

# Heart-to-Heart



## HeartCycle Sprinter Improvements

At the 2022 Annual Board Meeting the purchase of an Awning and new Bike Racks for the club sprinter was approved and ordered. I am happy to announce that these are now installed and were put to use on our first tour of the year, “Sonoran Desert, Tucson and Beyond”. These improvements to the Sprinter have been well received by our Members, Leaders and SAGS. The awning will shade participants and working members from the sun while at a Lunch or SAG Stop. The new Kuat Racks can hold 3 bikes on the front and 4 on the rear for a total of 7. Due to weight capacity there can only be 1 e-bike on the front rack and 2 e-bikes on the rear rack and must be placed on the inside wheel trays closest to the vehicle.

Please see photos below of our new improvements in use on the tour.







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## **Tour Director Musings**

Do you remember the joy of riding your bike as a kid, just for fun? Sometimes we get so use to training for a ride or tour and trying to meet our weekly goals, we miss the beauty of our surroundings. Don't forget to look around this spring and see the daffodils, hear the birds chirping and the stunning scenery surrounding you every day. It is great to be outside and appreciating nature.

HeartCycle has been using RWGPS for our tours in recent years. I switched from using my Garmin for the directions to listening to the cues from the RWGPS program and find it the best guidance yet. Do you still use the paper maps or the cue sheets that HeartCycle hands out at the orientation meeting? Let me know if you could save some paper and just listen to your RWGPS cues on tour at [bjsiel@msn.com](mailto:bjsiel@msn.com) The board is discussing the pro/cons of using paper map/cue sheets.

Hope to see you on one of our tours this year.

Judy Siel, Tour Director

## 9 Tips for a Seamless Progression into Spring Cycling

By Michelle Arthurs-Brennan

Work your way towards your best summer yet on the bike with a steady build through spring

**Yes, it's still cold outside and there's still frost on the car windscreens as we're leaving for our early morning commutes. However, those watching out the window during the day or lucky enough to spare the odd hour at lunch time might notice that there are also days when the sun is beginning to show its face.**

With March in full swing, and the first of the classics already attached by the pros, it's fair to say we're seeing the first signs of spring. This can be both hugely exciting, and also slightly nerve racking for cyclists who have spent the winter months working towards spring or summer goals. It's even more nerve racking for those who haven't quite managed the intended training that was prescribed on New Year's day.

The good news is that the summer season lasts until the end of September – that's rather a long stretch of sporting, eventing, long riding or racing ahead. Here are a few tips for a successful progression into spring...

### Don't panic train

There's a name for knee pain that starts in the early months of the year – it's called "spring knee" – and it gains its title from the countless number of riders who decide to suddenly up their milage in March, April and May out of fear that they've not done enough to reach their desired level of fitness.

Ramping up training volume or intensity too quickly can result in injury – and that injury can set you back much longer than just being a little bit behind on the schedule. If you feel you've not been doing enough, take a look at your goals and work out what you need to do to reach them – it's more than likely a slow and steady build is still an option.

### Move goals if you have to

This one is for those who actually can't reach the goals they had planned with a slow and steady build. Examples include a 100 mile ride in two week's time, if so far you've only ever ridden 10 miles in one go, or a 500 mile expedition over 5 days if you've barely ridden 50 miles a week since last summer. Examples that do not qualify are those fretting over a 100 mile ride next weekend, who have ridden a total of 70 miles in training – if you've ridden 70 per cent of the total distance or more in training you'll be absolutely fine.

In the case that you haven't got the miles in, it might be worth just moving the goal post a little – set yourself a new goal of a similar distance later in the year, but be sure to replace the initial one with something challenging to ensure you don't lose motivation and find yourself in the same position three months down the line.

## **Start working on short efforts if you've got the mileage sorted**

If you're smugly reading the comments above, comfortably assured that you've got all the mileage you need down to the last kilometer, then now is the time to start building on it and injecting some speed into your training.

What sort of efforts you do will vary dramatically depending on your goals, but if getting faster is important to you, start riding shorter intervals at a much higher intensity. A rough guide might be focusing on one to three minute hill intervals if you're planning on fast paced grit rides, eight to ten minute efforts if you're all about time trials, and a mixture of the two if you're going for sportives and want to build some leg strength over a variety of terrains.

This is just a matter of housekeeping – but it's amazing how easy it is to get so carried away with preparation and training that you leave signing up to the actual event to the last minute – and things do sell out.

We're rounded up some of the best women's only sportive events here, take a look and get your name on the start list before it's too late!

## **Look at your own progression, and no one else's**

If you regularly ride (or compete) with a group of other cyclists, remember that gaps in ability are caused by a relationship between two riders. Just because your friend is suddenly getting up the hills twice as fast, or sprinting to every line ahead of you, it doesn't mean that you've got worse, it might just be that they've had a sudden injection of fitness thanks to whatever they've been doing over winter.

