



Created by **Tom Scotto / Cycling Fusion**

Training Type: **Intermediate**

Working HR Zones: **Zone 3 & 4**

Cycling Specificity: **3**

Total Class Length: **60 minutes**

PROFILE DESCRIPTION

This class provides a perfect ride for the early months of the year (Jan-Mar) when riders are returning to our classes after the holidays and some time off the bike. This is also an ideal workout for outdoor riders interested in enhancing their base building program because it focuses on lower-intensity intervals that condition the cardiovascular system without over-taxing the body too early in the season.

OBJECTIVE AND INTENSITY

This profile introduces riders to yet another type of interval – the Aerobic Cruise Interval”. These are longer sustained efforts at an intensity that is between our 2 ventilatory thresholds (VT1 and VT2). Basically, this falls just above our comfort zone and the point we start to become breathless (Zones 3 & 4). It takes a good amount of discipline to maintain this steady-state effort, plus in the early season, this may be perceived “harder” than expected since our conditioning is naturally lower.

In addition to the discipline, this target intensity provides a perfect level of “stress” (just above VT1) to produce adaptation in our bodies aerobic stamina and efficiency. In reality, it is this level of intensity where much of our riding throughout the year falls. However, during the early months of the year we are not ready for long bouts in Zones 3 and 4, so this is a great way to start appropriately restoring our aerobic conditioning.

Intermediate Recovery

It is important to point out to your riders that this type of profile does not provide much recovery. Why? Because we are not continually pushing near or into Zone 5 (capacity) and thus the longer, more frequent recovery times are not necessary. We are again leveraging “duration” over intensity as our stimulus. All of our efforts will be between 4:00 and 7:00 minutes. This duration is usually enough to force most of our indoor riders much below Zone 5 in order to maintain a steady effort.

Optimal Leg Speeds

Since cadences BELOW 80 RPM (with appropriate resistance) can place a greater stress on the muscles of the legs and cadences ABOVE 80 RPM emphasize the cardiovascular system, what speed should we target? Correct, leg speeds at or above 80 RPM will provide the best platform for reaping the value of these sustained aerobic efforts.

THE PROFILE

WARM-UP

Length: 11:00 Minutes

Intensity: 50-70% PE / Zone 1-3

Cadence: 100/84 RPM

Besides the usual safety and guidelines speech, take this valuable opportunity to educate your riders. I start with an easy flat road as I introduce the class objective and give them some things to explore during our ride. After 5 to 6 minutes, we'll progress into some rolling hills and push the intensity to Zone 3, wandering into Zone 4 occasionally.

"This is one of my favorite rides because it puts us under some "good" stress for long periods of time. We are going to be targeting a very uncomfortable level of intensity – just above our endurance effort and below the point we start to become breathless. It can be tough because, mentally we either want to shut it down or step on the gas and blow up. Neither is an option."

"For those of us that know our thresholds, we are going to be working between ventilatory threshold 1 (VT1) and ventilatory threshold 2 (VT2)."

"Before you get prideful and think this is not going to be a hard ride, keep in mind that very little recovery will be provided in order to keep this steady level of stress on our body. Usually I tell you to take some time to recovery if you over-shoot your ability, but today I want you to take a different approach. During this ride, if you over-shoot your ability, I ONLY want you to back down a little bit and see if you can re-establish your effort. If not, back down a little bit more until you can stabilize."

"One last note to those of you that are outdoor riders building base. This is a great workout to assist in your aerobic conditioning but NOT a substitute for those long hours in the saddle. 60-minute indoor cycling classes are not the place to building that kind of endurance so make sure you are getting your saddle time in addition to this class."

Aerobic Cruise Interval Primer

Length: 5:00 Minutes

Intensity: 70-80% PE / Zone 3-4

Cadence: 100 RPM

Introduce your riders to the "Aerobic Cruise Interval" which is just a cooler name for these endurance efforts. Each effort will begin with 30 to 60 seconds for riders to slowly add resistance in order to increase their intensity to the appropriate level. Many times trying to jump directly into the desired intensity will result in over-shooting the mark, making it difficult to stabilize our effort.

"Hopefully you are ready to explore our Aerobic Cruise Interval. First we need to find our cruising altitude. So this first interval will be just that – exploration. We will first take 1 minute

to slowly increase our resistance while we maintain a steady cadence. Then we'll try to stabilize at this intensity for a minute."

"The question is 'are we working too hard or too easy?' Add some resistance while maintain your cadence and see how your heart rate responds. If your breathing starts to wander into a breathless state, you are pushing too hard. Back it down."

"Now to confirm we are at the proper intensity, ease off of the resistance a bit and see if your body falls back into your comfort zone. If it does, add the resistance back."

"If you have a heart-rate monitor and know your thresholds and training zones, just observe how you feel TODAY as you put yourself in Zones 3 and 4. If you have a heart-rate monitor and don't know your thresholds, make note of the heart rate you have stabilized on. This will be your target or 'sweet spot' for each effort."

2 Back-to Back Aerobic Cruise Intervals

Length: 9:30 Minutes

Intensity: 70-80% PE / Zone 3-4

Cadence: 95/85 RPM

We will perform 2 back-to-back efforts. First we will take 60 seconds for a breather and then slowly return back to our "sweet spot". The first interval will be 5 minutes, followed by 30 seconds to take a breather before the next 4-minute interval.

"Our first step as we begin is to take the first 60 seconds to slowly bring ourselves to the target intensity. This will keep us from over-shooting the runway."

