

Five Essential Strength-Building Moves for Cyclists

Sself.com/algo.html



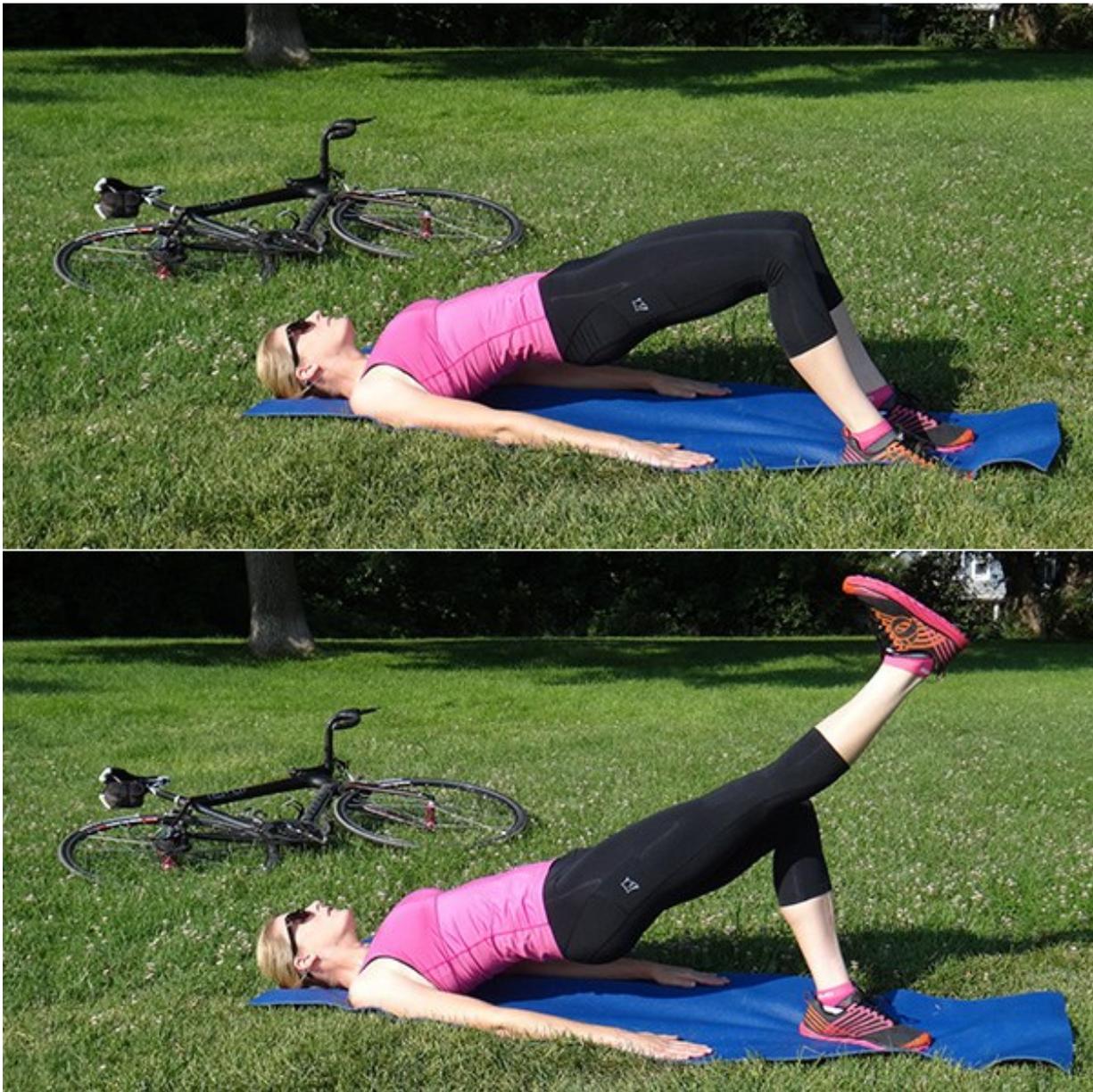
[Share via Pinterest](#)

(c) David Epperson

Yes, even an 8-year-old can ride a bike. And while that's the case, as you get older and become more advanced, going out for longer rides at a time and logging miles in the double and possibly even triple digits, it's important for your body to be strong. Cycling itself is the best way to get better at the sport, but there's a lot you can do off the bike as well.