First up: applaud them. Everyone likes to be told they're doing well. Secondly: compare your efforts with your own past performances – Strava segments are a great way of showing up if you've improved or not, but do remember that factors such as the weather play a very big role, so don't beat yourself up if you were slower when riding in a snow storm. Thirdly: let your friend inspire you – find out what they've changed, and chase after them!

## **Don't forget what you learnt over winter**

Every off-season cyclists troop into the gym and start working on core strength, jump onto the rollers or turbo to develop better cadence, and spend time in the kitchen perfecting their nutrition. Then come spring, we get all excited about just riding the bike and forget the basics of a strong, healthy body.

Yes, for most of us the greatest gains are to be had on the bike, but that doesn't mean the other stuff isn't important – so try to keep up the good habits you developed over the colder months when it was too chilly to really want to spend all day outdoors.

## **Prepare the bike**

Guess what? It's not all about you. You and the bike are going to be working towards your spring and summer goals together, so give her a good bath and replace any parts that need replacing before you start lining up at any events or rolling out of the door ready for your longest ride ever.

Key areas to check are the brake pads – are they worn? The tires – do they need replacing? And the cables – if you're finding shifting and braking isn't quite what it used to be, these could need refreshing.

## **Don't get caught out without layers**

It's worth remembering that spring weather is notoriously changeable – you can find bright sunshine one moment, only to be doused with rain the next. Thankfully, cycling manufacturers are well and truly used to catering for this, and you'll find a range of useful accessories available.

The most crucial items to own are arm warmers, leg warmers, and a packable waterproof – all of which can be rolled onto the body or into the pocket as mother nature requires. A good base layer that guards against chill and wicks sweat when you heat up is also a life saver, as are over-socks which guard against the worst of the windchill on cold mornings.

## **Remember it's about fun**

Is riding a bike your career? If not – then it's probably worth remembering that at the end of the day performing well is something that you'd like to do, but not something that you have to do. Riding a bike is a joy, and putting too much pressure on yourself can take away from that – so don your helmet, pop on those glasses, get on the road and have fun!

# It's Better Without GPS

By Emma Cole

**In a world where digital controls all, Emma Cole argues that it's good for the soul to ditch the bike computer.**

Do you ever go on a ride and see an enticing looking road? You wonder what might be down there, but your GPS device informs you that it's not on your route, so you obediently pedal on by without even thinking.

This happens to me frequently, and I find it very frustrating. GPS devices have slowly and sneakily become the rulers of every ride and, frankly, every so often we need to ditch them.

The GPS device has become too ingrained into everyday cycling, so much so we let it dictate every road, every trail, every turn. These computers are robbing us of an intrinsic value of the sport - exploration.

Don't get me wrong - when following a set route with a particular training goal in mind, these devices are great. The turn-by-turn directions let you focus on riding, safe in the knowledge that you are generating copious amounts of data that you can pore over later. Bike computers tell us everything we need to know about our FTP, TSS, and W/kg. But what about riding for the fun of it? What happened to simply following our noses?

**They'll never take our freedom!** Whenever I ignore my bike computer and follow my own senses, it can feel like I've been set free. Ditching the map gives me the total liberty to choose my route based on what I see and how I feel.

I can genuinely explore and discover new roads, all without a little machine telling me which way to go. I can take the roads that tickle my fancy, veer off when I want to, and yes there are a few U-turns every so often, but they're worth it. Who knows where I might end up.

When I last left my Garmin at home and ventured off into the wilderness I was meandering along narrow country lanes, peering through the gaps in the hedgerows, until I found myself at a quaint little cafe somewhere just outside of Stevenage. It was the smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls that made me stop, and they didn't disappoint. Fluffy, soft, melt-in-the-mouth. Utterly scrumptious. I ate two.

Would I have found this cafe if I had been following my GPS? Would I have stopped, or would I have sloughed on remorselessly, driven onwards by the arrow on a computer screen? Who knows, but what is certain is that instead of having my ride dictated by a little box on my handlebars, I followed my senses. And it was glorious.

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**Good for the brain.** Studies have shown that when people use GPS they engage less with their hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for navigation, and this can then lead to the hippocampus shrinking. London taxi drivers famously have greater grey matter volume in the hippocampus because of how much they use this part of the brain to memorize the city's labyrinth of streets.

Thus, sacking off digital directions and actually using our brains is not only good for our sense of freedom, it's good for our intelligence. We are forced to pay attention, take heed of where we are, read signs - manmade and natural - and develop our own internal compass.

Plus, it also means we can appreciate things that aren't marked on a map, like the towering old oak tree in the center of a village, a chocolate-box thatched cottage nestled at the start of a climb, or the rhododendron-lined avenue that signals the road home.

