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FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Fun with CycleFit

By Stephen Somerville

I like to jog outdoors in the summer to stay in some semblance of shape. Depending on the weather, I may instead run on one of the treadmills or partake in one of the cycle fit classes offered at the Aurora Leisure Complex.

On many Saturday mornings, to give my knees a break from the rigors of jogging on Aurora's sidewalks, I attend the 8:00 a.m. cycle fit class and it always is a most enjoyable class. On particular class stood out.

More on that particular class in a moment, but for those of you not familiar with one of the best-kept secrets in town, cycle fit is offered most days, with classes either forty-five minute or one hour in duration.

Music is played during the class, and riders go slower or faster, depending on the beat of the music. There is a knob that lets the rider tighten or loosen the tension on each bike.

What is best about the class is that you get the communal ?sharing of the pain,? as it were, with the added benefit that the work out really is your own. The person on the bike beside you could be a veteran cycle fit participant who has been doing this class for the past ten years and although you may be a rookie, you can both enjoy the same class, because you go at your own pace.

I find that after doing the treadmill at a good clip for say a half hour, my legs and lower back may be a little sore, but working at the same rate on the bike, and after a shower, leaves me refreshed and nothing aches.

I also find that it really improved my cardio, because of the varying length and tempo of the songs, so you are induced into a higher training zone.

The instructors at the Leisure Complex are collectively very good. They all use different music and bring varying personalities and routines to the class, and they will push you to get the most out of your class. Heck, I even wonder whether or not Elona, our Saturday morning instructor, is employed full-time as a prison warden!

But without a doubt the best thing about cycle fit is the social aspect. I have become friends with a number of the other riders. I guess a certain bond develops between fellow cyclers attempting to sweat off the pounds.

Two things about your first couple of cycle fit classes. Do pace yourself. The first time I did a forty-five minute class, I thought my heart was going to come out of my chest. And second and most important, unless you have been riding horses all your life or regularly cycle outdoors, your behind will hurt the first few times out. It seems that it takes about four classes for your rump to feel fine.

Now, back to that Saturday morning class.

When I showed up that morning and saw that there were only four other riders signed up for the class, I was not a happy camper. Cycle fit is usually one of those activities where more really is the merrier.

?Well?, I thought to myself, ?I am already here, so let's get this exercise over with as fast as possible, and move on with the rest of my day.?

As you can probably tell, I wasn't in a great mood; I was a little bit tired, and I was not feeling like the most energetic person that morning, but then something happened.

Elona - our instructor - showed up.

She has so much energy and enthusiasm to share with everyone, that within minutes, I was enjoying myself and conversing with my regular seatmate, Marc.

No matter how many people are signed up for the class, Elona keeps us all motivated and very much entertained.

As we were starting our ride, I asked Marc how his week had been.

We then began commiserating over our respective meals from the night before. I told Marc that I wasn't feeling particularly energetic or well as I had consumed three large pieces of Kentucky Fried Chicken, fries with gravy and copious quantities of coleslaw.

Marc laughed and said that he could go one better; he had four pieces of KFC, plus the sides as well as a bunch of the popcorn chicken.

We enlightened the rest of the class as to our gastronomical state and everyone had a good laugh!

With that Elona had us go through a couple of our ?favourites? ? the dreaded ?tabata? ? where you do eight sprints for a twenty second period with ten second rest periods in between.

We did two back to back sets!

Marc and I could feel the KFC oozing out our glands as we sweated alongside our fellow class mates.

The 45 minute class went too fast.
It was a lot of fun and I also had a great workout to boot. And unlike a run outside or on the treadmill, my knees or ankles don't ache afterwards!
New cycle fit members are most welcome!

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