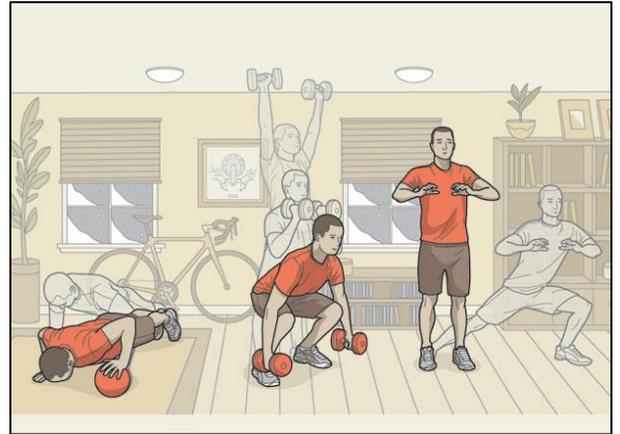


The Off-Season is a Time to Build Strength

Off-season strength and mobility training will help you become more efficient on the bike—so you can ride faster with less effort. To get those benefits, I suggest all cyclists incorporate the following three exercises into their strength programs.

Perform three sets of each of the following exercises two or three times a week. I'm a big proponent of body weight exercises but dumbbells or kettle bells will add some resistance.



Push & Pull Exercises - The stronger your upper body, the less prone you'll be to fatigue on long rides.

- Push Ups - To make push-ups harder, elevate your feet or put one hand on a medicine ball and one on the floor. Aim for 20 repetitions per set.
- Incline Pull Ups - You can use a low pull up bar at a local park or strap device i.e. TRX.

Dumbbell Squat/Overhead Press - Improves hip and lower-back mobility, so you'll generate power through more of the pedal stroke. With your feet shoulder-width apart, set a dumbbell on the floor outside each foot. (Use a weight you can lift 20 times.) With your eyes forward and chest high, squat until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Grab the dumbbells and stand up. Curl the weights to your shoulders and press them over your head. Reverse the moves, touch the weights to the floor, and repeat. Do 20 reps per set.

Lateral Lunge - Strengthens and increases the flexibility of your inner-thigh muscles.

When they're tight, you'll tend to scoot forward on the saddle to effectively lower your seat height, which robs you of power. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Step wide to your left, keeping your right foot flat on the floor and your right leg straight. With your head up and chest high, push your hips back and squat until your left thigh is parallel to the floor. Return to the start position; repeat on the right side. That's one rep; do 15 to 20 per set.

Paul Wood

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Phone (843) 693-8448