

Spinning: get your ass kicked and have some fun!

ASK ROCCO
WITH
ROCCO CASTELLANO



This week's column was suggested by my editor because she wanted me to tease my publisher about what a pussy he was for quitting in the middle of his first spinning class. Now, normally I would go into a tirade about all the aspects of pussy-ness he represented by leaving a "bicycling" class. I would go on to make sure you understood he should be ducking around corners and be accepting of the laughter he will endure for climbing off that bike and skulking out of the room, barely breaking a sweat, knowing that forever he will be known as a quitter. Normally, that's what would happen ... but not this week.

No, this week I will give him a pass, although I would have loved the chance to have a little fun. What's the reason? Because spinning, when done right, kicks the shit out of you. Among the many fitness-related things I'm good at, I'm also an avid cyclist. I love getting on my bike and losing myself in 25-30 miles. Being outdoors, battling hills, and those f---ing headwinds are what builds character - or 30-inch thighs, whichever you prefer.

Let me go back to those f---ing headwinds. For all the cyclists out there, am I the only one who can ride north, south, east and west and still hit a category-three headwind in each direction? I can battle the craziest hill for miles but for some reason I hate when I'm going downhill and I have to pedal my ass off to go 10 miles an hour.

I digress ... I don't know why, but I have been getting many emails lately from people asking me about spinning, and whether they should take a class to get in shape. I was wondering if there was a resurgence of spinning, or if people just thought it was safer to get on an indoor bike than on a treadmill ... you know, because walking can be hazardous to your health. I guess.

Again, I'll go back to me being a cyclist. During the winter, when I can't get on a road because it's five degrees below zero and snow is hiding parked cars, I find it a viable option to hit a spinning class. But it's not like the spinning classes I remember from my studio.

Back in 1999 (and yes, I partied

like it was), I built the best spinning room and loved every minute of taking one of my instructors' classes. I never got certified because I was too busy running my business, and I had unbelievable instructors. They were really good. So, 16 years later I'm getting emails from fans of this column for advice on whether they should get in on a class and what should they expect. So here it is:

In a word, yes, get in on a class. Shit, that was easy. The second part is a bit wordier, so grab a pen and

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take some notes.

The first thing you should know is you will get your ass kicked, own it, shut the f--- up, and take the beating like the out of shape piece of shit that you are. Most of the time rookies make a million mistakes when going to their first class, but this should help you prepare or at least know what's coming.

Really good instructors will make sure you are warmed up prior to kicking your ass. I don't trust anyone nowadays, so make sure you warm up with some upper body, lower body stretches and break a baby sweat before you get on your bike. If you have a sensitive ass, bring a gel pad seat with you. Your pubic bone will thank you, and it only costs about \$15. I can't believe I have to say this, but always bring a towel and a water bottle. Hydration is key, so the first day I would bring two water bottles, just in case you're sopping up water like SpongeBob.

One thing I hate is when an instructor is there just for their own workout - and you should hate that too. The instructor is there for you, so they need to act like it. They need to be monitoring the class and

you, especially if you are a newbie. Oh, and make sure you tell the instructor that you are a newbie. Don't try to be a tough idiot and just push through it. You will die, or at the very least have a shitty experience. The instructor should go over the different positions you will be asked to perform and show you how to adjust the tension on your spinning bike. If nothing like that happens, your instructor sucks.

Now this part always gets me in trouble, but mostly from instructors who are just in it for themselves. So, I really don't give a shit. The better instructors will know how to teach a spinning class and will do movements on the bike, but they will also get off the bike and make sure you are doing it right, help motivate you to push and be there to pull back on the throttle if you are getting in over your head.

If you haven't tried spinning, do yourself a favor and get on a bike. If you've been doing it for years, keep doing it. If you're my publisher, stop being a pussy and get to another class.

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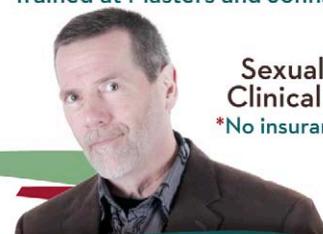
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