

Cycle Align: Post-Ride Program for the Indoor Cycling Instructor

Created by Leslie Mueller

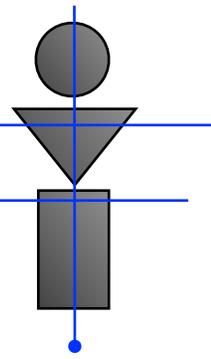
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- I. Introduction 5 min

- II. The Practical Experience 45 min
 - A. Measuring body alignment in a group setting
 1. Center of Gravity
 2. Hip Function Test
 3. Wall Test
 - B. Alignment Exercise
 1. Experience 10 alignment exercises
 - a) Learn how to perform the exercises
 - b) Understand the purpose of each exercise as it relates to cycling and how it prepares students for the demands of cycling.
 - C. Re-test body alignment

- III. Short Practical Program for Cycling Classes 30 min
 - A. Review purposes of 4 exercises
 1. Elbow Curls
 2. Upper Spinal Twist
 3. Pelvic Tilt
 4. Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch
 5. Frisk
 - B. Review exercises in small groups

- IV. Q & A 10 min



Start by testing where you are with these functional alignment tests.



The Center of Gravity Test:

Notice where your weight is distributed in your feet.

1. Is it in the balls of your feet, or your heels?
2. Is it in the inside edge or the outside edge?
3. Is it heavier in one leg than the other?

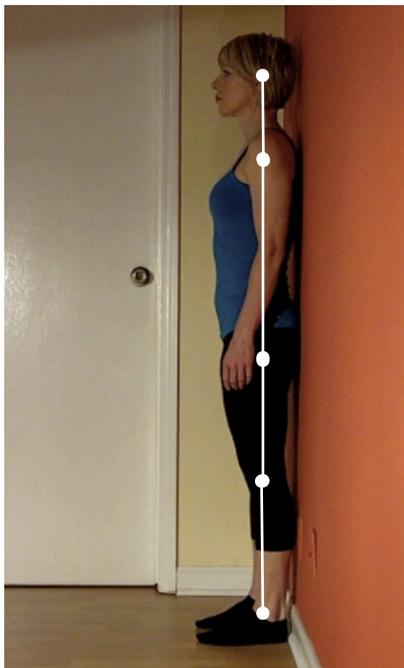
Your weight distribution indicates where your center of gravity is. It should feel balanced.

The Hip Hinge Test:

Engage your quads (the muscles on the front of your thighs) keep your knees straight and bend over, hinging at your hips.

1. How far can you go?
2. Do you feel pain?
3. Does it feel even from right to left?

The diminished ability to hinge in your hips contributes to back pain. You should be able to place your palms on the floor.



The Wall Test:

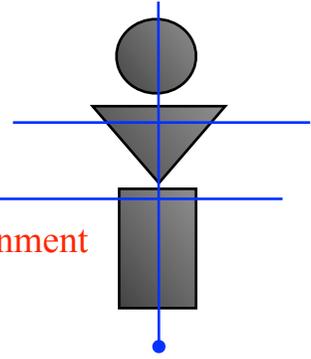
Stand close to a wall. Notice how much of your body touches the wall.

1. Does your head touch?
2. If not, how far away is it?
3. How much of your upper back is on the wall?
4. Does it feel even from right to left?

All your load bearing joints should be stacked over one another from the side view. The wall test give you a pretty good idea how well stacked these joints are. This is a great test for head forward posture. Head forward posture leads to neck, shoulder and back pain.

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Elbow Curls



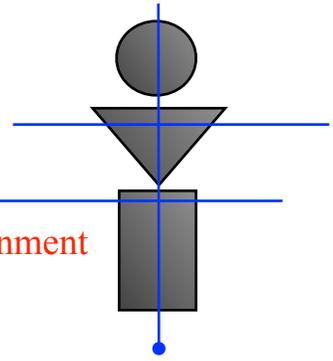
Instructions:

Stand with your feet under your hips, feet pointed straight ahead. Put your hands in a golfers grip, with your tips of your fingers touching the top of your palm, bending the second knuckle and extending the first knuckle (not a fist). Place your knuckles on your temples and press your elbows back as far as you can. Then, without bending your wrists, bring your elbows together, meeting at the center. You can do this against a wall to remind you not to move your head forward or back.

The purpose of this exercise: to bilaterally engage the scapular stabilizers and to encourage thoracic extension.

