



Created by **Jim Karanas, Team ICG® Master Trainer – Indoorcycling Group®** in partnership with **LIVESTRONG® Fitness by Matrix**

Training Type: **Intermediate to Advanced**

Working HR Zones: **Zone 3-5**

Class Length: **60 minutes**

PROFILE DESCRIPTION

A **criterium**, or **crit**, is a bike race held on a short course (usually less than 5 km), often run on closed-off city center streets. Race length can be determined by a number of laps or total time, in which case the number of remaining laps is calculated as the race progresses. Generally the event's duration (commonly one hour) is shorter than that of a traditional road race.

Race-Day rides have been part of indoor cycling since it began. However, few instructors use the profile effectively. The Criterium is the most fun and simplest race to simulate in an indoor environment. Also, you don't have to have raced a crit to cue this workout. It is, in my opinion, the easiest and most fun race-day workout to offer your students.

Your workout can approach the duration of an actual criterium. A crit is often 20 laps of a circuit that takes between 2-4 minutes to ride depending on the pace of the peloton.

To view a criterium in its entirety see:

<http://myworldfromabicycle.blogspot.com/2011/02/this-american-bicycle-race.html>

The recommendation for a class simulation:

15 min warm-up

40 min race simulation

5 min cool-down

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this profile is to allow riders to experience the race-level effort required for a criterium.

Simulating a criterium can provide a diverse and exciting workout. If cued well, the students will be encouraged to sustain a high-intensity effort almost the entire duration of the simulation. A crit is ridden at a threshold level of effort with several surges that take the heart rate to a near max effort. Crits do not have to be flat. Though there are no climbs, the inclusion of a small hill will go a long way to the students maintaining a threshold level of effort. Prime (pronounced "preem") laps, attacks, and sprints are the tools added to elevate the intensity to a near maximum effort.

This can be a very strenuous profile but is also easily modified to be an endurance workout for those that do not want to work hard that day.

Warm-Up

Every crit I have ever ridden started at maximum intensity. Because of the lack of climbs to break apart the peloton, the race leaders attempt to create separation in the first few laps. Hence, at least a 15-20 minute, progressive warm-up is necessary to prepare for the start of the simulation. This is necessary to increase body temperature, shunt blood and prepare the muscles for peak efforts.

Sample crit profile

A crit is a circuit race that is not raced at a continuous level of effort. Even though the recovery effort never drops below threshold, there is a surge-and-recover manner to the race that makes it easier for students to participate all the way through.

I find it best to define the loop's terrain to the class and then actually vary the time it takes to complete a loop based on how hard I am asking the students to race at any particular time. Surge laps are completed faster than laps raced at threshold.

To keep it simple for this profile, a standard loop performed at a threshold effort (the lowest intensity endured for the 40 minutes) will take 4 minutes. The

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racecourse is a square with 1 minute dedicated for each leg. The 2nd leg has a small hill with a gradient of 5% in the back half. The 3rd leg has a descent in the front half. So, the loop is:

- 1st leg – 60 sec flat
- 2nd leg – 30 sec flat/30 sec standing climb
- 3rd leg – 30 sec descent/30 sec flat
- 4th leg – 60 sec flat

However, when the peloton is racing at greater than threshold, the loop only takes 3 minutes to complete with only 45 seconds being dedicated to each leg. When you cue the loop going at this speed you are simulating the opening few laps, prime laps and the final 1-2 laps of the race. It actually encourages the students to work harder because a lap takes less time.

The suggested profile for this crit is 12 laps:

- Laps 1-3: 3 min/lap
- Laps 4,5: 4 min/lap
- Lap 6: Prime (3 min lap)
- Lap 7,8: 4 min/lap
- Lap 9: Prime (3 min lap)
- Lap 10: 4 min lap
- Lap 11, 12: 3 min/lap

Total time 41 minutes

Limited Recovery

It will be important to point out that the recovery offered in the profile is limited and should stay close to a threshold level of effort. That means it never feels easy but you can keep riding.

Letting riders know the amount of recovery they will have will enable them to prepare for the near max efforts. Provide the recovery in terms of race legs and laps (e.g. recover for 1 leg or 1 lap).

