



CORE TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS

by Tony Fahkry www.befit4life.com.au

If you're a recreational or racing cyclist, you may benefit from the following exercises designed to strengthen and stabilise your *Core* or *Inner Unit*.

I can hear the sigh of frustration. As if you didn't have enough training to do, some bloke is advising strength training as well! "But I hate gyms", I hear people saying. These exercises may be performed twice weekly during an off season, with great long lasting benefits.

Please note: the exercises outlined here are general in their function, though applicable for cycling. I would suggest consulting with a health professional prior to starting a program, if you are new to training. There are many factors for this disclaimer, though injury and progressive overload are two main ones that spring to mind.

Allow me to clarify some terms outlined below in the exercises and their execution.

Reps: The number of repetitions performed during a set.

Sets: Several exercises completed in a series, which consist of reps.

Intensity: The level at which you perform the exercises. -2 indicate stopping 2 reps short of exhaustion with perfect form.

Tempo: The speed at which the exercises are performed in order to maximise time under tension.

Rest: Is essential between sets in order to allow recovery for the next load of exercises.

1. Swiss Ball Oblique Crunches Against Wall

Find a position against a wall and lie over the Swiss Ball so that your hip is on the apex of the ball. Start in the pictured position, with arms across the chest, leaning over the ball as you transition through the movement.

Note: This is a great exercise for the co-contraction of the internal & external obliques which stabilise the pelvic girdle during cycling.

Reps: 12 – 16

Sets: 3

Intensity: -2

Rest: 60 – 90 secs

Tempo: 2:1:2





2. Prone Cobra on Swiss Ball

Lying over the Swiss Ball so that the apex of the ball falls in-between the navel and just over the groin area. Start in the flexed or lying over the ball position. Palms are facing the roof. Contract your glutes and draw your shoulder blades together as you extend through the movement. Externally rotate the arms with thumbs up as though performing the “Fonzie” salute. Maintain head in line with spine.

Note: A good exercise for those who are quad dominant cyclists and require glute & middle – lower trapezius activation. Also facilitates strengthening of the lumbar extensor muscles necessary for keeping you in the riding position for hours.