"We are going to keep the first interval steady. Remember, we are ALWAYS learning and exploring our fitness. So if you still want to experiment with the optimum cadence and intensity, please feel free."

"We are approaching the end of our first 5 minutes. You have an option. You can take a 30-second breather and then jump back in for another 4 minutes OR you can skip the breather and try to keep it steady for a total of 9 minutes and 30 seconds."

NOTE: It is important to provide intermediate time checks whenever you are expecting riders to remain steady and motivated over a longer period of time.

"Excellent work. We have 2 minutes remaining. Take a moment to focus on your breathing. Take a deep breath in and then take just as long to exhale. Keep the cadence and resistance the same and see if with this breathing technique you can calm your body."

RECOVERY

Length: 4:00 Minutes

Intensity: 60-70% PE / Zone 1 (2)

Cadence: 80 - 90 RPM

It should take riders approximately 1 minute to restore their breathing to a comfortable level. If it takes them 2 minutes to pull it back together, they are working too hard. If they can recover in 15 seconds, they should try taking it up a notch during the next set.

“I like what I’m seeing. You are embracing ‘real training’ which will pay huge dividends in your fitness when it counts. Anyone can push hard and blow-up. That never impresses me. If you want to impress me, perform something that requires discipline. Yes, I want you to find the ‘uncomfortable’ and stay there.”

2 Back-to-Back Cruise Intervals (Plus)

Length: 12:00 Minutes

Intensity: 70-80% PE / Zone 3-4

Cadence: 90 RPM

Nothing like disturbing the balance to see if (1) we are working at the right intensity and (2) seeing if we have the ability to re-stabilize after something alters our tempo.

“The first 6 minutes will be very similar to what we did earlier – except we have added more ‘duration’ to our interval.”

“After the first 6 minutes you will again have the option to either take a 30-second breather or continue at your steady-state effort.”

“During the second cruise interval we are going to perform 15-second standing efforts – 1 each minute. These standing efforts will raise your heart rate. You have 2 objectives if you choose to accept them (1) try to remain relaxed when you stand to limit how much your heart rate increases and (2) see if you can quickly restore your heart rate once you return to the saddle.”

“Relaxed fluid motion out of the saddle and breathing technique will be your best weapon in remaining as steady as possible.”

RECOVERY

Length: 4:00 Minutes

Intensity: 60-70% PE / Zone 1 (2)

Cadence: 80 - 90 RPM

Another time for riders to recovery and see how quickly their body responds when backing off the tempo and resistance.

Encourage riders to stand on some “easy” rolling hills to stretch the legs and give their butt a break from the saddle.

Last Aerobic Cruise Interval

Length: 4:30 Minutes

Intensity: 70-80% PE / Zone 3-4

Cadence: 90 RPM

At this point riders should be honing in on that sweet spot and also beginning to fatigue. We will end with one last aerobic cruise interval, but of course, increase our challenge.

“We have only one aerobic cruise interval left. Only 4 minutes and 30 seconds.”

“We are going to see if we can stabilize in only 30 seconds. Then you have the option to either remain at your steady-state effort until the end or accept our final challenge.”

“During the second half of our last set we attempted short 15-second standing efforts to disturb our cruising altitude with a goal of seeing how well we could control and restore our ‘sweet spot’. For this last interval we are going to experiment with 30-second standing efforts.”

“30 seconds provides more time for the heart rate to exponentially increase and less time between standing efforts to restore our steady-state. See what you can do. How relaxed can you be?”

“You always have the option to skip a standing effort if you feel another one will push you beyond the point of no return. Consider this another chance to test your body and learn.”

COOL-DOWN / STRETCH

Length: 10:00 Minutes

Intensity: 50-60% PE / Zone 1 (2)

Cadence: 100 / 90 RPM

I recommend taking the first 4 minutes to allow riders to spin their legs and cool-down reducing their heart rate and body temperature. Since we spent a considerable time seated, I will sometimes throw in a few “lazy” hills to get them out of the saddle. Just keep them focus on the cool-down and reducing their heart rate. Use the last 6 minutes for stretching or allow riders to choose to stay on the bike if needed.

This is a good time to review not just what your riders accomplished but how they felt during each interval and each set. How well were they able to stabilize their heart rate when NO disruptions were introduced? Were they able to keep from blowing up when performing short standing efforts?

Don't skip over this self-awareness! Riders often only want those high-intensity classes because they believe they are best for developing their fitness. This is an opportunity to show them another way to challenge themselves and another aspect of conditioning that provides tremendous value. Remember, our classes represent: Real Cycling, Real Training and Real Results (that's my motto).

THE MUSIC:

Song Title	Time	BPM	Artist	Focus
Incident At Gate 7	6:29	100	Thievery Corp	Warm-Up
Tidal Flat	5:25	84	Guardner	Warm-Up / Hills
Greedy Fingers	5:10	100	Down to the Bone	Cruise Interval Primer
The Chamber	5:37	96	Neal Schon	Aerobic Cruise Interval
New Last Jam	4:16	84	Joe Satriani	Aerobic Cruise Interval
Jade	4:21	88	Jens Buchert	Recovery
Electra Glide	6:57	92	Down to the Bone	Aerobic Cruise Interval
In a Gentle Way	5:34	88	Kiko Loureiro	Aerobic Cruise Interval
Transcendence	4:08	92	Thievery Corp	Recovery
Phunk Pi	4:47	88	Neil Zaza	Aerobic Cruise Interval
Mellow	5:43	100	Tetris	Cool-Down
Invisible Love	5:01	95	Enigma	Stretch