We chatted with Kristen Legan, former pro triathlete, now triathlon and cycling coach for [APEX Coaching](#), to find out what strength moves most benefit cyclists. So while you're watching the Tour de France in its final days or ramping up your miles on the bike, try out these moves designed to amp up your performance.

1. Bridge



[Share via Pinterest](#)

Start flat on your back with your knees bent, shoulder width apart, arms down at your sides. Squeeze your glutes together and pushing through your feet, raise your hips until only your shoulders and feet remain on the ground. If your hamstrings feel like they're going to cramp, go back to the starting position and try again by only squeezing and lifting with your glutes. Start with 3 sets of 5 returning to the original position on your back each time. More advanced option is do it single legged. Keep the other leg straight out with your foot flexed.

- This is a great activator for your glutes. It strengthens the glutes while accesses these muscles so you can use them more efficiently on the bike.

2. Tip and Reach



[Share via Pinterest](#)

Grab a light dumbbell in your left hand that you can easily lift overhead (top left photo). Balance on your right leg, left leg bent at the knee and lifted off the ground to shoulder height (or as high as you can; top right photo), left arm with dumbbell in hand extended up to the sky. Tilt at the hips and reach the dumbbell down to the ground just in front of your right foot (bottom photo), as the left leg extends straight back behind you. Try to keep your back straight. Return to upright position. Start with 3 sets of 5 rounds on each leg. You can start doing this exercise without any weights until you feel comfortable balancing on one leg. Then gradually increase the weight to make it more challenging.

- This exercise works on many things including balance, shoulder strength, lower back strength, quads, glutes, and hamstrings.

