

Created by Jennifer Sage  
Training Type: Road ride simulation, fun group ride  
Working HR Zones: Zones 2–5a  
Total Class Length: 60 minutes

**Profile Objective and Intensity:**

This profile is a simulation of an outdoor ride. Outdoor cyclists will either do a loop ride, or an out-and-back ride, or a combination. I know many prefer loops because the scenery changes more throughout the ride. But an out-and-back ride can be very interesting because while it's the same road, you are seeing it from two different perspectives, and climbing over a mountain and descending the opposite side doesn't mean that the return is going to be in any way similar.



Other elements come into play as well. You may have a headwind on the way out, so you may be excited about the possibility of a tailwind on the way back. And yes, this does happen, which can mean a much faster speed on the way back, especially on the flat road segments. But, if you live in an area where the wind can quickly change direction, especially in narrow canyons, then Mother Nature can sometimes pull a 180 on you and your anticipated tailwind becomes a headwind again! This is what happens where I live, especially in the late afternoons.

Indoors, scenarios like these allow you to change up the story every time you do a profile. It will probably mean changing up the music on that flat segment of road, since a headwind is more like a climb with slower cadences as you dig in against the wind resistance, and a strong tailwind can mean a faster cadence as you fly down the road.

Also, the changing light will alter the scenery as you return over the same roads, especially if you describe doing the ride in the late afternoon or early evening. This obviously won't change the effort level, but it can be used to enhance your visual descriptions.

The size and motivation of the group that you describe can help write your storyline as well. You may paint a picture of riding with your best friend, just the two of you enjoying the experience, perhaps offering each other some gentle encouragement along the way. That will be quite a bit different than describing a ride amongst local bike club members who use pacelines on the flat segments or who are filled with a healthy level of competitiveness.

What about changing weather? As you will see in this profile, approaching clouds and impending rain force you to pick up the pace quite a bit.

Such is the beauty of using outdoor simulations to enhance your indoor experience! It's only limited by your imagination.

This profile uses lots of wonderful visualization cues of the scenery and the outdoor experience. I call it *The Canyon Ride* because the middle section descends into and overlooks a beautiful canyon with desert topography. While this profile is not a specific ride I have in mind, it is a mix of many rides I've been on both here in the western part of the United States (Colorado, Arizona and Utah) and in southern France.

The riders all meet to do to a very special, popular ride to an observation tower with beautiful views. It begins in a small town, from the parking lot of a favorite coffee shop where cyclists love to gather before and after this ride. Some have driven there, some live close enough to ride there, but everyone begins with their preferred "juice" from the coffee shop before hitting the road: cappuccino, double espresso, or Americano. (If you weren't aware of it, cyclists are known for being coffee snobs! I happily count myself among that group!)

After a flat road good for warming up, the next section of road is rolling, and since you're still waking up the legs, it's important to approach the short rollers at an easier intensity than you will when you come back. Then, there is a mountain in the way that you must get up and over. After you descend via switchbacks, the road continues along the rim of a canyon, with a sharp drop-off on the left and a steep rock face on the right side. This is a dead-end road, with few cars on it, as it only goes up to a radio tower and observatory, which is up a short, steep hill at the far end of this road. After that, you turn around, go back along the canyon, and then back over the mountain. The climb is very different from this direction as it snakes back and forth. Then, after the descent, it's back through the rolling hills, ending with a celebration back at the coffee shop.

### **Some Images of a Desert Canyon**

The photo on the first page, and these photos here and on the next page are from Colorado National Monument, near the Utah border, just west of the city of Grand Junction. While my "Canyon Ride" is not an actual ride, I did have some of the views and characteristics of the National Monument in mind, especially the sweeping switchbacks. The Monument is not an out and back ride, it's a large loop, and if you ever have a chance to come ride it in Colorado, do not miss that opportunity! (But do it in the spring or fall, as it's pretty hot in the summer. And make sure to let me know if you do come here to ride; I'll do my best to meet you). I hope the photos here give you a visual idea of some of the images I'm trying to convey in this profile. (Note: feel free to use these photos, which are posted on the ICA website). If you live in the west, you'll know what I'm talking about, but if you've not yet experienced it, you'll find this helpful. Or, another option is to create an out and back ride over similar terrain but change the views to something you're more experienced with.







