

ROAD CYCLING TO LOSE WEIGHT IN CADENCE

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One of the most important aspects to cycling is your cadence, or how many pedal revolutions you perform in a minute. Developing a cadence takes time; you need to build endurance and strength. Maintaining a specific cadence can keep your body in an optimal workout zone, burning calories effectively and helping you lose weight. Your optimal cadence will depend on your physical fitness. Varying your cadence is also beneficial; interval training can increase your calorie burn.

FINDING YOUR RHYTHM

In basic terms, cadence is your cycling rhythm. When you first begin riding, your leg muscles, your heart and your lungs will feel the strain of keeping any pace, particularly if it is too fast; to build your endurance, begin with a lower gear and higher cadence. Though you pedal more quickly, a lower gear offers less resistance so you can ride for longer periods of time. No matter how easy or difficult your ride, you will burn calories toward your weight loss goal. However, increasing your pace can push your heart rate into a calorie- and fat-burning zone, optimizing your workout.

TARGET HEART RATE ZONES

In order to lose weight you have to use more calories -- through physiological processes or exercise -- than you take in through your diet. The optimal heart rate zone for burning fat is approximately 60 to 70 percent of your maximum heart rate. Your aerobic conditioning zone is 70 to 80 percent of your maximum. To calculate your maximum heart rate, subtract your age from 220 if you are a man and 226 if you are a woman. Check your heart rate by counting the beats in 10 seconds and multiplying by six to determine your heart rate.

SHIFTING GEARS

Learning to shift your gears properly is one key to maintaining a smooth cadence even over varying terrain. According to the book "Ride Your Way Lean" by Selene Yeager, getting to know your gears is paramount to your weight loss success. A timely change up or down can mean the difference between an easy and a difficult ride. Downshift to a lower gear before going uphill and shift up into a higher gear on flats or downhill. If you are feeling fatigued, stick to lower gears and "spin" until you recover; when you need more challenge, push into a harder gear and try to maintain your cadence.

INTERVALS

Riding for long periods at a steady cadence is an excellent way to burn calories, build muscle and increase your cardiovascular endurance. However, mixing in intervals -- i.e., performing at a higher intensity in short bursts -- with rest in between is the key to real weight loss success. Intervals are effective because the recovery periods allow you to maintain higher cadence and resistance during high-intensity intervals, eventually spending more time at these higher outputs. Yeager also recommends including intervals in your weight loss regimen. Performing cadence intervals pushes you beyond your comfort zone, thereby increasing your strength and cardiovascular thresholds.