

Turbo Spinning

By Marc Evans

In 1982 indoor cycling trainers were in their design infancy. Sure, rollers had been around many years, but few individuals were athletic enough to ride them safely. The first trainer I had was a bulky device that hummed like a jet turbine the faster you rode. Nonetheless, it served its purpose well...that is until one late February while "spinning" away when a piece of the turbine fan turned into a projectile whizzing by my ear at breathtaking speed and embedding itself into my front room wall. The next week I bought myself a set of rollers.

Fortunately, this problem was eventually corrected. As a matter of fact, I've now used the same wind trainer (Blackburn) for over 12 years for myself and with dozens of clients.

In 1983 I started working with a group of very talented triathletes several who were top 10 and 20 at the IRONMAN with times that still today would be competitive. Also, I had several international distance world ranked athletes, which made for a unique group of highly gifted and competitive athletes.

Weekly during the winter and at times summer I'd have them all over to the house and on the deck I'd run a group "turbo" workout. One year we had the "Turbo Bowl" on Super Bowl Sunday. Yes, we turboed the whole game. Thank goodness I've lost my interest in watching football...

The workouts always began with the athletes in the small chain ring where I would have them concentrate on various sectors of the spin and revolutions. Soon, I had them "Spinning" at what I called "HRPM Spinning" or "high revolutions per minute". Sometimes they'd reach 130 rpm's.

I found this type of spinning to be quite effective in teaching a most efficient spin and thus, included this regularly. In particular, after threshold, V02 and lactate efforts I had the athletes spinning at minimums of 100 rpm. During race pace intervals the rpm was 90.

Perhaps, the best drill I came up with was the "One Leg Spin". Simply, I had the athletes emphasized the spin with the right leg and let the left follow without force. Then switch over to the left. Over time I realized the best way to teach this was when using the small chain ring and say, a 21 free wheel cog. This gearing forced the athlete to remain focused on the spin where a more forceful gear would not.

"Descending One Leg Spinning" then became the drill of choice. Start out with say, 10 with the right and 10 with the left then 9 right, 9 left, 8...7...6 and so on. Follow the drill

with a normal spin for about 60 seconds. You can do this drill on the road or trainer and along with dozens of other possible drills you can make your turbo training fun. Here's a workout in detail:

1. Warm up in small chain ring at hrpm spinning start a 90 end at 105 for 20 minutes.
 - a. TF Drills 2(4 x 2 minutes) two sets of the following:
 - i. Work the downstroke (forward and downward)
 - ii. Descending One Leg Spins from 20
 - iii. 4x30 seconds alternating One Leg Spins
 - iv. hrpm at 110 and 115 for 1 minute each
 - b. Anaerobic Threshold
 - i. 6 x 6 minutes at 40Km pace plus 1 minute rest
 - ii. Or, 8 x 3 minutes plus :30 seconds rest
 - c. HRPM
 - i. 3 x 3 minutes @ 100, 110 & 115 rpm
 - d. Warm Down
 - i. 10 minutes of One Leg Spins alternating every 30 seconds