## The Canyon Ride Coaching

### The Warm-up

#### **Norweg, Cirque du Soleil, Saltimbanco, 164 bpm, 6:08**

Describe the great group ride we are about to embark upon. This should take you most of the warm-up song. Ask them to add little bits of resistance as needed, as you approach the first segment of rolling hills (song #2).

*Today we are meeting up with a handful of our best friends for a group ride. We put our bikes on top of the car, got up early, and drove over an hour to get to this very special place. Some of our friends have driven farther; some live closer. It's one of our favorite rides because of the beauty and the challenge. It's an out-and-back ride, meaning we ride out to one point, turn around, and come back on the exact same road. But it is in no way boring, because the changing light, the winds, and the views all look and feel different in each direction.*

*We meet in a small town in the parking lot of a very cool little coffee shop that caters to cyclists. We all have our favorite caffeinated motivation. I'm getting a double espresso, how about you? A cappuccino, an Americano? Time to jump on the bikes and let the legs spin as we warm them up for the big ride ahead. Fortunately it starts off flat.*

*Let me tell you what lies ahead on this ride: after a couple minutes of flat road it will turn into to short rolling hills, undulating its way to a pretty big piece of rock in our way. We have to climb up and over that mountain; it is forested on the east side as we go up, with fewer trees on the way down the west side. There are switchbacks on the way down the other side, and we are treated to a stunning view on the descent. At the bottom, the road runs along the rim of a canyon, a wide cirque to our left (to the south), where there is a river down below. On the right is a steep rock wall. The road is mostly flat here and curves in and out on the valley edge, and the wind can funnel into this circular canyon. The wind can be your friend or your enemy, depending on its whim. This is the high desert of the west, with deep red rocks and scrub brush, the smell of sage, eagles flying overhead, and the occasional deer or other wild animal scurrying across the road.*

*Our destination is a few miles ahead (in our indoor world, that will take about 6 minutes)! At the end of this rim, the road rises up steeply to an observation tower. It's not that long of a climb, only about 3 minutes, but it's very steep. Very few cars come out this way since it's not a through road, except perhaps to park at the observation tower to go hiking.*

*Then we turn around and go back the way we came. You all set? We're about to hit the rollers!*

### Rolling Hills

#### **San Tour, Rishi & Harshil, 140 bpm, 6:39**

There are five short rollers. You can pace them any way you want, but I tried to space them out in a way that they somewhat resemble the song I'm using on the return, which is "Rosalita" by Bruce Springsteen. That song has more definitive spots to stand (to climb). This one not so

much, but in my Class Builder I have the following timing for the uphill and downhill. The song starts out nice and easy, which is perfect for this profile. Then the rhythm becomes more definitive about a minute into it. Your descents will be short (15–20 seconds), using low resistance. Then, to simulate reaching the flat road at the bottom, you simply add some more resistance and stay seated. There's only 20–30 seconds on the flat before going back up.

(As the song starts) *The road is going to roll up and down now, a total of five times, but we're still getting our legs ready, so let's not attack these short climbs quite yet. This first climb we'll just ease into; turn it up to slow your legs down to a rhythm of about 70 rpm.*

1:08 *We're at the top. Ease up as we roll downhill. That first one was easy. (After 20 seconds) Now we're at the flat part; add a little more resistance.*

1:49 *The road gently turns uphill again; add some resistance, stay seated for now.*

2:15 *Add some more of that hill and stand up for a short rise to the top.*

2:45 *Sit back down and roll downhill. (After 20 seconds, add some more resistance as you reach the flat.)*

3:26 *Here it comes...and back uphill—add enough to get you out of the saddle, stand. Your legs are more prepared now; you can add a little “oomph” to your climb!*

(At 3:53, the drums pick up) *Sit back down but continue to climb; push your way up this hill!*

4:21 *There's the top—that was short and sweet; roll the legs out. The next one comes quickly; we reach the bottom in 20 seconds, then add a bit more. Then it's only for 20 more seconds...*

5:02 *Here's our fourth roller—stand up! You'll stand this whole one; it's a 40-second push, but not too hard, stay aerobic.*

5:42 (With the drums) *Sit back down and take off the hill, but this one is very short. We'll barely reach the bottom before we go back up.*

5:56 *Add more and UP! Stay in control of your breath; you've got a big sustained climb ahead of you, so don't get out of control.*

6:23 *Sit back down and take a very brief break before the big climb. (About 45 seconds left before the next song)*

### **Climb**

#### **Sunspot, Armin van Buuren, 135 bpm, 6:01**

Allow riders to slowly add resistance, starting the climb easily. There is a 1-minute buildup.

