



101 Ways to Be a Better Indoor Cycling or Spinning® Instructor

Congratulations on your efforts to become the best indoor cycling / Spinning® coach that you can be!

Every single tip in this list is covered in more detail in an article, video, or audio in the Indoor Cycling Association archives. Upcoming content will continue to inspire members to be the best coaches possible, helping students achieve their goals like never before.

1. Teach students the importance of resistance...*never* ride with zero resistance!
2. Top priority for every single rider: proper setup.
3. Start class on time.
4. End class on time.
5. Learn proper pedaling skills.
6. Transition from being a “masher” (heavy downstroke) to a “spinner” (fluid, round pedal stroke).
7. Remember, *low* resistance does not mean *no* resistance. There is no situation in which you would ride with no resistance.
8. Too much resistance can strain back muscles; for novices, a lower cadence limit of 60 rpm is strongly recommended.*
9. Not every ride should be balls-to-the-wall; learn to teach moderate-intensity rides.
10. Take the “bounce” out in the short-term by adding a little more resistance, and long-term by working on proper pedaling technique.
11. Compete with yourself. How do you know your limits unless you surpass them?
12. Standing while riding is a learned and trained skill. Do not use with reckless abandon.
13. Design every profile with an objective. There may even be times when your objective is just to have fun, such as a theme ride.
14. Tell your profile objective to your riders before class.

15. Stop worrying about maximum heart rate and learn how to estimate lactate threshold (LT) heart rate.
16. Pick a mantra to help you up a climb. Repeat it to yourself anytime you feel like backing off.
17. Form before fitness. If you have poor form, how can you expect to get more fit?
18. Keep it real. It's the best way to stay safe and optimize your time on the bike to meet your (or your students') goals.
19. Motivate students with intrinsic coaching methods; this way they learn to stay committed even when you're not around.
20. Keep your knees aligned over the pedals and not out to the sides.
21. Use visual cues (hand signals) to enhance your coaching.
22. Become skilled in cueing perceived exertion.
23. Give particular attention to your new and unfit students.
24. Educate your students. The more they know about how the body works (*truth*, not hype), the more they're likely to commit to their workout.
25. Breathe with your belly, not your chest.
26. Do not abuse sprints. When done correctly, they are a powerful medicine. Like a prescription, there's a frequency and dosage you should respect.
27. It's OK to have fun! There is nothing that says you can't *keep it fun while keeping it real*.
28. Inspire students to bring their "Suitcase of Courage" to class.
29. Learn how to teach to the three different learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Not everyone assimilates information the same way.
30. Recommend 1 or 2 options for each drill.
31. Riding with poor form only reinforces bad habits. Practice doesn't make perfect; practice makes permanent. So practice perfectly!
32. Whether you are teaching to 3 students or 33, give them your all.
33. Vary the genres of music you use to satisfy everyone's different tastes.

34. Learn to teach off the bike in the most effective manner.
35. The magic happens outside of your comfort zone. Teach your students to spend more time outside of theirs.
36. Do not suck in the abs while riding. Unless you are not interested in breathing.
37. Suffering is an important part of cycling, including indoor cycling. Pain is not. Know the difference.
38. Always teach with a mic so every one of your students can hear you clearly. (Bonus: You also protect your vocal chords with a mic.)
39. When standing, if form degrades due to fatigue, it's time to sit back down.
40. Remember, every one of your students is an athlete. Remind them of that!
41. Stop talking so much! Too much talking is distracting and annoying. There is power in silence, as long as you have given your riders something to focus on.
42. Stop yelling so much! Sometimes a whisper is more powerful than a scream. (Remember that mic?)
43. Ask your class for their favorite music/songs.
44. Understand the proper use of high-intensity intervals.
45. Make sure your music matches your message. There is cognitive dissonance when the music does not fit what you are asking students to do.
46. Are you enunciating clearly and speaking slowly when you talk? Garbled words or talking too fast means students can't follow your cues.
47. Master the art of endurance coaching—it is the turning point in becoming a complete instructor.
48. Learn your students' goals.
49. Use creative visualization, an effective coaching method that all successful athletes use in just about every sport.
50. Show up to class 15 minutes early.
51. Learn this *theoretical* equation: $I = C \times R$ (Intensity is equal to the product of cadence and resistance.) Intensity can apply to heart rate, RPE, or power output.

