

C.O.R.E CYCLING™

News From The Saddle

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FEBRUARY 2012



C.O.R.E CYCLING™
Creating the Optimal Ride Experience

New Year New Possibilities - part 2 ***Your Thoughts Are Affecting Your Ride***

How Indoor Cycling Can Make You Happier

So now we know that riding our bikes increases brain fitness (*January 2012, "Indoor Cycling is Good for your Brain"*). And you already know that riding your bike makes you feel great. What you may not know is that what you're *thinking* about in spin class and the *experience* the class provides actually *changes* the physical structure of your brain. (*I'll give you a moment to let that sink in*). As author Sharon Begley points out in her book "Train Your Mind - Change Your Brain" *the brain devotes more cortical real estate to functions that it's owner uses more frequently and shrinks the space devoted to activities rarely performed. That's why the brains of violinists devote more space to the region that controls the digits of the fingering hand*". So the physical experiences we've had lead to more neural connections taking up more space in our brains. However, even more fascinating is that merely *thinking* about an activity leads to the same changes. In a 1996 experiment at Harvard Medical School, neuroscientist Alvaro Pascual-Leone had volunteers practice a simple five finger exercise on the piano over 5 days for 2 hours each day. As expected the brain space devoted to these finger movements grew, taking over less used grey matter. Here's the amazing part, a separate group of volunteers were asked to simply *think* about doing the exercise (hands remained stationary) for the week, dedicating the same amount of *practice* time. Pascual-Leone found that the region of the

brain that controls piano playing finger movement expanded in the same way for volunteers who merely imagined playing the five finger exercise. *In other words, your thoughts are changing your brain.* While the implications of mental practice for mastering a skill are enormous (and well documented) the skill of *practicing happiness* is much more elusive. The idea that happy, joyful thoughts beget more happy, joyful thoughts is supported by the Hebbian theory (Dr. Donald Hebb) of "neurons that fire together wire together". Therefore, actively nurturing the positive emotions you experience in spin class *throughout* your day and not just for the hour you're in class will result in more neural connections devoted to *keeping* you happy. Relive the sense of accomplishment, the sheer joy of feeling your heart pound in your chest as you crest that final climb just in time for the morning sun to greet you. You catch yourself grinning at the thought that you've just made another *joyful* neural connection.

C.O.R.E Cycling Indoor Cycling Instructor Certification

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March 2012 - "Spinning Mindfully - Are You Paying Attention?"

Feb 11-12/12 University of Toronto (Miss), ON. Feb 25-26/12 Toronto, ON., Mar 10-11

University of Toronto (Miss)ON., Mar 17-18/12 Toronto, ON.

"RESPECT THE SPORT" - video <http://youtu.be/DxuY3QSPWc8>

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