

MIDWEEK WORKOUT COMPANION TO GWL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Purpose: Develop aerobic and muscular endurance through focused sub-threshold intervals in order to handle longer ride and race formats and arrive at the finish with energy and fitness to make winning moves.

Background: Most amateur athletes lack the time to put in the necessary long hours (15-20hrs per week or more) on the bike to make long, sustained easy rides pay off in the off-season. A structured interval plan focusing on high quality sub-threshold intervals coupled with a weekly long, endurance pace ride can serve a similar purpose in less time, while still building quality fitness.

Plan Execution: The following structured interval progression is intended to be executed mid-week as a companion to the weekly GWL coached rides. These two weekly workouts provide adequate intensity for off-season base building. *I recommend an additional long (at least 2 hours, building up to 4hrs or more), disciplined endurance-paced ride building in duration as riders are able to reap the full benefit of this training period.*

Workout description: I strongly recommend the use of an indoor trainer for quality interval sessions. On the road, find a course that allows you to ride at intensity for up to 30 minutes with minimal breaks in pedaling. Continuous power to the pedals is the goal of these intervals.

Warm-up: Ride 10-15 minutes, building intensity, e.g.:

3 min very easy spin – 3 min endurance pace – 3 min “Sweet Spot” pace – 3 min very easy spin.

Main Set:

4 x 10 minutes at “Sweet Spot” intensity, on 2 minutes recovery between intervals.

What is “Sweet Spot” intensity?

Perceived Exertion – this is below heavy, uncontrolled breathing. You can put together a short sentence without gasping, but could not comfortably carry on a conversation. Your legs should not “burn” but by the final set, you should be feeling the onset of fatigue – you’re just below the point where your legs burn. This may feel easier than you expect in the first interval.

Heart Rate – Aim for 85% of your maximum cycling heart rate. If you exceed 90%, back off. Short times above 85% or the final interval going between 85-90% is fine. If you don’t know your max HR, 220-(your age) is a reasonable starting point, but you’ll want to know this number or test for it eventually.

Power based – aim for 90% of Functional Threshold Power (please reach out to me if you train with power and would like an FTP testing protocol).

Cooldown: Spin your legs out for 5 minutes or ride home *very easy*.

INTERVAL PROGRESSION: You should progress through the workouts as you are able. If you opt to do two of these sessions during the week, you should not do them on back-to-back days, and leave at least one easy/recovery day before your GWL workout. If you are unable to complete the intervals at the perceived exertion or HR laid out above, you should repeat the workout before moving on to the next progression. Remember: building long-lasting fitness is the goal, and that takes consistency and adequate recovery. Remember: *A long ride is more important than an additional interval session!*

Progression 1: 4 x 10 minutes on 2 minutes recovery
Progression 2: 2 x 20 minutes on 3 minutes recovery
Progression 3: 3 x 15 minutes on 3 minutes recovery
Progression 4: 2 x 25 minutes on 3 minutes recovery
Progression 5: 1 x 45 minutes continuous
Progression 6: 4 x 15 minutes on 3 minutes recovery
Progression 7: 3 x 20 minutes on 3 minutes recovery
Progression 8: 2 x 30 minutes on 5 minutes recovery
Progression 9: 1 x 60 minutes continuous

For questions, please reach out to me via FB messenger. You can direct message me or post your question in the PRT team feed with an “@Kurt Braeckel”. I don’t regularly check the feed, so you’ll need to call my attention to it.