Instead of being entirely at the behest of a device and obsessed with knowing exactly where we are, we could be paying attention to our surroundings, learning about a place and, most importantly, using our brains.

Keep it simple. Riding a bike is a very basic pleasure. Its beauty is in its simplicity, and a GPS device often serves to complicate things. That little black box needs constant attention - charging, syncing, uploading, updating, and that's before we fall victim to the siren call of the marketing campaigns that persuade us we need to upgrade to the latest model.

Ditching the device means there's no need to worry about making sure the computer has enough battery or panicking when it doesn't reroute because of unexpected road closures. We can forget about whether we have a signal and focus purely on the riding for the love of it.

If you can't bear to fall short on your annual distance accumulator, by all means couch your bike computer in a pocket you can upload your ride to Strava later, but in the moment, why not focus on something else than a little arrow? Why not use our brains and senses to direct our ride instead.

Ditching the GPS device strips cycling back to what really matters: you, your bike and the road ahead.

[Editors' note: years ago I did a bike ride out of Limoux, France with Le Monastere where I rode without a computer or maps. I didn't know where I was, where I was going, how far I had gone or how far it was to the next corner or the end of the ride, I just rode. It was the most relaxing and freeing riding I had ever done.]



## 2023 Tour Teasers

**The following HeartCycle tours have space available for you!**

### **Sardinia, Italy**

**June 10-20** Rich Crocker will be coordinating this amazing tour that is returning due to rave reviews from 2018. Sardinia is like heaven to any keen cyclist: the roads are perfectly paved with minimal traffic. this beautiful trip will put you in the heart of the most ancient land in Europe. Among mountains sculpted by wind and sun, with its deep canyons, white sand beaches, and unspoiled forests, we discover nature, archaeological remains with are unique in the world, gastronomic treats, and traditions. this is an advanced tour, but not all about the riding, the east day will have a boat tour of beaches.

### **Million Dollar Views in the San Juan Mountains, CO**

**June 24-30** Arguably the most beautiful part of Colorado, the San Juan Mountains along U.S. Highway 550 (the Million Dollar Highway) offer stunning views in every direction that are best enjoyed by bicycle. Late June is the perfect time of year to ride in southwestern Colorado; monsoons don't start until July. The weather is sunny with average lows in the 50s and average highs in the 70s. Join us for spectacular scenery, unforgettable riding, good food, and fun. Both Silverton and Ouray are historic towns-enjoy their charm & maybe a hike or hot springs!

### **Grand Valley Ramble, Colorado**

**September 17-22** Join us for 5 scenic days exploring the Grand Valley in western Colorado. This is a fixed base tour staying in the heart of downtown Grand Junction at the Hampton Inn for five nights. Riding up and across the Colorado National Monument with its spectacular scenery on 2 different days should be on your bucket list of rides to do in 2023. The spectacular lunar-looking landscape is accentuated with majestic spires of red rock and panoramic canyons. We will also explore Fruita farmland and cycle the Palisade fruit and wine loop with a visit to an alpaca farm and ride past numerous wineries where wine tastings are optional, and have a remote start at the quiet crossroads of Glade Park for a ride to the Utah state line and back. Most of the roads we will be riding do not have shoulders, but very low traffic. Join us in western Colorado for a great fall ride.

**Check the HeartCycle website for the full tour descriptions and Tour Leaders contact information if you have more questions.**



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# Colorado HeartCycle 2023 Tours

## History in the Finger Lakes Region

### **Rochester, New York**

August 13 - 19                      Status: Cancelled  
6 days, Intermediate                      \$1,800.00  
Janet Reilly, [kayaks06@verizon.net](mailto:kayaks06@verizon.net)  
Gail Golderman, [goldermg@union.edu](mailto:goldermg@union.edu)

## New England Seacoast

### **Portland, Maine**

September 10 - 16                      Status: Waitlist  
6 days, Intermediate                      \$1,500.00  
Kurt Arehart, [klarehart@gmail.com](mailto:klarehart@gmail.com)  
Jim Bethell, [bethell.jim@verizon.net](mailto:bethell.jim@verizon.net)

## Grand Valley Ramble

### **Grand Junction, Colorado**

Sept. 17 - 22                      Status: Open  
5 days, Intermediate                      \$1,200.00  
Judy Siel [bjsiel@msn.com](mailto:bjsiel@msn.com)  
Barry Siel, [bsiel03@gmail.com](mailto:bsiel03@gmail.com)

## Slovenia, Italy & Croatia

### **Ljubljana, Solvenia**

Sept. 23 - Oct. 2                      Status: Waitlist  
9 days, Intermediate                      \$4,400.00  
Cindy Dore, [cdorecycle@gmail.com](mailto:cdorecycle@gmail.com)