

SPORTS MEDICINE

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Post-Cycling Exercises To Prevent Strain

Cycling involves prolonged sitting in a forward-bent position (flexion). The soft tissues that cross the hip and spine (including the ligaments, facet joints, and disc) can become strained in this flexed position. This is due to the fact that tissues have viscoelastic properties with time-dependent mechanical behavior. These tissues can then deform, or creep, increasing the risk for injury. If the load is applied long enough the tissue will be unable return to its previous (normal) length.

To reduce the strain and decrease the tissue deformation after a long ride, we need to reverse, or undo, the flexed position of the hips and spine. Try to avoid sitting just after riding, and follow this simple mobility exercise regime.

Post-Ride Exercises:

1. Lie on your stomach with your elbows directly under your shoulders and prop with your hips on the floor. Allow your head to drop slightly forward and hold this position for 3 - 5 minutes (*Photo 1*).
2. Place a foam roller on the floor and sit in front of it with your knees bent. Hold your neck with your hands and lean backwards over the roller, starting between your shoulder blades. Move your head and elbows together as you pivot over the roller (*Photo 2*). Second, rest your shoulders on the floor with your hips up. Push with your feet and pivot your low back over the roller (*Photo 3*). Perform 10 reps each segment, working up and down your spine in a slow and controlled manner with minimal pain.
3. Place one foot up on a chair and lean forward until you feel a stretch in front of the side on the floor; hold for 30 seconds and switch legs. Repeat until you have stretched for 2 minutes/each side (*Photo 4*).

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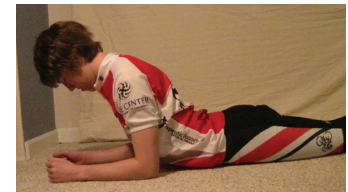


Photo 1

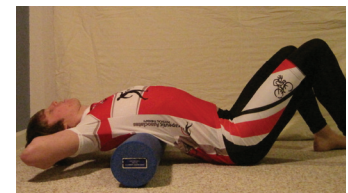


Photo 2

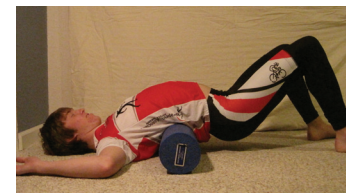


Photo 3

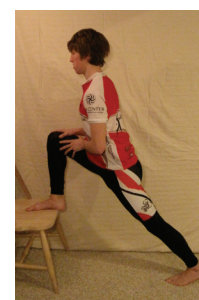


Photo 4