

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

Created by Leslie Mueller

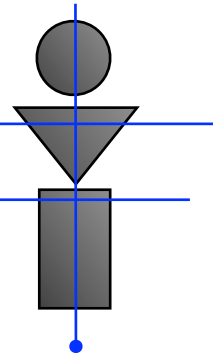
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- I. Introduction 5 min

- 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. Squat
 2. Figure 4 Twist
 3. Cats & Dogs
 4. Static Extension Position
 5. Figure 4 Lift
 - 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?

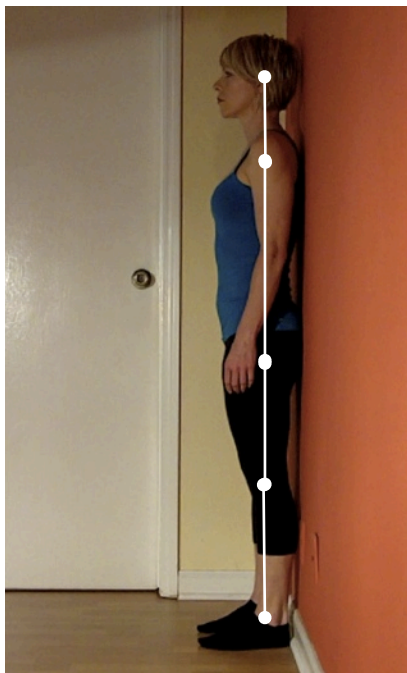
Your weight distribution indicates where your center of gravity is. It should feel balanced.

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.

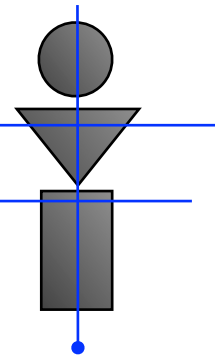


The Wall Test:

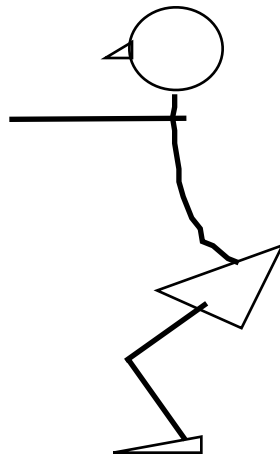
Stand close to a wall. Notice how much of your body touches the wall.

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.



The Squat



Instructions:

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Hold your arms out in front of your body like Frankenstein. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, toward your spine and down toward your hips. Place an arch in the small of your back and bend your knees. Lower your body as far down as you can without rounding your upper back forward. Your chest should point straight ahead. Your knees should point in the same direction as your toes.

The purpose of this exercise: To encourage the thoracic and lumbar extensors to engage and to encourage hip stability via the primary hip flexors.

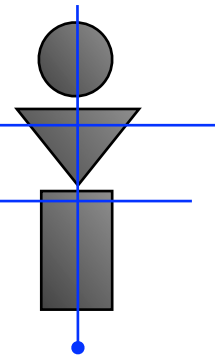


Figure Four Twist



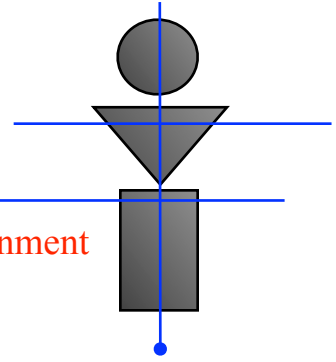
Instructions:

Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet and knees shoulder width apart. Place your arms straight out at shoulder height. Cross your right leg over your left so that your legs resemble a #4. Keep your hips level (your belt line should be straight across). Press your right knee away from your body and twist your lower body over to the left as you turn your head and look right. Maintain the pressure, pressing your right knee away from your body but keep your right foot firmly on the floor. You should feel this in the outside of your right hip and/or in your lower back. Hold this position for one minute on each side.

