# Sentences – Biking: Dictionary of Cycling Lingo

**aerobic**: exercise at an intensity that allows the body’s need for oxygen to be continually met.

* This intensity can be sustained for long periods.

**aerodynamic**: a design of cycling equipment or a riding position that reduces wind resistance; aero for short.

**anaerobic**: exercise above the intensity at which the body’s need for oxygen can be met.

* This intensity can be sustained only briefly.

**apex**: the sharpest part of a turn where the transition from entering to exiting takes place.

**attack**: an aggressive, high-speed jump away from other riders.

**audax**: sometimes uses as a synonym for randonneur.

* More formally, audax cycling

**balaclava**: a thin hood that covers the head and neck with an opening for the face.

* It’s worn under the helmet to prevent heat loss in cold or wet conditions.

**bead**: in tires, the edge along each side’s inner circumference that fits into the rim.

**blocking**: legally impeding the progress of opposing riders to allow teammates a better chance of success.

**blood glucose**: a sugar, glucose is the only fuel that can be used by the brain.

**blow up**: to suddenly be unable to continue at the required pace due to overexertion.

**bonk**: a state of severe exhaustion caused mainly by the depletion of glycogen in the muscles because the rider has failed to eat or drink enough.

* Once it occurs, rest and high-carbohydrate foods are necessary for recovery.

**boot**: a small piece of material used inside a tire to cover a cut in the tread or sidewall.

* Without it, the tube will push through and blow out.

**bottom bracket**: the part of the frame where the crankset is installed.

* Also, the axle, cups and bearings of a traditional crankset, or the axle, retainer rings and bearing cartridges of a sealed crankset.

**bpm**: abbreviation for beats per minute in reference to heart rate.

**break, breakaway**: a rider or group of riders that has escaped the pack.

**brevet**: a long-distance event used to qualifying riders for major randonnees such as Paris-Brest-Paris and Boston-Montreal-Boston.

* The typical brevet series has rides of 200, 300, 400 and 600 km.
* Pronounced “brevay.”

**bridge, bridge a gap**: to catch a rider or group that has opened a lead.

**bunch**: the main cluster of riders in a race.

* Also called the group, pack, field or peloton.

**bunny hop**: a way to ride over obstacles such as rocks or logs in which both wheels leave the ground.

**burning matches:** Just like there are only so many matches in a pack, a cyclist can only give a certain number of hard efforts in a ride before he or she is exhausted and “hits the wall.”

**cadence**: the number of times during one minute that a pedal stroke is completed.

* Also called pedal rpm.

**carbohydrate**: in the diet it is broken down to glucose, the body’s principal energy source, through digestion and metabolism.

* It is stored as glycogen in the liver and muscles.
* Carbo can be simple (sugars) or complex (bread, pasta, grains, fruits, vegetables), which contains additional nutrients.
* One gram of carbohydrate supplies four calories.

**cardiovascular**: pertaining to the heart and blood vessels.

**cassette**: the set of gear cogs on the rear hub.

* Also called a freewheel, cluster or block.

**catch air**: when both wheels leave the ground, usually because of a rise or dip in the riding surface.

**categories**: the division of racers based on ability and/or experience.

**century**: a 100-mile ride.

**chain suck**: when the chain sticks to the chainring teeth during a downshift and gets drawn up and jammed between the small ring and the frame.

**chainring**: a sprocket on the crankset.

* There may be one, two or three.
* Short version is ring.

**chainstay**: the thin frame tube that extends from the rear dropout to the bottom bracket, where the bike’s crankset is located.

* There is a chainstay on each side of the rear wheel.

**chasers**: those who are trying to catch a group or a lead rider.

**chondromalacia**: a serious knee injury in which there is disintegration of cartilage surfaces due to improper tracking of the kneecap.

* Symptoms start with deep knee pain and a crunching sensation during bending.

**circuit**: a course that is ridden two or more times to compose the race.

**circuit training**: a weight training technique in which you move rapidly from exercise to exercise without rest.

**cleat**: a metal or plastic fitting on the sole of a cycling shoe that engages the pedal.

**clincher**: a conventional tire with a separate inner tube.

**clydesdale**: a large rider.

**cog**: a sprocket on the rear wheel’s cassette or freewheel.

**contact patch**: the portion of a tire in touch with the ground.

**corncob**: a cassette in which each cog is only one tooth larger than the previous one.

* Also called a straight block.

**criterium**: a mass-start race covering numerous laps of a course that is normally about one mile or less in length.

**crosstraining**: combining sports for mental refreshment and physical conditioning, especially during cycling’s off-season.

