

## The Winter Solstice Ride

By Shari Miranda

Using songs about light and sunshine to brighten up your mid-winter blues!



### 1. Warm-up

#### Lovers of Light, Afro Celt Sound System, 4:00

Have participants find an easy flat road, adding resistance a couple of times during this song while you explain the ride.

*This time of year, we tend to think about the holidays—but I always look forward to December 21, because it's the winter solstice and after that the days will gradually start getting longer and lighter. So, all of the songs in the ride today have "light" in the title or lyrics. We've got some mixed terrain for the first part of class, then an epic climb with surges to finish things off before we hit the road home. Intensities will range anywhere between Zone 2 and Zone 5, depending what's happening in the moment. Enjoy the ride, and celebrate the LIGHT!*

### 2. Warm-up Surges

#### In Your Light, Gotye, 4:39, 102 rpm

#### Zone 3 with pushes into Zone 4

Seated flat, four 30-second pushes (hold strong gear, increase speed [more resistance if needed]).

0:37 – 1:05

1:35 – 2:02

2:30 – 3:00

3:32 – 4:02

### 3. Climb

#### City of Blinding Lights, U2, 5:41, 69 rpm

#### Zone 3 into Zone 4 (with gearing)

We're going to build a medium-heavy to heavy hill by adding resistance every minute. Stand once, about halfway (2:50), building the effort even more. At 3:30, gear and sit, continuing to add if able.

*Your intensity will increase each time you add; you are breathing hard here, right around your threshold, but still able to handle it.*

(Before last increase.)

*Are you ready for this? Add just enough steepness to your hill to feel like you want to slow down while seated...but instead, stand up and add some momentum. Your legs will have to*

*put out some effort to keep those pedals turning, standing up allows you to add your body weight. Let your intensity rise!*

#### 4. Seated Flat

**Running To The Light, Runrig, 4:50, 96 rpm**

**Zone 3 building to Zone 4**

Drop back to Zone 3, on a flat road that is easier at first. As we go, we'll start picking up our effort again, gradually getting the legs to that 96 rpm beat (or as close as you can w/good form) and adding resistance every minute or so.

#### 5. Climb with Standing Surges

**Our December, Thriving Ivory, 4:09, 80 rpm**

**Zone 3 climb; Zone 4 surge**

Start on a climb that is fairly steep and slow; find your own pace between 60 and 65 rpm.

We have three 20-second surges. Gear and stand with the music, grabbing the beat at 80 rpm:

1:00 / 1:50 / 3:03 / then sit and keep the faster pace to the top!

Hold the resistance when you sit back down each time.

#### 6. Pace and Pass

**Bright Lights, Bigger City (Soap Disco Remix), Cee Lo Green, 3:56, 62 rpm**

**Pace: Zone 4; Pass: Low Zone 5 (entering breathlessness)**

Start by holding the climb from previous track. (May need to recover slightly, then build the intensity.) We continue to climb here with the goal to get ahead of three riders on the hill. It's still a seated hill during the *pace* (just below threshold), transitioning to a standing surge to *pass*—kicking it up a notch for higher intensity (just above threshold).

There will be three 30-second surges. Increase rpm on the pass, return to music cadence on pace. Hold the gear as you return to the saddle after each pass.

0:45 – 1:15 Pass; sit and add gear afterward (hard pass)

1:47 – 2:17 Pass; sit and add gear afterward (harder pass)

3:04 – 3:35 Pass; sit and add gear afterward, climb to the top (hardest pass!)

#### 7. Hold Pace on a Flat Road

**Everlasting Light, The Black Keys, 3:24, 89 rpm**

**High Zone 3 (borderline uncomfortable), up to and hold threshold (borderline breathless)**

Initially gear down a little, bring leg speed up. Then, add resistance two or three times without slowing down—thereby increasing intensity again.

(Zone 5 intervals are next!)

#### 8. Intervals

**Ray of Light, Madonna, 5:16, 64 rpm**

**Work phase: Zone 5; Recover phase: Zone 2 (Zone 1 if needed)**

Four rounds, varying lengths. Increase gear and speed; as hard as you can go with great form for the duration of each interval!

**WATTS: Meet or beat your highest output on each effort!**

(Riders decide their leg speed, aiming for 90–100 rpm; if they can go much faster, they should add resistance.)

