

Another View Point

In late 2000 I was looking for a way to regain some fitness and lose some weight before a hip replacement in 2001 after 13 years of osteoarthritis. I'm 38. Having raced BMX in the late 1970's and early 1980's and spending most of my time as a kid riding the bush trails around northwestern Sydney, I thought I'd buy a mountain bike. Despite the pain and discomfort, I managed some 1,500 km prior to the operation and generally improved my health, with a new goal of racing my mountain bike once I had the new left hip (partner and surgeon not particularly happy about this one). A comfortable and efficient position and using clipless pedals was never achievable due to my almost fused hip, but the thoughts of a functioning body and a return to competitive sport kept me pushing as hard as I could.

Two weeks out of hospital I bought an indoor trainer and was on the bike every day. Six weeks later I was back commuting to work. Three months later I competed in my first XC mountain bike race and I didn't come last. So at last I had the function, now I needed the form, so I

bought a road bike to join some roadie mates with a new goal of entering the 'Gong ride' six months later.

Now a new problem arose, bike fit and knee problems. I spent countless hours researching through the net, books and magazines and to some extent I was successful, but a nagging knee problem was hampering my progress. Nevertheless I persevered, averaging 200 km a week and I completed the 'Gong ride' in two hours and 45 minutes. Then I seemed to hit a wall. No matter what I did, my right knee was getting worse and this saw me spending less time on my bikes. Although my times were improving in the XC races, I knew I had to do something.

Fearing the worst. I was off for x-rays and bone scans to isolate the problem to see what course of action I needed to take. A few hundred dollars later my diagnosis was quadriceps tendon insertion tendonitis. Then a light bulb went off. I went back and researched my problem in Steve Hogg's series of articles and came to the unqualified conclusion that my problem was not just a residual effect of my osteoarthritis and an overuse of my right side, but my general physiological condition due to a sedentary

lifestyle with no form of exercise to correct it. Also, I was overloading my quads and the subsequent discovery of a 6 mm leg length discrepancy compounded this further.

So armed with my new insight, I bit the bullet and went to see Steve and all I can say is I should have done it sooner. It's only been a week since I had the Cyclefit done and already my knee is pain free, I'm feeling muscles I didn't know I had and my sit bones seem to be going through a new breaking in period again. Sure I seem to have a weird looking bike now with adaptors on adaptors to get me in the necessary position to function properly on the bike, but I'm climbing hills faster and my heart rate is lower. Now it all seems to make sense.

This isn't a letter to endorse Steve and his philosophies, he doesn't need it (I had to wait two months to see him once I made the decision). Instead it's to highlight the fact that sometimes, no matter how hard we work at something, there's always another way. I followed numerous methods for obtaining correct bike fit and have a solid reputation for meticulous detail. I made numerous measuring devices and hounded my partner incessantly to help me

measure this and measure that and still I couldn't solve my dilemma. So to all the people out there who think they know better and persistently write in to challenge Steve's working examples, keep doing so, you only help to highlight the fact that everybody is different and we all need an individual approach when it comes to these sort of issues.

If the bike salesman with his tape measure and 20 minute bike fit works for you then great, you're lucky. If you're like me and many others and increased activity on the bike means an increase in discomfort, then seek professional advice, work hard at understanding your shortcomings and adapt both physically and psychologically. As for Steve's service and approach, I can't speak highly enough of it. I learnt more about myself on the bike in the four hours he spent with me than I ever could have going it alone. And now, with my relatively pain-free enthusiasm, that 5.30am alarm isn't half as bad as it used to be. I'm now off to join a yoga class.

*Greg McQuaid
Via Email*

If The Bike Fits Wear It

When riding, do you suffer from any of the following: sore arms, neck or knees; numb hands, bum or genitals; cramping; can't stand up straight or touch toes after a ride; loss of power or fatigue; reluctance to get up on a cold winter morning to go for a ride? No, it's not a description of a normal ride but a sign that something's wrong, or so I thought having suffered from all of the above. I knew that it couldn't possibly be my finely tuned and buffed body so it had to be the bike. In desperation I turned to **Steve Hogg at Cyclefitcentre.com** and four hours later and \$390 (plus parts) lighter I emerged with a new look bike: higher seat further back and canted to the right; shorter stem set on higher bars; adjusted cleats with shoe inserts; plus a working knowledge of musculo-skeletal bio-mechanics and the address of a good chiropractor! Why? Because apparently I had a pelvis which sloped to the right, shoulders that drooped to the left, leg length disparities, no pelvic core strength, and a tendency to say "You're joking!" at each new revelation. Steve cheerfully told me not to worry as most of the population is asymmetrical; they just don't know it, whereas bikes are symmetrical and standardised to fit a small commercial market. The disparity results in maladaptation and pain!

To cut to the chase I rode 100 km the next day without pain for the first time in five years and ran a place in a club race two days after that! I knew it was the bloody bike! This is not a sales pitch but if you want to be stronger, fitter, faster, better looking and do it all without pain don't contact me, talk to Steve on 8338 8911!