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Upper Spinal Twist



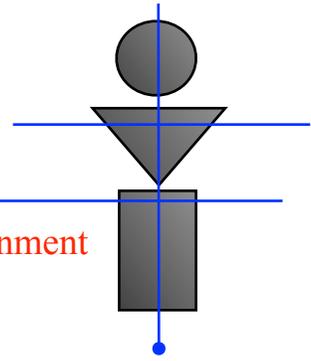
Instructions:

Lie on your side as if you were just sitting in a chair that tipped over. You should have 90 degree angles at your knees, hips and shoulders. Your spine should be long and straight. Your knees and hips should be stacked on top of one another. You should begin this exercise feeling some weight on the outside edge of your shoulder, do not slide the shoulder on the floor shoulder forward. Reach the top arm back, twisting your torso away from your hips. Make sure you maintain a stacked position with your knees and hips. Hold this position for one minute on each side.

The purpose of this exercise: to encourage thoracic spine (mid back) extension, to encourage pelvic stability through the work of the torso rotators and to encourage the proper position of the shoulder blades on the upper back.

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Pelvic Tilts



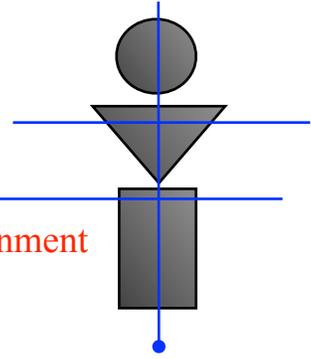
Instructions:

Lie on your back with your your knees bent, your feet and knees shoulder width apart. Make sure your feet are parallel. Press the small of your back into the floor as you exhale, then arch the small of your back up off of the floor as you inhale. Do not lift your hips. Do not push into the floor with your feet. Do not pull with your upper back - try to initiate this movement from your hips. Repeat 10 times.

The purpose of this exercise: to encourage flexion and extension mobility of the pelvis and spine. To encourage initiating movement from the pelvic muscles.

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Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch



Advanced

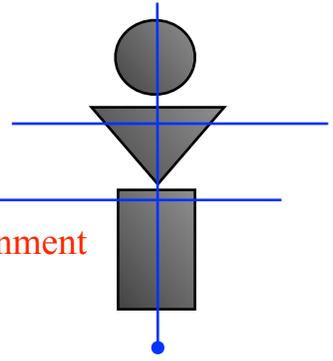
Instructions:

Kneel in front of a wall with your back to the wall. Place one foot on the wall and the other out in front of you on the floor. Your legs should be hip width apart - if you feel off balance, widen your base by moving your front foot away from the center line of your body. Tuck your tail bone and press your hips forward. The knee of your front leg should end up directly over your ankle. If it is in front of your ankle, move your foot forward. You should feel this in the top front of your thigh. Hold this form one minute on each side.

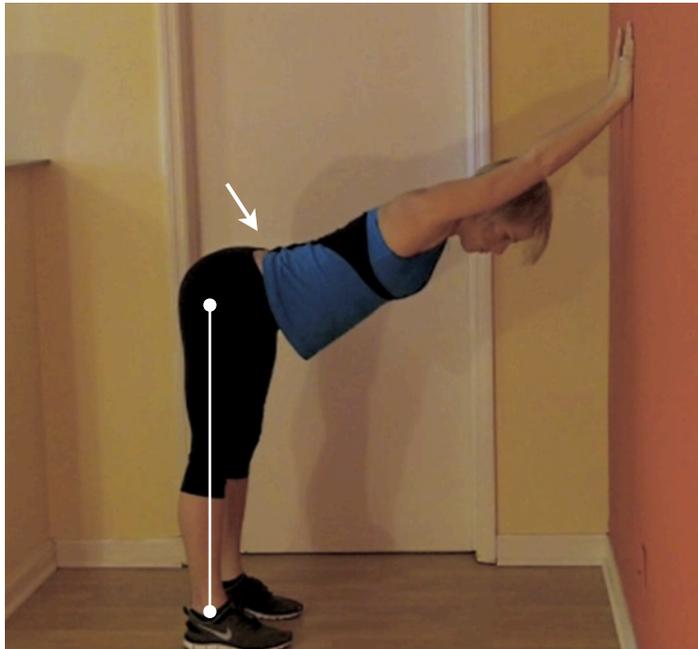
The purpose of this exercise: To lengthen and engage the powerful hip extensors and flexors. To encourage extension of the pelvis and lumbar spine.

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The Frisk: to leave your body long and strong



Instructions:

Stand arm distance from a wall and place your palms on the wall at your shoulder height and width. Leaving your hands exactly where they are, back away from the wall as you bend forward at your hips. Step back far enough so that your heels are just under your hips.

Put some of your weight into the balls of your feet and engage the front of your thighs by trying to lift your knee-caps up toward your hips. Try to place an arch or sway in the lowest part of your back.

The purpose of this exercise:

To encourage the hips to hinge while strengthening the extensors of the lower back and to promote upper-spinal extension and proper shoulder position.