3. Front and Side Plank

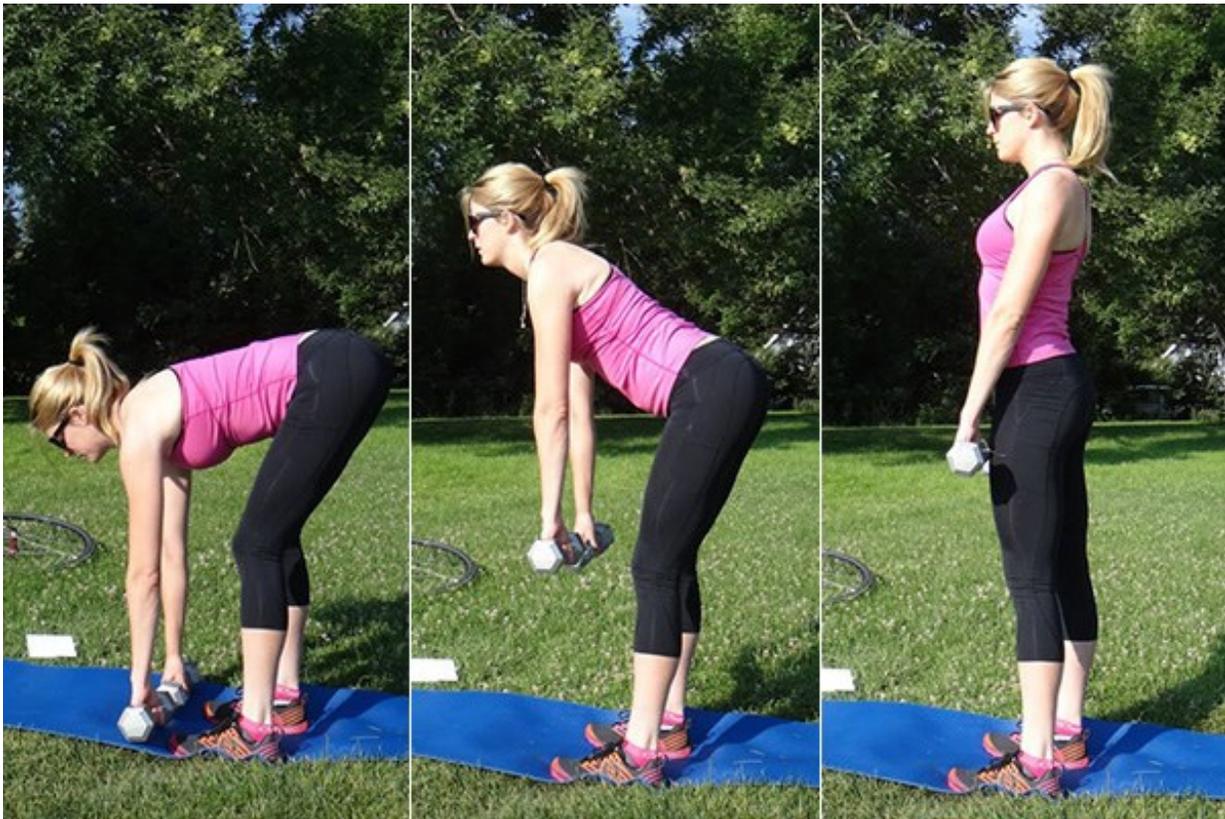


[Share via Pinterest](#)

Front plank is one of the easiest and most efficient core exercises athletes can do to improve their cycling. Start with both forearms or hands planted on the ground, body in push-up position. Keep your body in a straight line without dropping your head or hips. Hold this for 30 seconds. For side plank, start on your side legs stacked, holding your body up with one forearm extended on the ground for support. Keep your body in a straight line without dropping your head or hips. Start by holding for 30 seconds and gradually build up the duration over time. A more advanced version of front plank would be to lift one leg for half the time and then switch to the other leg for the remainder of time. To make side plank more advanced, lift your top arm straight up at the sky and hold (as shown above).

- Core strength and stability is key to a healthy body and fast cycling.

4. Deadlift



[Share via Pinterest](#)

Begin standing with legs shoulder width apart, dumbbells in each hand. (You can also use a barbell if you're in the gym.) With a straight back and knees slightly bent, bend at your waist, keeping the dumbbells as close to your body as possible as you move them down to touch the ground or as close to the ground as you can. Make sure to stick out your butt to keep from arching your back. Then, keeping your back straight again, butt out, squeezing your hammies and glutes lift your body back up to standing position with your shoulder back. Start with 3 sets of 5 reps and build up repetitions and sets. As you get more advanced, use heavier dumbbells or add weights to the barbell.

- Deadlift specifically works your glutes and hamstrings, but it's also a great way to strengthen your lower back. Cycling works a lot of the front muscles on our bodies like our quads. So it's important to strengthen the backside of our bodies to reduce the risk of injuries and imbalances.

5. Squats



[Share via Pinterest](#)

Start by standing up with your feet a little wider than shoulder width, toes pointing slightly outward, arms at your sides. Sticking your butt out and keeping your back straight, sit back and down into your heels, bending both knees until you can't keep your back straight anymore. Make sure your knees go outward and don't fall in. Push through your heels to come back to standing. Start with 3 sets of 5 reps and gradually build up the number of sets and repetitions. More advanced version includes using dumbbell weights in each hand.

- Squats are a great power exercise for cycling. Your pedal stroke motion is similar to a squat motion so the stronger you can get doing these, the stronger you can push on your pedals. This works the glutes and quads.

RELATED:

- [The 4 Stretches Every Cyclist Needs to Know](#)
- [A \\$400 Bike That Doesn't Need Repairs?!](#)

Image Credit: *David Epperson; Kristen Legan*