Reps: 12 – 16

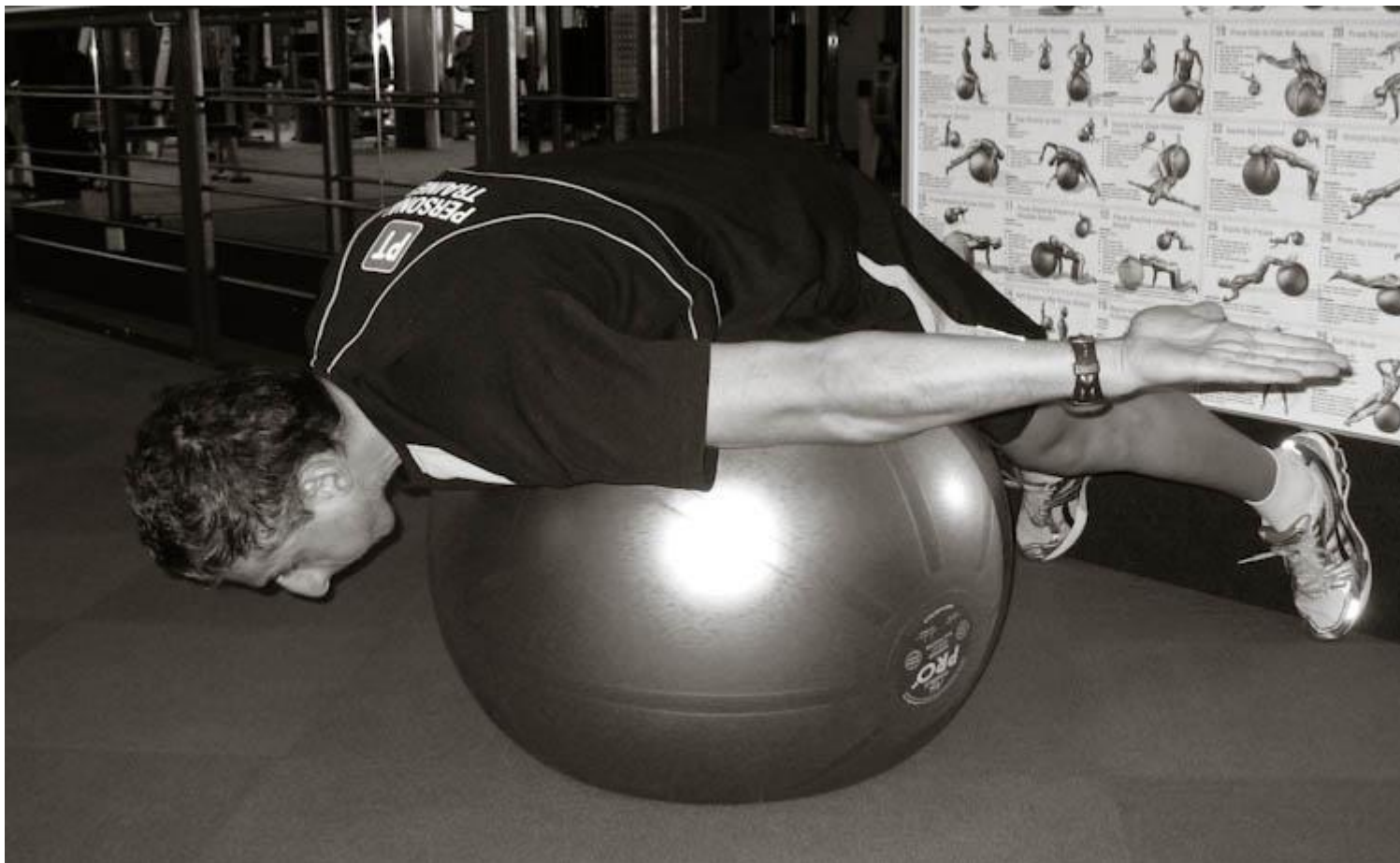
Sets: 3

Intensity: -2

Rest: 60 – 90 secs

Tempo: 4:4:4





3. Quadruped Alternating Superman

Start on all fours on the ground. Wrist stacked below shoulder & knee directly under hips, so the body forms a square shape. Draw navel to spine, while maintaining a neutral spine. Extend opposite arm & opposite leg straight out and to a 45° deg angle to the spine. Be sure hips do not rock from side to side.

Note: Great movement for thoracic and pelvic stabilisation. You will certainly see which side you are weak on when performing this exercise. Strengthens the lumbar & thoracic muscles which are essential for stabilising the trunk & pelvis in cycling.

Reps: 10 – 12

Sets: 3

Intensity: -0

Rest: 60 – 90 secs

Tempo: Hold for 3 – 10 seconds



4. Prone Jackknife on Swiss Ball

Start with arms resting on the apex of the Swiss Ball. Be sure to choose the right size ball based on your height. Draw navel to spine. Roll forward with simultaneous motion at the hip and shoulder joints. Only go as far as you can while holding perfect spinal alignment. At no time should you feel any pressure in your low back nor should your head drop down.

Hold for the prescribed number of seconds and then roll backward, breathing out through pursed lips as you come back.

Note: Another great exercise for cyclists as it trains the co-contraction of the *Inner Unit* musculature. It also facilitates stability & strength of the core for those longer rides.

