



If you're like most people - hibernating during the winter months, being less active and putting on a few extra pounds, late spring or early summer is a great time to become more motivated. It's a time to look for ways to shed unwanted pounds and re-commit to a healthy lifestyle.

Cycling to Change



by Roger Steinbrock

Blood, Sweat and Tears classic *Spinning Wheel* states things that “go up, must come down,” but that isn't true for everything, like your weight. For weight to “come down,” you have to be committed to a weight-loss plan and exercise regularly.

One way to take off unwanted pounds, borrowing another line from the BST song, is the “spinning wheel got to go round.” Of course, the power supply to make the spinning wheel go around is you.

There are many ways to exercise. Some may create a routine on their own - doing sit-ups, push-ups and crunches, while others may work mainly on their cardiovascular system and begin running long distances. Some may seek an aerobic dance class to work on movement and stamina. One of the newer trends in exercise is to take a cycling class, or the more popular name a spinning class.

Your toatalhealth.village.com indicates “spinning” was created by Jonny Goldberg, a world-class cyclist, to train quickly for races. In California, 1989, he and his business partner, John Baudhuin, opened the first spinning center. They also developed a program to certify other spinning instructors to further advance this form of exercise.

WHAT IS SPINNING?

Spinning is an aerobic exercise that utilizes a specially-designed stationary bicycle, called (you guessed it) a spinning bike. Unlike a regular exercise bike workout, spinning

involves a variety of movements and speeds, with participants, or spinners as they are referred to, sometimes standing on the pedals and other times sitting like normally seen on a stationary bike.

And unlike most modern exercise bikes, a spinning bike has a large flywheel front wheel to control momentum and provide resistance during a workout, so it make a class available for people of all ages and all levels of fitness.

“Cycling doesn't take a lot of coordination because you are staying in one place and it's easier to concentrate on our form,” Jo Ellis, recreation instruction supervisor, said. “Classes are designed for all fitness levels, by adjusting your pace and the tension.”

As a participant pedals, motivating music plays and an instructor guides them through a visualization of an out-

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- A stiff-soled shoe with good ventilation – some running/aerobic shoes (soft-soled) may leave feet numb at the end of class
- Two towels – One for wiping away sweat and one for draping over the handlebars so your hands won't slide out of position.
- A full water bottle, because you're definitely going to sweat!

Source: yourtotalhealth.village.com

door cycling workout, providing them obstacles like hills to climb. Throughout the class, there is a variation of pace – sometimes pedaling as fast as a participant can go, while other times pedaling from a standing position with the tension knob set high to simulate hills and elevation.

Although a participant follows the general instructions of the spinning instructor, they are in total control of the pace at which they exercise.

Spinning is high calorie burning program, if conducted at a high level. On the average, a participant burns 450-500 calories for a 45-minute workout. Besides providing a workout for the heart, it also tones quadriceps and outer thigh muscles. Plus, cycling doesn't require a lot of coordination like some aerobics exercise programs.

However, spinning classes don't work all leg muscles equally, so it may require some additional cross-training activities, so an imbalance in muscle development doesn't occur. Participants can also over do it by spinning every day, creating injuries to knees, hips and lower backs.

EXTRA HELPFUL HINT

Make sure the seat setting is correct for your height, so your knees are slightly bent at the bottom of the pedal stroke. Set the handlebars so they are level with the seat. When you lean forward and place your hands on the bars, there should be a slight bend at your elbows. Riding in the incorrect seat setting can lead to injury.

Source: yourtotalhealth.ivillage.com

CYCLE ON DOWN

Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department began offering their version of spinning classes, referred to as cycle classes, in February with classes at varying levels of intensity. *Cycle 101* is designed as an introductory course for those just beginning with stationary cycle exercising.

A more moderate class, *Cycle – Power Ride*, provides more challenges for developing cardiovascular strength. Rides during the 45-minute workout would cover 15 to 20 miles if mapped out at the set pace.

Cycle – Rip N'Ride is a class providing the additional cross-training to achieve full-body toning. Participants alternate with 10 minutes of riding followed by 5 minutes of weight lunges and squats.

Cycle – Pedal Pushers is designed as an introductory class for those specifically over 50 years of age.

Ellis says she's always looking for different classes to compliment what the department already offers.

"I like to offer new and exciting classes, so we have a well-rounded fitness program," Ellis said. "By incorporating cycling classes into our current selection, we are providing people a wide variety of classes from which to choose."

With such a variety, there is no reason not to, as the song goes, "let the spinning wheel fly."

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SPIN / CYCLE CLASS

- Go regularly. Find a class that fits your schedule.
- If you don't like the instructor, keep trying until you do.
- Use your instructor as a resource. Tell her about your goals and don't be shy requesting workouts or even music.
- Wear cycling shoes. Clipping into the pedals gives you more control, makes you more efficient and works your hamstrings in addition to your quads. It will help your outdoor riding.
- Stay hydrated. Spin classes tend to be intense so keep a water bottle within arms' reach and drink often.
- Pace yourself. Spending all your juice on the first simulated hill climb means you'll struggle the rest of class. A heart rate monitor helps you keep your effort in the right range.
- Imagine that you're really out there climbing that hill or sprinting to the finish. You'll feel more motivated and have more fun.

Source: ehow.com