THE PROFILE

WARM-UP

Length: 7:00
Intensity: 3-4 RPE
Cadence: 90-110 RPM

Center the rider and provide an overview of the ride's objective.

Roll your legs with little to no resistance on the bike.

Today we are going to race a criterium. This is a race-day class that will target an effort of 85 to 100% of your perceived effort. This is a high-intensity workout so it is important that you monitor your body throughout the class. There will be no satisfactory recovery until the race is over. After warm-up, we will race for 41 minutes.

A criterium is a form of circuit race. We will do laps where the terrain will repeat, so you know what's coming. Depending on how hard I cue you to ride, a lap will take either 3 or 4 minutes. You need to hang for 12 laps to complete the race.

Also, remember that form is more important than performance. It is better to use less resistance or less leg speed if trying to do more will cause you to lose your form. If you find your form wavering at any point, reduce your effort and focus on your form until you can recapture it.

INTENSITY RAMP

Length: 8:00
Intensity: 6-7 RPE
Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Prepare to race by riding the course.

We are going to do 2 warm-up laps of the course. This way you know what the terrain is like. Each lap will take 4 minutes and I want you bring up your intensity for each lap. At the end of the 2 warm-up laps, we will proceed immediately into

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the race effort. I will ask you to raise your intensity to an RPE of no less than 8 at that time.

The course is a square. The first leg is flat. Stay in the saddle, pedal at 80-90 RPM and increase your effort to an RPE of 6. The first leg takes 1 minute.

As we take our first corner into the 2nd lap I want you to stand and jog at 80-90 RPM for 10 pedal strokes then go back to the saddle. Do that now. Separation often occurs out of the corners so we will be performing several of these jumps throughout the race. This leg has a short hill that will take 20-30 seconds to climb. Here it is. Increase the resistance, drop your cadence to 70-80 RPM, stand up and drive to the top of this hill.

The next corner is soft and leads into a short descent to start the 3rd leg. Release the resistance and spin down this hill for 30 seconds. 90-100 RPM. As we hit the flat, increase the resistance and drop the cadence back to 80-90 RPM for 30 seconds. Do that now.

As we take the 3rd and final corner, let's jump again for 10 pedal strokes. The 4th leg is flat for 1 minute.

Repeat a second warm-up lap raising the level of effort to an RPE of 7.

THE RACE

LAPS 1-3

Length: 9:00

Intensity: 8-10 RPE

Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Ride like hell. Don't get dropped.

Here we go. The first few laps of every crit are about survival. I need you to bring your effort up to threshold or above. Give me an RPE of 8 or 9. The peloton is moving at breakneck speed and we don't want to get dropped. Because of how fast we're going, we will get through these laps faster than the warm-up laps.

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Each lap will take 3 minutes. Hang on for 9 minutes and you'll be able to stay with the leaders for the entire race.

Cue the laps similarly to the warm-up laps with regard to terrain but manage the timing so they are hitting each corner after 45 seconds as opposed to 1 minute. Encourage the added effort but also a sense of pace. You want them to maintain this intensity for 9 minutes. Don't add any additional sprints or attacks in the first 3 laps. Just make it about hanging on.

LAPS 4-5

Length: 8:00

Intensity: 8-9 RPE

Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Settle down and watch for attacks.

Awesome job hanging with leaders. Reduce the resistance and spin for the first leg of this lap but don't recover too much. Maintain an RPE of at least 8. If you have a HRM or power meter, select a target that you will not go below. The pace is going to pick back up shortly. Stay in the saddle for the first corner but watch for attacks. The leaders will likely throw in some surges to shake off more riders. Each lap will take 4 minutes.

At 1:30 of the 4th lap, have everyone sprint up the hill.

Here they go. You lose them now you might as well go home!

Finish laps 4 and 5 encouraging a continued effort at an RPE of 8 by peppering in attacks, jumps and sprints.

LAP 6

Length: 3:00

Intensity: 9-10 RPE

Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Prime lap. Winner gets a bottle of olive oil and \$20.

If you have a bell, bring it and ring it at the start of this lap.