**cyclocross**: a fall or winter event contested mostly or entirely off pavement.

* Courses include obstacles, steps and steep hills that force riders to dismount and run with their bikes.

**downshift**: to shift to a lower gear, i.e. a larger cog or smaller chainring.

**drafting**: riding closely behind another rider to take advantage of the windbreak (slipstream) and use about 20 percent less energy.

* Also called sitting in or wheelsucking.

**drivetrain**: the components directly involved with making the rear wheel turn, i.e. the chain, crankset and cassette.

* Also called the power train.

**dropout**: on a bike frame, the slots into which the front and rear wheel axles fit.

**drops**: the lower part of a down-turned handlebar typically found on a road bike.

* The curved portions are called the hooks.

**echelon**: a form of paceline in which the riders angle off behind each other to get maximum draft in a crosswind.

**elastomer**: a compressible, rubber-like material used to absorb shock in some suspension systems.

**electrolytes**: substances such as sodium, potassium, and chloride that are necessary for muscle contraction and maintenance of body fluid levels.

**endo**: to crash by going over the bike’s handlebar.

* Short for end over end.

**ergometer**: a stationary, bicycle-like device with adjustable pedal resistance used in physiological testing or for indoor training.

**fartlek**: a Swedish word meaning “speed play,” it is a training technique based on unstructured changes in pace and intensity.

* It can be used instead of timed or measured interval training.

**fat**: in the diet it is the most concentrated source of food energy, supplying nine calories per gram.

* Stored fat provides about half the energy required for low-intensity exercise.

**feed zone**: a designated area on a race course where riders can be handed food and drinks.

**field sprint**: the dash for the finish line by the main group of riders.

**fixed gear**: a direct-drive setup using one chainring and one rear cog, as on a track bike.

* When the rear wheel turns so does the chain and crank; coasting isn’t possible.

**full tuck**: an extremely crouched position used for maximum speed on descents.

**general classification**: the overall standings in a stage race.

* Often referred to as GC.

**glutes**: the gluteal muscles of the buttocks.

* They are key to pedaling power.

**glycogen**: a fuel derived as glucose (sugar) from carbohydrate and stored in the muscles and liver.

* It’s the primary energy source for high-intensity cycling.
* Reserves are normally depleted after about two-and-a-half hours of riding.

**glycogen window**: the period within an hour after exercise when depleted muscles are most receptive to restoring their glycogen content.

* By eating foods or drinking fluids rich in carbohydrate, energy stores and recovery are enhanced.

**gorp**: good ol’ raisins and peanuts, a high-energy mix for nibbling during rides.

* Can also include nuts, seeds, M&Ms, granola, etc.

**granny gear**: the lowest gear ratio, combining the small chainring with the largest cassette cog.

* It’s mainly used for very steep climbs. Named after the gear that grandmothers use most frequently.

**granny ring**: the smallest of the three chainrings on a triple crankset.

**half wheeler:** a rider who, when riding side by side, keeps his front wheel just a little bit ahead of the other rider and never lets the other rider catch up and ride evenly.

**hammer**: to ride strongly in big gears.

**hamstrings**: the muscle on the back of the thigh, not well developed by cycling.

**hanging in**: barely maintaining contact at the back of the pack.

**headset**: the parts at the top and bottom of the frame’s head tube, into which the handlebar stem and fork are fitted.

**hitting the wall:** synonymous with bonking, where you have run out of glycogen stores and are unable to continue at an endurance pace because you have not had enough to eat or drink.

**hybrid**: a bike that combines features of road and mountain bikes.

* Also called a cross bike.

**intervals**: a structured method of training that alternates brief, hard efforts with short periods of easier riding for partial recovery.

**jam**: a period of hard, fast riding.

**jump**: a quick, hard acceleration.

**lactate threshold (LT)**: the exertion level beyond which the body can no longer produce energy aerobically, resulting in the buildup of lactic acid.

* This is marked by muscle fatigue, pain and shallow, rapid breathing.
* Also called anaerobic threshold (AT).

**lactic acid**: a substance formed during anaerobic metabolism when there is incomplete breakdown of glucose.

* It rapidly produces muscle fatigue and pain.
* Also called lactate.

**LBS**: local bike shop.

**leadout**: a race tactic in which a rider accelerates to his maximum speed for the benefit of a teammate in tow.

* The second rider then leaves the draft and sprints past at even greater speed near the finish line.

**LSD**: long, steady distance.

* A training technique that requires a firm aerobic pace for at least two hours.

