

**Use these tips to avoid the aches and pains and injuries that often plague cyclists.**

Cycling is an oxymoron. It's sedentary exercise. Even though you're pumping your legs and working hard, you're in a seated position, which is why many seasoned cyclists look like office workers who spend too much time slumped over at a desk. Combine this position with an improperly conditioned body and you've got a recipe for pain. Use the five tips below to reduce common cycling aches and pains and decrease your risk of injury.

### **TIP #1** Activate your whole body

Warm up with Movement Prep, a series of dynamic stretches that increase your core temperature, fire up your muscles, and prepare your nervous system for activity. The result is you'll be ready to pedal from the onset, ramp up quickly, and reduce your risk of injury. Consistently performing it before each ride will also improve mobility. [Click here to see a sample routine.](#)

### **TIP #2** Focus on body positioning

The way your bike is fit can impact your body's position. An improper fit can lead to knee and low back pain and numbness in the hands from putting too much weight on the handlebars. At least once a year, have your bike fit by your local pro bike shop. Once it's fit properly, focus on positioning. During a ride, spread out the stress on your body by keeping a smooth curve in your spine instead of an excessive arch or hunch. For every 10 to 20 minutes you ride, or when you hit steep terrain, stand up to pedal for 30 seconds. This will help release tension in your hip muscles.

### **TIP #3** Work on mobility

Your mobility is crucial to getting in and maintaining proper positioning on the bike. To allow your body to pivot through your hips properly, stretch your hip flexors—the muscles on the front of your hips—with the Half-Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch ([video here](#)). Work on your upper-body mobility and take stress off your neck with the Reach, Roll, and Lift. [Watch a video of the move here.](#)

### **TIP #4** Improve stability for better mechanics

Hip and torso stability is critical to quality mechanics. Your goal is to keep your lower leg, knee, and hip in line and neutral (facing forward) as you pedal. Allowing your knees to cave in can lead to problems with your IT band, for example. Try this drill to test your stability: Set the bike at an easy gear and pedal at a high rpm. Move your feet as fast as possible without moving your torso. Then, work on building your stability with a movement like the Pillar Bridge ([see Pillar Bridge video](#)).

### **TIP #5** Build stronger legs

If you lack hip strength or you feel fatigued, your body compensates by flexing your back or pulling harder on the handlebars, stressing your lower back. To overcome this, add Romanian Deadlifts into your non-riding workouts. They'll improve hip mobility, teach your body how to pivot through your hips, and build glute and hamstring strength. [Click here for a how-to video.](#)

### **TIP #5** Avoid overtraining

Follow a progressive training plan that doesn't increase training volume by more than 10 percent a week to avoid being over-fatigued. This can lead to movement compensations and cause injury. After you train, perform self-massage. It's like cleaning the mud off your bike before you put it away. Roll for 30 to 60 seconds along the length of each of your muscles with a foam roll. Spend more time on sore spots.