Before you get ready to pump your legs, it's vital to go over proper technique. Washington offers tips for how to get the most out of your indoor cycling ride.

### Adjust Your Seat

Finding the appropriate seat level can make all the difference in how much you extract from the ride, which typically lasts 45 minutes per class. "Setup is really important," Washington said. If the seat is too high, your legs will become overextended. If it's too low, there will be an inordinate amount of pressure on the knees.

Find the desired seat height and be sure to take a few rotations with the pedals to ensure your arms and legs have comfortable extension.

### **Handle the Bar**

The handlebar position is equally critical. Since spinning is such a strenuous activity over a relatively long period of time, eliminating potential strains to the body is simply smart injury prevention.

"You don't want to reach too close and put pressure on your neck," Washington said. You also don't want to be extended so far from the handlebars that your back is stressed. "The key is to relax your shoulders," Washington added.

### **Get off the Saddle**

The saddle is the seat, and there are times during the workout when the instructor will call for everybody to raise his butt off it. This helps work the legs in a different way. "The moment you come off your saddle, all the weight from your upper body is helping your legs rotate the pedals," Washington said.

Just don't lean forward too much when off the saddle. Washington said it stresses the heart, so it's better to anchor your weight with your butt. Think of getting in a defensive position in basketball or football. "Don't work harder than you need to," Washington emphasized.

### **Don't Be Competitive**

Washington noted that he'll see less-accomplished cyclists try to match the intensity of the more experienced ones in the room. Bad idea. "They need to ride at their level," Washington said. Don't worry about keeping up with anyone else. Ride to your comfort and don't be afraid to lessen the bike's resistance.

You're likely going to feel sore your first couple times after a spinning workout. You don't want to exacerbate your body's stress by trying to impress the blonde next to you or challenging the Lance Armstrong of the class. Pace yourself and understand your body's limitations. Your body will grow more from the workout.

*Let's be honest, guys, ladies aren't the only ones watching their waistlines. Our Gut Check column offers tailored advice on how to keep your weight in check by offering easy, healthy twists on your favorite foods and exercise advice for men who want to be a little closer to six-pack abs than a beer belly.*

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