**mass start**: events such as road races, cross-country races and criteriums in which all contestants leave the starting line at the same time.

**metric century**: a 100-kilometer ride (62 miles).

**minuteman**: in a time trial, the rider who is one place in front of you in the starting order.

* So called because in most TTs riders start on one-minute intervals.

**motorpace**: to ride behind a motorcycle or other vehicle that breaks the wind.

**mudguards**: fenders.

**off the back**: describes one or more riders who have failed to keep pace with the main group.

* Also referred to as OTB.

**orthotics**: custom-made supports worn in shoes to help neutralize biomechanical imbalances in the feet or legs.

**overgear**: using a gear ratio too big for the terrain or level of fitness.

**overtraining**: deep-seated fatigue, both physical and mental, causedby training at an intensity or volume too great for adaptation.

**oxygen debt**: the amount of oxygen that must be consumed to pay back the deficit incurred by anaerobic work.

**paceline**: a group formation in which each rider takes a turn breaking the wind at the front before pulling off, dropping to the rear position, and riding the others’ draft until at the front once again.

**pack:** the main group of riders in a race or large event.

* Also often called the peloton.

**palmarès:**From the French word meaning ranking or prize list.

* A bike racer’s list of achievements, accomplishments or wins.

**panache**: flamboyance, verve, daring, style as displayed in road racing.

* See: Lance Armstrong in 2001 Tour de France.

**panniers**: large bike bags used by touring cyclists or commuters.

* Panniers attach to racks that place them low on each side of the rear wheel, and sometimes the front wheel.

**peak**: a relatively short period during which maximum performance is achieved.

**peloton**: the main group of riders in a race or large event.

**periodization**: the process of dividing training into specific phases by weeks or months.

**pinch flat**: an internal puncture marked by two small holes caused by the tube being squeezed against the rim.

* It results from riding into an object too hard for the air pressure in the tube.
* Also called a snakebite.

**power**: the combination of speed and strength.

**preload**: the adjustable spring tension in a suspension fork or rear shock.

* It determines how far the suspension compresses under body weight and how much travel remains to absorb impacts.

**presta**: the narrow European-style valve found on some inner tubes.

* A small metal cap on its end must be unscrewed before air can enter or exit.

**prime**: a special award given to the leader on selected laps during a criterium, or the first rider to reach a certain landmark in a road or cross-country race.

* It’s used to heighten the action.
* Pronounced “preem.”

**protein**: in the diet it is required for tissue growth and repair.

* Composed of structural units called amino acids.
* Protein is not a significant energy source unless not enough calories and carbohydrate are consumed.
* One gram of protein equals four calories.

**psi**: abbreviation for pounds per square inch.

* The unit of measure for tire inflation and air pressure in some suspensions.

**pull, pull through**: take a turn at the front.

**pull off**: to move to the side after riding in the lead so that another rider can come to the front.

**pusher**: a rider who pedals in a large gear at a relatively slow cadence, relying on the gear size for speed.

**quadriceps**: the large muscle in front of the thigh, the strength of which helps determine a cyclist’s ability to pedal with power.

**RAAM**: the Race Across America, contested from the west coast to the east every year since 1982.

**randonnee**: a long-distance event in which riders must navigate a prescribed course while passing through intermediate checkpoints within certain time limits.

**randonneur**: a rider who participates in randonnees.

**Randonneurs USA**: the event-sanctioning, record-keeping and informational organization for American randonneurs.

**reach**: the combined length of a bike’s top tube and stem, which determines the rider’s distance to the handlebar.

**repetition**: each hard effort in an interval workout.

* Also, one complete movement in a weight-training exercise; rep for short.

**resistance trainer**: a stationary training device into which the bike is clamped.

* Pedaling resistance increases with pedaling speed to simulate actualriding.
* Also known as an indoor, wind, fluid, or mag trainer (the last three names derived from the fan, liquid, or magnet that creates resistance on the rear wheel).

**road race**: a mass-start race on pavement that goes from point to point, covers one large loop or is held on a circuit longer than those used for criteriums.

**road rash**: any skin abrasion resulting from a fall.

* Also called crash rash.

**rollers**: an indoor training device consisting of three long cylinders connected by belts.

* Both bike wheels roll on these cylinders so that balancing is much like actual riding.

**saddle sores**: skin problems in the crotch that develop from chafing caused by pedaling action.

* Sores can range from tender raw spots to boil-like lesions if infection occurs.