*We are going to ease into this climb now; just feel the hill start to build up. It's forested on this side of the mountain, but when we emerge on the other side, you're going to be stunned with the expansive desert views. (At 1:00 add some more resistance.) Dig into that rhythm with your legs.*

(Allow intensity to rise to mid-Zone 4, sub-threshold, over the next few minutes.)

4:17 (When the energy picks up) *Let's stand up as the grade pitches up. (Stay standing until 4:49.) Sit back down and continue your effort to the top. Intensity at this point should remain moderately hard. The other side is going to be harder.*

### **Downhill**

#### **Rinzler, Daft Punk, 90 bpm, 2:18**

Short song for your descent. Make sure they drop their heart rate to Zone 1 or 2. Legs spin easily.

*You're at the top, and before you descend, a thought pops into your head...once down, you have no choice but to come back up the same way. You're human, so the idea of turning around at this point makes some space in your mind. For my cyclist friends out there, admit it, those kinds of thoughts appear out of nowhere, don't they? You think, "Hmmm, I could go back down the way we came and be relaxing back at that café while my riding buddies continue down the hard side." But...you will not let that thought dominate you, will you? You push it aside. We're all in this together, so let's go!*

*As you start your descent, imagine looking out over a vast canyon of red rocks, bluffs, and a river way down below. We are not going to descend all the way into the canyon, just to the rim road a few miles down. Take advantage of this descent to recover...but remain very aware! There are switchbacks twisting back and forth; imagine that you have to brake slightly into the curve (but not too much), then accelerate as you exit the far side of the curve. Pay attention to how the switchbacks are connected; they come pretty quickly but aren't all the same distance.*

*Remember, you're going to have to climb back up these switchbacks on the way back...there is NO OTHER WAY around it and it's going to be awesome!*

*We're at the bottom...so yes, that means you are now committed. WE all are now committed.*

### **Fast Flat**

#### **Nimbus Two, Perfect Blind, 90 bpm, 5:51**

The song takes a minute to get going. You can use this time to recover a bit more, or just have them start to engage a little more gear at this cadence of 90 rpm. Most of this flat will be done in the saddle, but halfway they have the opportunity to stand and stretch the legs.

*There is a bit of a headwind here. Not too much, but enough to feel like an extra gear. Grab onto that rhythm at 90 rpm, because we don't want to delay. The clouds are starting to gather in the distance, and there's a chance they'll be coming this way.*

*This section is going to be the pure joy of cycling along this canyon rim. It's one of the reasons why we do what we do. The exhilaration, the joy, the freedom that riding a bike brings. It's all human-powered, it's just you pushing yourself along on this beautiful*

*road. And it wouldn't be possible without all those days working on your aerobic base, all those threshold repeats, all those cadence drills and mental strength sessions—they are all coming together right here and right now. All of your training has brought you to this point. It helps to remember that as you recognize that the strength in your legs and heart on a bike ride like this is due to your commitment to your training. Be grateful for the work you've done to bring yourself to this point!*

About halfway through the song, tell them the road makes a couple of twists, so you come out of the saddle to regain your momentum. Stand for about 20–30 seconds, then sit back down until the end.

*Did you see the mountain goats on the ridge above us?*

*The most fun part is ahead of us—the steep climb to the observation tower! It's going to be 3 minutes long. You and your buddies usually say the last one up buys the beer back at the diner when you get back to your car! How about you, are you planning on not being the one who buys?*

### **Short, Steep Climb**

#### **Get Off of My Cloud, Rolling Stones, 127 bpm, 2:57**

*OK, here it is! I'm going to let you decide how quickly you want to get up. Let's stand up and get this party started.*

(After 1 minute)

*It's your choice—you can stay standing as long as you want, or sit down and drive from the saddle.*

If anyone sat down, when there's 30 seconds left, invite them all to stand back up and surge to the top.