The purpose of this exercise: to encourage rotation of the pelvis and lumbar spine.

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Cats & Dogs

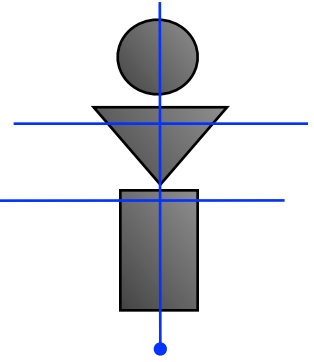


Instructions:

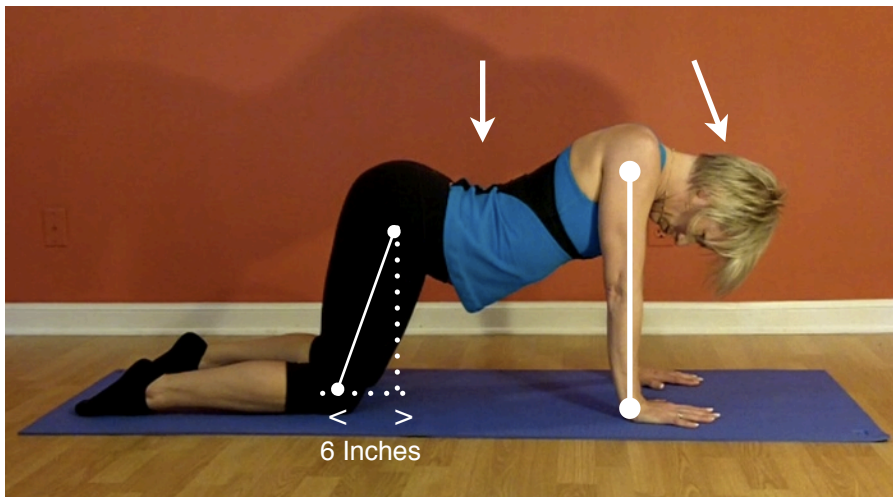
Place your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Tuck your tail bone, press the middle of your back up toward the ceiling, press your shoulder blades apart and tuck your chin as you exhale completely. Then, lift your tail bone, arch your back, squeeze your shoulder blades all the way in to your spine and look up as your inhale completely. Repeat 10 times.

The purpose of this exercise: to encourage coordination of the flexors and extensors of the shoulders, hips and spine. To encourage diaphragmatic breathing.

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Static Extension Position



Instructions:

Place your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Move your hands forward from this position about 3 inches. Shift your weight forward until your shoulders are directly over your wrists and your hips are about 6 inches in front of your knees. Allow your chest to sink toward the floor and your shoulder blades to collapse in toward your spine. Lift your tail bone arching your lower back and allow your head to hang down. Hold this position for 2 min.

The purpose of this exercise: This exercise promotes lumbar (lower back) and thoracic (mid back) extension with bilateral (both sides at the same time) hip demand and encourages proper position of shoulder blades on the upper back.

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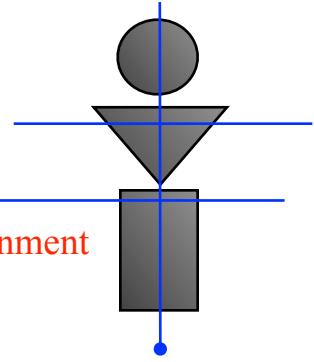


Figure 4 Lift



Instructions:

Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet and knees shoulder width apart. Cross your right leg over your left so that your legs resemble a #4. Keep your hips level (your belt line should be straight across) and lift your left foot off of the ground. Relax your upper body and abdomen. Pull your left knee toward your body and push your right knee out and away. Keep your left knee and ankle lined up with your left hip, do not let your foot drift toward the center line of your body. Hold this position for one minute on each side.

The purpose of this exercise: to encourage pelvic stability through the hip flexors and external rotators.