1:08 Go (20 sec)

1:30 Break—keep the resistance, just slow the legs

2:00 Go (40 sec)

2:40 Break

3:24 Go (40 sec)

4:08 Break

4:38 Go hard to finish (30 sec)

5:08 Done

**9. Recovery****Surrounded by Light, Tiesto, 2:40**

Let riders recover while you set up the final climb (see the text below for how to explain the hill).

(This song ends about 2:30 so you might want to adjust the stop time in iTunes.)

**10. Long Hill with Standing Surges****Strange Shades Of Light, Midnight Society ft. Alan T, 10:10, 63 rpm****Climb: Z3–Z4 / Surge: Z4–Z5**

The shorter hills we climbed earlier have prepared us for the next 10 minutes.

(Note: You can follow my cues here, or see Jennifer's suggestions from when this song was a Friday Favorite: <http://www.indoorcyclingassociation.com/2013/07/friday-favorites-the-perfect-companion-for-a-mental-strategy-for-strength/>)

*You MUST have enough gear on to feel a strong incline, to feel like you're really powering uphill against something.*

*You know that feeling of climbing a hill that's so steep, you start going slower and slower until you grind to a halt? Ever tried restarting on an incline? Darn near impossible! So... To stop that from happening, we're going to tackle this climb with two 3-minute sets of 15-second standing surges. Find a heavy gear that makes you want to slow down, but stand and go harder instead.*

*It should feel like you're propelling yourself up to go faster and stronger. Sitting and finding tempo again should happen quickly because the challenging gear slows you when you take body weight out.*

Two rounds of accelerations (approx 15/15). Each set is approx. 3 minutes long.

0:00 Add resistance to get on the climb, Zone 3

1:30 Add more gear in preparation to support the increases. Start reaching into high Z3, edge of comfort zone into Z4 hard/uncomfortable

**Check your resistance a few seconds before we go—make sure it's challenging but not so overwhelming that you can't maintain a smooth pedal stroke.**

2:15 Start the surges (1 phrase on standing, 1 phrase off seated, approx 15/15)

5:15 Hold the climb as the music drops out and builds back in; catch breath, reposition yourself on bike, in saddle, refocus. When you're ready, add a little more resistance, preparing for the next set.

**In the second set, work on efficient, strong pedal strokes; very tough but you know you can do it. (Remind them it's OK to sit for the surge if form is starting to go; still should \*feel\* harder!)**

6:45 Surges

**Think of yourself as having lots of power as we get closer to the top! You're only getting stronger! Climb toward the light.**

9:35 Stay in the saddle and climb til the end (about 30 seconds to the top), holding the pace.

### **11. Flat Road Home**

**Jingle Jane, Divide and Kreate, 2:30, 103 rpm**

Zone 2 to shake out the legs and catch the breath. Enjoy!

(Notice all the references to "what fun it is to RIDE"!)

### **12. Recovery and Cool-down**

**This Little Light Of Mine, Marika Hughes, Yo-Yo Ma  
Sunshine, The All-American Rejects**

[Songs about light for pre-class are at the end of the playlist! These can be playing as students enter the room.]

**Other songs about light and sunshine**

Colors of the Light, Freddy Jones Band, Waiting for the Night, 3:35

In the Shadow, In the Light, Enigma, Voyageur, 5:35, 160 bpm

Light in Your Eyes, The Subdudes, The Subdudes, 3:55

Light On, David Cook, David Cook, 3:46

Lifelight, Rotersand, Truth is Fanatic, 4:30, 130 bpm

Sunshine Highway, BYOB, Everything in Moderation, 4:34, 120 bpm

Sunshine Highway, Dropkick Murphys, The Warrior's Code, 3:22

Sunshine Reggae, Laid Back, Vinyl Maxi, 6:35, 83 bpm

Sunshine Beat Pharmacy, Wikkid Times, 7:35, 135 bpm

Pocketful Of Sunshine, Natasha Bedingfield, 3:22, 10 rpm

Chase This Light, Jimmy Eat World, 3:27

Daylight, Maroon 5, 3:46, 60 rpm

Light Up The Night (Lee Swagger Remix), The Black Eyed Peas, 4:43, 65 rpm

Lights (Bassnectar Remix), Ellie Goulding, 4:41

Another good song for the last long climb might be:

Sanctuary (Harry Lemon Remix), 9:45, 63 bpm, because it has a lyric that says,

*Take this light, hold it high, feel it shine.*

*I know now that here inside...this is mine.*

*...this is yours.*

*This is your sanctuary...*