### **Fast Flat**

#### **Furia, Atriohm, 97 bpm, 7:16**

*The view is even better up here from the observatory. So many eagles flying around up here! We can look back in the direction where we came from and see the rim road, and the mountain we have to climb back over. Remember those gathering clouds? Hmmm, they are blacker than before, and are getting closer and closer. We see a few flashes of lightning. Normally we'd hang out here and rest a bit, but there is no time for hanging today...we've got to get flying! Desert storms can get quite dangerous.*

The song picks up in energy at :50. That's when you reach the bottom of this little hill and start pedaling in earnest.

*We are in luck—that headwind we had on the way out has now picked up into quite a nice tailwind. Grab this beat at 97 rpm. It's a pretty fast cadence. So, if it's too fast, it's better to slow down a bit every now and then, then try to join us.*

*As you ride, you notice elements of the scenery around you that you didn't notice before, but approaching it from this different direction, and with a slightly different light, they now stand out, like the rocky red bluffs in the distance, the twisted piñon trees, or the meandering river below.*

At 3:08 the song takes a break, then starts to pick back up at 3:38, and really takes off at 4:57. Have them stand up for a saddle break when it slows (we're back at those curves we came though on the way out), then sit back down at 3:38 and gradually start adding intention to your pedaling. At 4:57, stand for a brief 8–10 seconds when the energy picks up, then sit down and commit to the cadence.

*Everyone in your group knows what they have to do on this hill ahead of us. We are going to have to get up and over this climb without any lagging behind; no rest for the weary! Your legs might be asking for a break, but you gently remind them that we cannot do that right now, unless, of course, you want to get drenched!*

### **Climb**

#### **Travel Around, Space Safari, 133 bpm, 7:06**

As the song builds, begin adding resistance, then at :54 with the drums stand up for the first switchback. You can time the switchbacks as you see fit, but I like to let the rhythm of the music get me in and out of the saddle. I suggest standing for about 30 seconds, then sitting for 40–50 seconds. Riders will float right around threshold on the standing segments, almost to breathless but not quite.

*OK, this is it, folks. The road is going to snake its way back and forth up this mountain. We'll sit into the turn, then stand up as we exit the switchback where it gets steeper. You'll stand for about 20–30 seconds, then sit. Usually we'll sit twice as long as we stand, but this is your climb, so do what you need to do. Remember, we are now trying to outrun a storm, so intensity will be hovering around threshold, and near the top, maybe even a little above threshold as you stand up.*

*Every time the road switches back, you can see the clouds are ominous and black, and they are now covering the observation tower we recently left. We start to feel a few fat, cold drops of rain. But so far...not too bad.*

At about the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> switchback:

*That's it, guys, I love the way you are so committed to this. Nothing gets in your way! We've all managed to stay pretty close together, so let's continue to motivate each other to get up this climb as quickly as possible.*

The song slows down for the final 20 seconds, perfect to describe rolling over the top while seated.



**Descent****Round One, Daft Punk, 108 bpm, 1:41**

This song has an edgy urgency to it. No need to pedal quite as fast as the beat; it's not super defined, so students can pedal at what feels good to them.

*It looks like we've outraced the rain! It's no doubt raining, maybe even a downpour, on the other side of this mountain, perhaps even the top, but we have descended into the sunny side! Still in front of us are those fun rolling hills. This time, we'll attack each one a little harder than we did on the way out.*

**Rolling Hills****Rosalita (Come Out Tonight), Bruce Springsteen, 154 bpm, 7:02**

This song is a lot of fun and usually brings some big smiles (unless you tend to play it a little too much!). I've written the way the climbs make sense to me, using the popular chorus and higher-energy segments to dictate the ups and downs, and have even put in quotes the lyrics to help you know where I am in the song. Notice that the ascents and descents vary quite a bit and are not the same length. That's because Bruce Springsteen isn't noted for following strict rules of songwriting for chorus and verse!

Similar to the first time over these rollers, you will descend with low resistance, then add some resistance as you hit the flat section before the next standing climb. I've given some suggested times for the flat section, but don't try to be exact, it's not that important. Instead, about 15–20 seconds after each descent, tell them there is no longer gravity helping them out and they need to add a little more resistance on the flat. That is, except the final one because there's not enough time; you just go down, then back up.

