

# 3 Ways to Boost Your Race Fitness This Winter

**H**ow did your race season this year go? When you look back on it, would you call it a success? Setting next season's high-level race goals early in the off season will help to add structure and meaning to all the long hours in the saddle you are planning over the fall and winter.

## 1 Create a Plan: Overreach and Adapt to Achieve your Fitness and Skills Goals

Did you have a structured training program last year, or did you just ride through the season and hope for the best? If the latter was your plan, this year it is time to consider building an annual training plan, and designing a specific off-season strategy that will set the foundation for next year's season. Incorporating skills work and progressive, structured training rides will lay the groundwork for race-specific training in the early spring. Begin the design of your plan by working backward from your "A" races next season. Incorporate base, build, and race preparation blocks into your plan. Ensure that recovery and rest is included, as well as any travel or vacation periods. Southern California riders can take advantage of a new off-season training program combining a training camp, power-based training plans using TrainingPeaks, skills clinics, and structured rides (details at <http://bit.ly/15memiX>) coached by USA Cycling Level 2 coaches Rob Panera and Gary Tingley, and professional road cyclist Cody Stevenson.

By Gary Tingley  
Photo By Danny Munson

## 2 Use a Power Meter and Training Peaks to Monitor your Training Load

Dr. Andrew Coggan created the Training Stress Score (TSS) and describes Training Stress Balance (TSB) as a rider's form being a combination of fitness and freshness. A rider's fitness is brought on by training stress, and a rider's freshness is brought on by ample rest and recovery. If you find it difficult to time the application of training stress and recovery, the balance and forecasting of these two elements is something that a certified cycling coach can assist you with. Monitoring fitness and freshness can be achieved by tracking Chronic Training Load (CTL), which represents long-term training effects of workouts done two weeks ago and on, and Acute Training Load (ATL), which represents short-term

training effects of workouts done within the past two weeks. Using your power meter to measure your training load and leveraging TrainingPeaks tools to view your results, you'll be able to track your Training Stress Balance, Chronic Training Load, and Acute Training Load. One strategy for application of training stress is to gradually ramp the application of Chronic Training Load while incorporating rest weeks when required. Once race season begins, your Chronic Training Load may plateau and drop prior to key events. Monitoring training stress and recovery can aid in the prevention of illness and is very useful in timing the application of a taper for your priority races.

## 3 Ride with Consistency and Use a Stationary Trainer

Do you skip training days? Does work or family life

intervene? Inclement weather in the fall and winter months, along with reduced daylight hours, can add difficulty to consistent off-season training. There is a remedy: the stationary trainer. Embrace it. Use indoor training as your secret weapon. Set a time each day to train during the week, and stick to it. Make this a non-negotiable block of time. Make your 1 to 1.5 hour indoor trainer sessions meaningful by incorporating a variety of workouts to include level 3 and 4 (tempo and sub-threshold) work, short level 6 microbursts, and a couple of active recovery days as well. One of my favorite off-season workouts on the trainer is 1:20:00 in length and begins with a warm up for 15:00 with a couple of "pops" to get your legs ready.

- Start with 2 x 1:00 @100% FTP (Functional Threshold Power) and 100-110RPM with 1:00 easy between these two spin ups.
- Then, for the three main sets, complete 1 x 18:00 @ 90-102% FTP with a self-selected cadence.
- Then go easy for 5:00.
- Then 1 x 10:00 @ 95-102% FTP.
- Go easy for 4:00.
- Then 1 x 12:00 @ 90-98% FTP.
- Then recover, cooling down to make 1:20:00.

Trainer technology has come far in the last few years, with advances in resistance units and power measurement integration. If your first introduction to a trainer was a lower cost magnetic unit, the technology and "road-like feel" has rapidly improved. Recommendations to look at for the new breed of trainers include the iPhone compatible \$999 **Wahoo Fitness KICKR** with power measurement and the popular **Kurt Kinetic Road Machine** with Virtual Power.