

Overcoming Discomforts

From minor discomforts to great annoyances, cycling, like all physical activities, comes with growing pains. Before dismissing the aches and pains as part of the road you need to travel to get fit, take some time to see if you can help your students ease their discomforts.

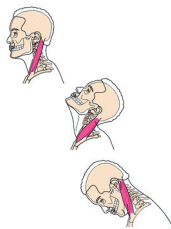
A good place to begin is checking the student's bike setup. Revisit your *Spinning® Instructor Manual* to review bike setup. In addition, ask students to demonstrate the three hand positions and five movements so you can take a closer look at their form.

Taking the time to identify and address the source of the discomfort will help prevent imbalances or injuries. Strength, endurance and flexibility of the muscles, ligaments and tendons must also be looked at when investigating problem areas. If a student comes to you with discomforts that are beyond your scope of practice, always recommend a visit to a health care provider. You may be trained to teach safe alignment and biomechanics, but remember that no fitness certification qualifies someone to diagnose or treat injuries.

When addressing someone with an achy lower back, there may be many variables to consider, such as poor posture, muscle tightness, muscle strain, muscle inflammation, or weight control. Strength in the muscles that keep the back stable and well aligned (back, leg and abdominal muscles), endurance in the muscle that support the back and flexibility in muscles, ligaments and tendons will all contribute to the health of the back.

Following are a few questions to help you determine how to address your students' aches and pains. **These suggestions are not a substitute for seeking professional health care.**

Neck



- Check alignment of head.
- Is their head in neutral position?
- The average head weighs 14lbs: if the head is not maintained stacked over shoulders, neck strain can occur.

Lower Back



- Check handlebar height
- Is their back extremely rounded?
- Is the rider too stretched out?
- How many classes is the student taking?
- Does the student include strength and flexibility in their training?
- What is the student's lifestyle, work and activities outside of Spinning®?



Wrists



- Check alignment of wrist and hands.
- Is the wrist excessively flexed for long periods?
- Are the handlebars too low?
- Demonstrate neutral alignment of wrist.

Knees



- Is the bike seat height too low or too high?
- Check fore and aft position.
- Does the student use too little or too much resistance?
- Check cadence.
- Check cleat alignment.
- What other activities does the student participate in?

Feet



- Check foot placement on the pedal.
- Check toe straps.
- Check type of shoes. A soft or improperly fitting shoe may cause discomfort.
- Check cleat alignment.

Discomfort in the Saddle

- Is the saddle too high or too low?
- Has the student dramatically increased training hours on the bike? Pressure on tender of the pelvis and sit bones need time to toughen.
- A seat may not be compatible to the student's anatomy. Purchasing a seat slider will allow them to reach a more comfortable fit.
- Regularly stand up to restore circulation to the area.

From time to time, perhaps every three months, present a class that revisits form, technique and sound training principles (in addition to any introductory class you may have on your regular schedule). Use a profile that incorporates the three hand positions and five movements. Begin the class by addressing how important it is to review the fundamentals of the training system. Ask your students to stand next to their bike and perform a quick overview of bike setup. If you find you are getting impatient glares, be patient but confident about what you are presenting. Remind them that training is not just a matter of expending energy. Intelligent training requires proper attention to the ABCs (see below) of training. Use the language in the ABCs to present the objective of this Form and Technique class. Spend five or more minutes with the five movements and break down each movement. Review the alignment of their body from head to toe as addressed above. You will discover that your



students appreciate the knowledge you are giving them on how to care for and respect the body.

Below we have provided some vocabulary for you to use and expand upon.

ABCs of Training

Alignment, Adaptation, Awareness of body, Avoid injury, Attention to detail

Breathing and relaxation, Body/mind connection, Breakthroughs in training, Balance, Being open to breaking old habits

Cadence, Control, Confidence, Concentration, Cycling smart

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