**saddle time**: time spent cycling.

**sag wagon**: a motor vehicle that follows a group of riders, carrying equipment and lending assistance in the event of difficulty.

* Also called the broom wagon.

**Schrader**: an inner tube valve identical to those found on car tires.

* A tiny plunger in the center of its opening must be depressed for air to enter or exit.

**seatstay**: the thin frame tube that extends from the rear dropout to the top of the seat tube.

* There is a seatstay on each side of the rear wheel.

**set**: in intervals or weight training, a specific number of repetitions.

**singletrack**: a trail so narrow that two cyclists can’t easily ride side by side, which makes passing difficult or impossible.

**sit on a wheel**: to ride in someone’s draft.

**slingshot**: to ride up behind another rider with help from his draft, then use the momentum to sprint past.

**slipstream**: the pocket of calmer air behind a moving rider.

* Also called the draft.

**snakebite**: see pinch flat.

**snap**: the ability to accelerate quickly.

**soft-pedal**: to rotate the pedals without actually applying power.

**speed**: the ability to accelerate quickly and maintain a very fast cadence for brief periods.

**speedwork**: a general term for intervals and other high-velocity training, such as sprints, time trials and motorpacing.

**spin**: to pedal at high cadence.

**spinner**: a rider who pedals in a moderate gear at a relatively fast cadence, relying on pedal rpm for speed.

**squirrel**: a nervous or unstable rider who can’t be trusted to maintain a steady line.

**stage race**: a multi-day event consisting of various types of races.

* The winner is the rider with the lowest elapsed time for all races (stages).

**straight block**: a cassette with cogs that increase in size in one-tooth increments.

**suppleness**: a quality of highly conditioned leg muscles that allows a rider to pedal at high cadence with smoothness and power.

* Also known by the French term, souplesse.

**take a flyer**: to suddenly sprint away from a group.

**team time trial (TTT)**: a race against the clock with two or more riders working together.

**tempo**: fast riding at a brisk cadence.

**throw the bike**: a racing technique in which a rider thrusts the bike ahead of his or her body at the finish line, gaining several inches in hopes of winning a close sprint.

**time trial (TT)**: a race against the clock in which individual riders start at set intervals and cannot give or receive a draft.

**tops**: the partof a drop handlebar between the stem and the brake levers.

**training effect**: the result of exercise done with an intensity and duration sufficient to bring about positive physiological changes.

**travel**: in suspensions, the maximum distance a fork or rear shock can compress.

**tubular**: a lightweight tire that has its tube sewn inside the casing.

* Also called a sew-up.
* The tire is glued to the rim.

**tubeless:**a tire that attaches to the wheel and doesn’t require a tube because it airtight when you add a liquid sealant.

**turkey**: an unskilled cyclist.

**turnaround**: the point where the riders reverse direction on an out-and-back time trial course.

**ultra cycling**: used to describe the side of the sport involving the longest endurance events.

* Also called ultramarathon.

**Ultramarathon Cycling Association**: the event-sanctioning, record-keeping and informational organization for ultra riders.

**unweight**: the act of momentarily lightening the bike through a combination of body movement and position.

* It’s integral to jumping over things such as potholes or railroad tracks.

**USA Cycling**: the umbrella organization for American. bicycle racing. Affiliated with the UCI.

**UCI**: Union Cycliste Internationale, the world governing body of bicycle racing, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

**upshift**: to shift to a higher gear, i.e. a smaller cog or larger chainring.

**USCF**: U.S. Cycling Federation, the organization that governs amateur road, cyclocross, and track racing in America. A division of USA Cycling.

**USPRO**: U.S. Professional Racing Organization, the organization in charge of professional bicycle racing in America. A division of USA Cycling.

**velodrome**: an oval banked track for bicycle racing.

**VO**: the maximum amount of oxygen that can be consumed during all-out exertion.

* This is a key indicator of a person’s potential in cycling and other aerobic sports.
* It’s largely genetically determined but can be improved somewhat by training.

**watt:** a measurement of power produced. It tells how much force is applied to the pedals.

**wheelie:** to elevate the front wheel and ride on the rear wheel only.

**wheelsucker:** someone who drafts behind others but doesn’t take a pull.

**windchill:** the effect of air moving across the skin, making the temperature seem colder than it actually is.

* A cyclist creates a windchill even on a calm day, a situation that must be considered when dressing for winter rides.

**wind up:** steady acceleration to an all-out effort.

**yard sale:** a crash that leaves all your gear scattered around you on the ground, as if for sale.

Source: https://www.roadbikerider.com/cycling-lingo-slang-definition-list/