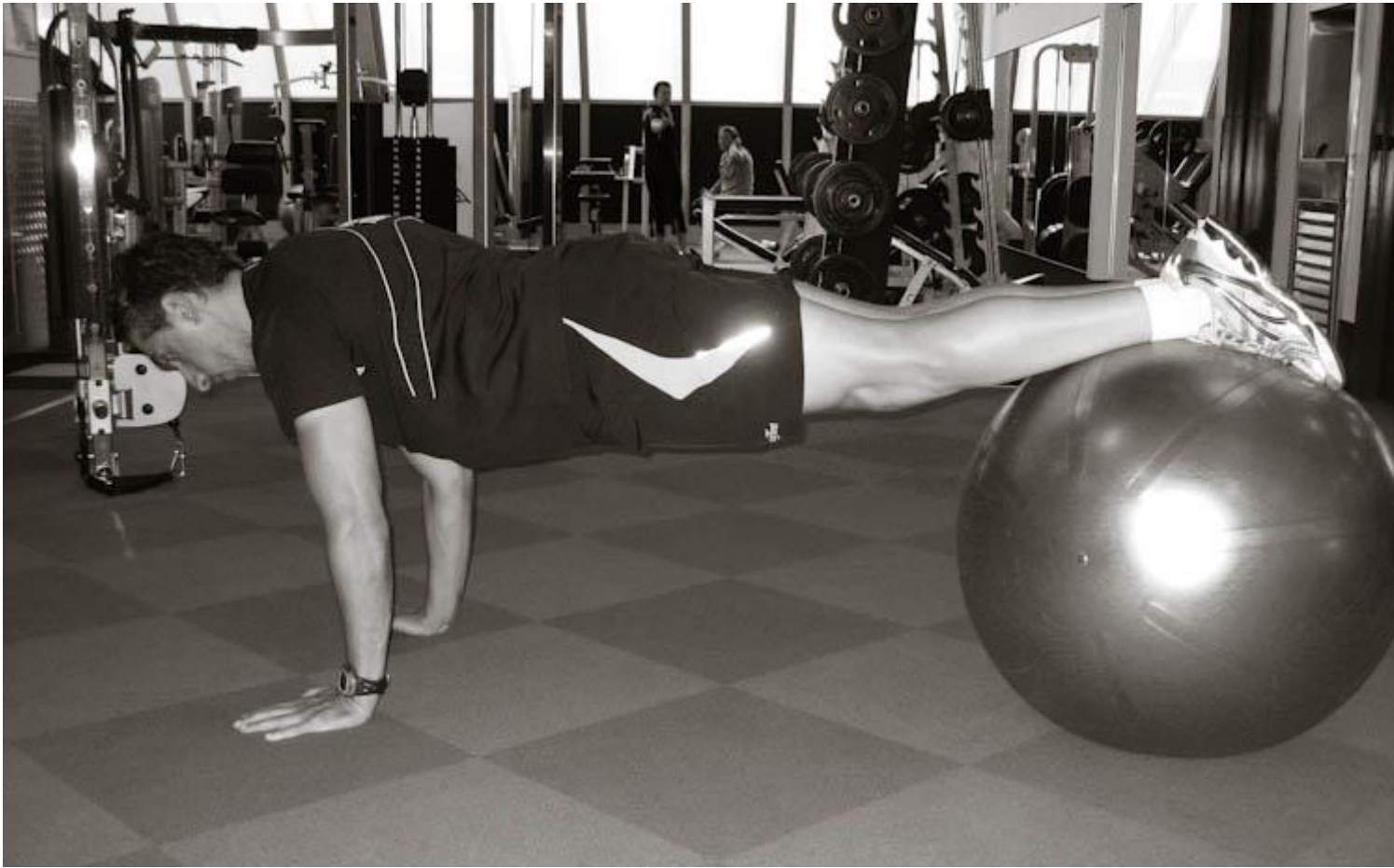
Reps: 10 – 12

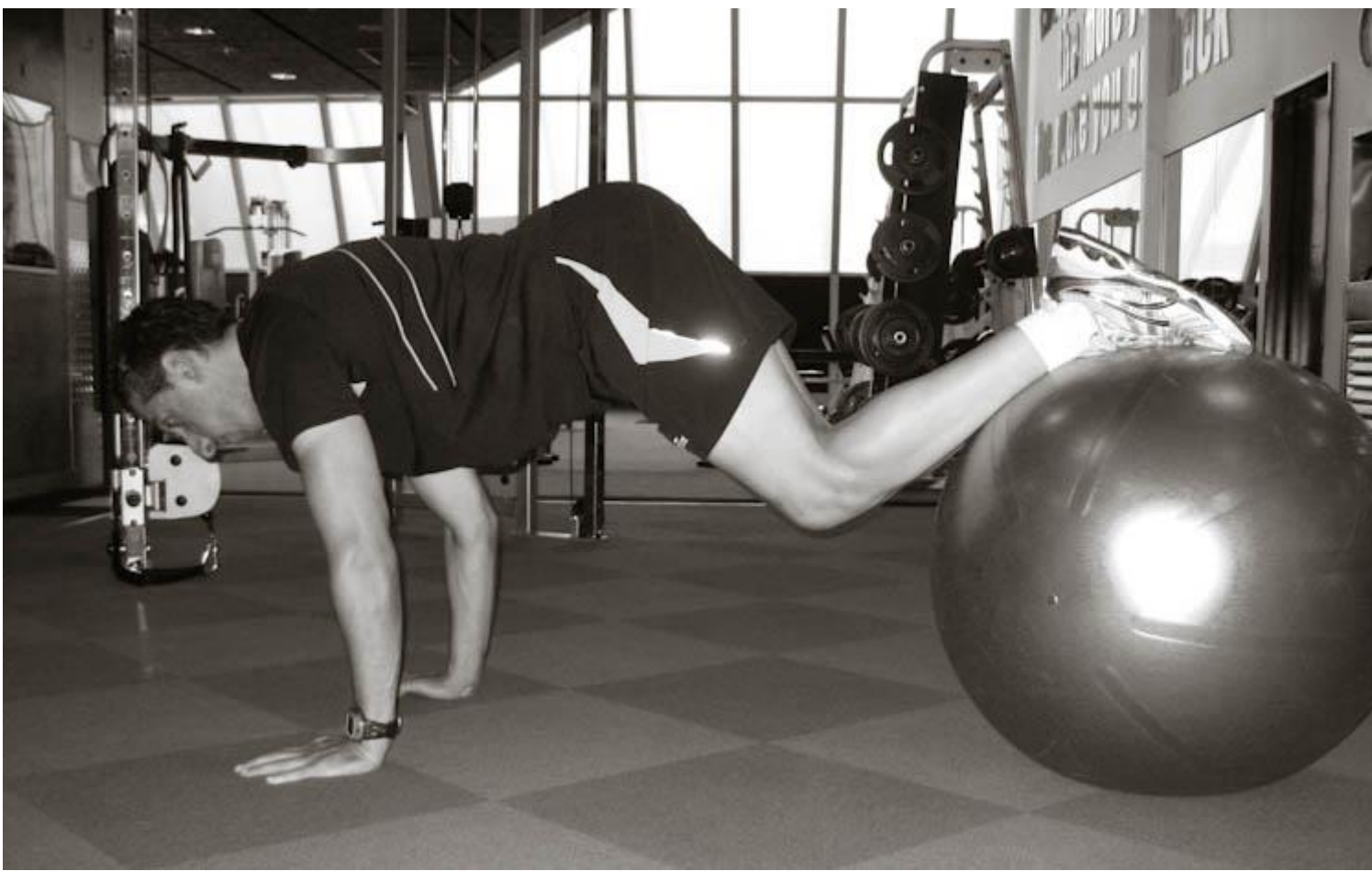
Sets: 3

Intensity: -2

Rest: 60 – 90 secs

Tempo: 3:1:3





5. Standing Cable Woodchops. High ->Low

Start with shoulders back and down, head straight up. Begin the action by driving from the pelvis. Lean from one side of the body to the other side by initiating a side movement. Grip the handle with outside hand first, then inside hand over to activate internal/external oblique's. The action should finish just past the knees, with trunk in an erect position.

Note: A fantastic twisting exercise which is important for any individual. Approx 93% of human muscle fibres are laid in a diagonal, which facilitates rotational work during exercise. Integrates left/right brain hemispheres and foot/ankle, knee & hip co-ordination.

Reps: 16 – 20

Sets: 3

Intensity: -2

Rest: 60 – 90 secs

Tempo: 2:0:2





6. Supine Lateral Swiss Ball Walkout

Lying supine on a Swiss ball, with head and shoulders on the ball. Legs should make a 90° angle with the ground and ankles should be in vertical alignment with the knees. Arms out to the side in a straight manner, holding a dowel rod where possible. Begin moving slowly from side to side; maintain straight hips and glutes squeezed throughout the movement. Exhale as you reach the side and cannot possibly go any further. Do not allow your head to drop or lose its position on the Swiss ball.

Note: Great exercise for glute/pelvic synergy & activation. Teaches stability and the spinal/pelvic muscles to strengthen & stabilise the Inner Unit.

Reps: 4 – 6 each side

Sets: 3

Intensity: -2

Rest: 60 secs

Tempo: 3:1:3