0:26 Start climbing ("Spread out now, Rosie")

1:10 Top. Sit down and go downhill ("Dynamite's in the belfry, baby")

1:23 Flat (add R)

1:54 Stand and climb ("Rosalita, jump a little lighter")

2:20 Top. Sit down and go downhill ("Jack the Rabbit and Weak Knee Willie")

2:41 Flat road (add R)

3:05 Stand and climb ("Rosalita, jump a little lighter")

3:42 Top. Sit down and go downhill (with the horns)

4:09 Flat road (add R)

5:18 Back up hill ("And my tires were slashed and I almost crashed")

5:42 Top, sit and go downhill ("I know a pretty little place in Southern California") (No flat road in between this last two)

6:06 Stand and climb ("Rosalita, jump a little lighter") Until the end of the song.

There's a lot going on in this song, so most of your coaching will be to tell them when to climb and descend, or add resistance on the flat. Throw in some motivation and joy and maybe even a few karaoke moments on the chorus. This song will leave everyone smiling when it's done!

**Cool-down**

**Maybe You're Right, Barenaked Ladies, 121 bpm, 6:26**

*Well we made it without getting wet! Lots of high fives on today's ride. We finished it faster than we've ever ridden it; it's amazing how some storm clouds and possible lightning can increase your motivation!*

*Oh, by the way, who was the last one up to the observatory? Who's buying the drinks? Don't tell me it was me!*

## The Canyon Ride (Out and Back) Quick Profile

Section, Cue and Intensity	Music	RPM	Time
Warm-Up / Intro Easy to moderate, flat road.	Norweg, Cirque du Soleil	82	6:08
Rolling hills (out) (5 short climbs) Ease into them, moderate intensity, save for the big climb	San Tour, Rishi & Harshil	70	6:39
Big Climb (out) Sub-threshold (Z3, some Z4)	Sunspot, Armin van Buuren	63	6:01
Descent (out). Recover. This commits you; no other way back. Beautiful views.	Rinzler, Daft Punk	90	2:18
Fast flat along canyon rim road (out) Moderate, with slight headwind. Mostly in saddle (stand briefly midway)	Nimbus Two, Perfect Blind	90	5:51
Steep climb to observatory (out) Out of the saddle, hard (race your buddies to the top)	Get Off of My Cloud, Rolling Stones	63	2:57
Descent, then fast flat (back). Mostly in the saddle (midway, short stand). Tailwind, fast legs, approaching storm	Furia, Atriohm	97	7:16
Climb with switchbacks (back) Hard climb, alternating seated and standing, outrunning the storm	Travel Around, Space Safari	66	4:25
Descent (back) Recover. It's sunny on this side of mountain.	Round One, Daft Punk	~90	1:41
Rolling hills (back) Attack the 5 short hills harder than before, have a lot of fun on these!	Rosalita, Bruce Springsteen	77	7:02
Cool-Down/Celebrate/Stretch	Maybe You're Right, Barenaked Ladies	NA	6:26

## The Canyon Ride Playlist

Song Title	Time	Artist	Album	Source
Norweg	6:08	Cirque du Soleil	Saltimbanco	eMusic
San Tour	6:39	Rishi & Harshil	Forget Your Limitations	eMusic
Sunspot	6:01	Armin van Buuren	10 Years	eMusic
Rinzler	2:18	Daft Punk	Tron: Legacy (CD1)	eMusic
Nimbus Two	5:51	Perfect Blind	Surfacing	Free on EktoPlazm <a href="http://www.ektoplazm.com/free-music/perfect-blind-surfacing">http://www.ektoplazm.com/free-music/perfect-blind-surfacing</a>
Get Off of My Cloud	2:57	Rolling Stones	Forty Licks	All
Furia	7:16	Atriohm	Next Destination	Free on EktoPlazm <a href="http://www.ektoplazm.com/artist/atRIOhm">http://www.ektoplazm.com/artist/atRIOhm</a>
Travel Around	7:06	Space Safari	PPCD002	Amazon
Round One	1:41	Daft Punk	Tron: Legacy (CD2)	eMusic
Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)	7:02	Bruce Springsteen	The Essential Bruce Springsteen	All
Maybe You're Right	6:26	Barenaked Ladies	Elevate	eMusic