52. Introduce yourself to new riders.
53. Don't make stuff up. If a student asks a question and you don't know the answer, admit it, and tell them you'll find out. Then keep your promise.
54. Learn your students' names.
55. Play cool music, and change your music often.
56. Create a weekly/monthly newsletter to encourage students to keep coming back.
57. If they're bored, you're boring...it's not the technique. Read up on how to be an engaging coach so you don't have to resort to gimmicks.
58. Learn the result of cadence.*
59. Biomechanics matters. It does.
60. Tabata is a powerful and specific protocol. Respect it and limit it.
61. Hold giveaways/contests/events to make goal-reaching challenges fun.
62. Master your sound system.
63. Walk around the room and encourage your students.
64. Model good form.
65. Super fast legs *usually* means lower power output and fewer calories burned. An upper cadence limit of 110 rpm is strongly recommended.*
66. Fill students' water bottles during recovery.
67. Give riders time to prepare for hard efforts.
68. Let your riders know how long an effort will be.
69. Wear cycling shoes (and convince students to as well).
70. Use charts to show your ride profile.
71. Teach Tour de France profiles.
72. Set up 4-, 6-, 8-, and 12-week periodized programs.
73. Don't be afraid to help riders with their form.

74. Turn the instructor bike around and face the mirror during class to monitor your technique.
75. Teach riders how to remain relaxed on the bike.
76. Provide adequate recovery between high-intensity efforts.
77. Provide field tests to help riders target the right intensity.
78. Provide an adequate warm-up before classes.
79. Instruct riders on the best hand positions for optimal muscle engagement.
80. You can still follow safe and effective cycling technique and have a unique coaching style.
81. Walk around the room to ensure your voice and music are balanced.
82. Explain the benefits of using the bike computer consoles correctly.
83. Use vocal inflection (remember that mic!).
84. Continue to work on your presentation skills.
85. Do any kind of upper body or core workout after class. Never while pedaling.
86. Use video in class to inspire riders.
87. Lead a charity event.
88. Understand and teach the benefits of power (even if you don't have bikes with power).
89. Encourage safety and avoid contraindications.
90. Start class with a (short!) personal story or experience.
91. Teach students to continue to challenge their bodies.
92. Explain the benefits of wearing padded bike shorts.
93. Throw a cycling costume party (1980s? 1960s? Halloween? Carnival?).
94. Help riders after class with setup or questions.
95. Bring the outdoors indoors.
96. Practice what you preach. Ride hard; rest hard. Eat well. Sleep well.



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97. Remove isolations, hovers, pushups, crunches, and tap backs from your repertoire. The risks are too high and the rewards too little or non-existent.
98. Walk into the studio with confidence and a smile on your face. Your students pick up on unspoken messages.
99. Use the beats per minute of the music to guide your cadence.
100. Don't take it personally if not everyone loves your style or your music; you can't please everyone all the time.
101. Always be the consummate professional. Look, dress, and act the part of a coach, and continually educate yourself on correct training and inspirational coaching techniques.

**These cadence ranges of 60–110 rpm are general guidelines appropriate for 90% of riders, depending on your population. Certain skilled riders may prove to be the exception if they maintain proper form and appropriate resistance outside the suggested cadence range.*

How can the Indoor Cycling Association help you as an instructor?

The Indoor Cycling Association is the global leader in online education for indoor cycling instructors. It doesn't matter your certification or the bike you ride—the articles, videos, webinars, and audios at ICA will help you become a more entertaining and engaging instructor. You will increase your knowledge of cycling technique, biomechanics, and physiology, and learn how to create fun and meaningful profiles using fabulous music. And, you will learn how to coach using successful mental training techniques used by some of the top coaches in the world, such as intrinsic motivation and visualization. As a result, you will inspire your riders like never before and they will flock to your classes!

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