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A bell is usually rung to announce to the riders that whoever wins the next lap, wins the prime (pronounced preem). Bring the intensity back up and let's see who win this prime. We'll get through this lap in 3 minutes.

It's only 1 lap so you have to hang on. Bring the intensity up again and stay with the leaders.

Cue the lap similarly to Laps 1-3 but add a sprint for the last 30 seconds of the 4th leg.

LAPS 7-8

Length: 8:00

Intensity: 8-9 RPE

Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Settle down and watch for attacks.

No spinning here. The leaders don't go for the prime. Maintain an RPE of at least 8. If you have a HRM or power meter, select a target that you will not go below. The pace is just dropping slightly. These are 4-minute laps.

Here we go. The leaders are attacking after the first corner. Jump and run for 10 pedal strokes. Hit the saddle and take the effort up to a 9. They are going to blast up the hill in an effort to split the peloton. Stand on the hill with added resistance and run as hard as you can. 30 seconds. Sit as we summit and drop the resistance but it looks like they are going to work the downhill. Pedal hard at 100 RPM with as much resistance as you can.

At 2:30 of the 7th lap, have everyone recover for 30 seconds.

Lost some bodies on that one. Great job hanging on. The peloton was obliterated. Catch your breath. You're still up front.

Finish laps 7 and 8 encouraging a continued effort at an RPE of 8 by peppering in attacks, jumps and sprints.

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LAP 9

Length: 3:00
Intensity: 9-10 RPE
Cadence: 80-100 RPM

**Prime lap. Winner gets a bottle of wine and an inner tube.
If you have a bell, bring it and ring it at the start of this lap.**

I hate primes. Okay, bring the intensity back up and hang on. We'll get through this lap in 3 minutes.

Cue the lap similarly to Lap 6.

LAP 10

Length: 4:00
Intensity: 8-9 RPE
Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Catch your breath. Final respite.

You've all been doing great. The leaders are not going for anything on this lap. Ride at an RPE of 8 and take a breather. This is our final reprieve. Let's get ready the finish.

Cue Lap 10 without any attacks or sprints. At this time the leaders will be getting ready for the final effort of Laps 11 and 12.

LAPS 11-12

Length: 6:00
Intensity: 9-10 RPE
Cadence: 80-100 RPM

Ride like hell. Don't get dropped. Sprint to the finish

We finish as we started. I need you to bring your effort up to threshold or above. Give me an RPE of 9. The race is over in 6 minutes.

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Cue the laps similarly to Laps 1-3 but add jumps and sprints and frequent attacks. Encourage the added effort but remember they have to last for 6 minutes. You want them to maintain this intensity and finish with a 30 second sprint.

COOL DOWN

Length: 4:00

Intensity: 2-3 RPE

Cadence: 100 RPM

Recover completely.

Pro racers will ride crits at 30-35 mph. Success requires a mix of good technical skills — in particular, the ability to corner smoothly while "holding your line" on the road, as well as rapidly and sharply — and riding safely with a large group on a short circuit and exceptional "sprint" ability to attack other riders and repeatedly accelerate hard from corners.

In amateur racing it is more about survival as lack of skill leads to frequent crashes and pile-ups.

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Song		Time	Artist	BPM/RPM	Focus
Love on a Real Train		7:02	Tangerine Dream	110/110	Warm-up
Tribal Force		8:01	Klangstrahler Projekt	90/80-100	Ramp
Born This Way	4:20	9:00	Lady GaGa	128/80-100	Laps 1-3
Anytime Swingers	4:40		BeBo Best	108/80-100	
Street Violin	3:58	7:59	Josh Vietti	100/80-100	Laps 4-5
Delirious	4:01		Prince	100/80-100	
Can't Stop Rockin'		3:03	ZZ Top	160/80-100	Lap 6
L.A. Woman	4:04	7:59	Billy Idol	90/80-100	Laps 7-8
Khaleegi Stomp	3:55		Transglobal Underground	90/80-100	
Guero Canelo		3:00	Calexico	90/80-100	Lap 9
Winds of Sand		4:00	Atlas Plug	136/80-100	Lap 10
Absurd		5:59	Fluke	128/80-100	Lap 11-12
Stylish		4:00	Superagua	100/100	Cool-down