

*** The outline in this article and my other articles “*Preparation Phase*”, “*Building an Aerobic Power Base*”, “*Periodization – What is it*” and “*Hammering versus Periodization*” are writings about **classic linear** Periodization. While there are other Periodized Methods, I find this method works well for the vast majority of athletes. Also, by truly understanding this method athletes and coaches alike create their own intellectual base of knowledge from which personal adaptations can be created.

Transition – 1 a: passage from one state, stage, or place to another: change

Phase – 1 a: to adjust so as to be in a synchronized condition

Transition Phase, what is it to you as a cyclist? Transition Phase, as a time period or phase in your training plan. It is the first or last phase of the season, depending on how you see it. Personally, I like to think it is the first step because as this “season” has concluded you need to answer the question “what is next?” This question in itself implies that it is a time to restart or time for a rebirth. Your focus is now the next season and it is in Transition where the first steps are taking place to prepare the mind and body. As the definitions of transition and phase imply you are about to change and you need to synchronize. Synchronize and change what? Believe it or not you are slightly off. You may have felt or seen signs of that recently. The change and synchronization is one of mind and body, of mental preparation and physical recovery. You have spent months reaching goals, riding indoor trainers, weight training, racing, traveling, etc. You are ready to sit back and take a good look at what you have accomplished or may have not accomplished. You should look at what you have learned about your sport and yourself. It is this reflection that serves to regain mental motivation to begin the physical preparation for the next season. Physically, you are tired. You feel fit, sure, but your posture has probably suffered from thousands of miles in a hunched over position. Little aches and pains probably appeared in the last months of the season and your body, if you listen closely, is telling you “I need a bit of a break!”

So, you probably aren’t looking forward to the trainer, huh? You’re tired and maybe achy. This is why you need to transition. Mentally you need to bring back the fire you had as the beginning of spring. Physically you need to rehab the aches and recover from all those miles in the saddle. This is a perfect time to address these aches by seeking help from homeopaths such as Chiropractors, massage therapist and possibly physical therapists.

How are you going to accomplish firing up the motivation and prepare your body for this next season? It may start with Reflection. Why not to take a good look at where you have been, where you started from and what you have accomplished with your previous efforts? As you go through this process you will feel the juices starting to flow. It is a great mental exercise. During the next few weeks you need to do it daily. You could also read about races, motivational stories, training, diet, travel, etc. You could shop for new bike toys that will make you fast and inspire you to train. You should relive your races and events. Determine why you did well or did poorly. You should be thinking about where you have been and where you want to be next year. What can you do better?

What shouldn't you do during the next few weeks? DON'T GET FAT and OUT OF SHAPE. There is no off season. You have worked hard to gain fitness don't throw it away. You don't need the bike to stay in shape. Sure one long ride (2 hours) once a week would be nice, but how about running, swimming, hiking, alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ice skating, an aerobic class, or a yoga class? You need to keep stimulating your aerobic engine for a few hours each week, but how about maybe working on that flexibility and maybe getting back into the gym for some body reshaping or rehab?

How long should you plan on being in Transition? As with any phase of development you can't skip steps. The answer is as long as it takes to accomplish the goals. You must get yourself refreshed both mentally and physically before starting the Preparation and Base Phases. Both of these next phases are grueling. Once you are mentally fired up about the idea of hopping on your trainer for a few hours to build a stronger aerobic power base AND your body has been fully rested, and in some cases rehabbed, you should be ready to move into the Preparation Phase. Transition can take as little as 2-3 weeks for some and for others as many as 8 weeks.

Like with any phase or period of training, Transition Phase has specific goals. You need to accomplish the tasks if you are going to continue to progress. Remember and believe this, you didn't just get fast on that day at Presque Isle or the day of the Hans Huddle or at the Empire Qualifiers. You got faster and fitter during the work you did on that trainer, in the gym, and when you did all of those repeats and intervals. You earned those great race days. Don't take transition lightly. Start earning it for next season!



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