

Transition Phase – Here We Go!

By Peter Cummings, MHP, NNP

Transition – *noun*: passage from one state, stage, or place to another; change.

Phase – *noun*: to adjust so as to be in a synchronized condition.

The **Transition Phase**: What does it mean to you as a cyclist? As a distinct period in your training plan, the Transition Phase is either the first or the final phase of the season, depending on your perspective. Personally, I view it as the first step toward what's next. As one season concludes, the critical question arises: "What comes next?" This question implies a period of renewal, a time to restart. During this phase, your focus shifts to the upcoming season, and it's within the Transition Phase that the initial steps toward preparing both mind and body are taken. As the definitions of "transition" and "phase" suggest, you are about to undergo change, and synchronization is essential. But what exactly needs to change and synchronize?

Believe it or not, you are slightly off balance. Recently, you may have felt or noticed signs of this imbalance. The required change and synchronization involve both mind and body—a mental preparation and a physical recovery. Over the past months, you've been relentlessly pursuing goals: riding indoor trainers, weight training, racing, traveling, and more. Now, it's time to sit back and reflect on what you've accomplished—or perhaps, on what you haven't. Reflection allows you to regain the mental motivation necessary to begin the physical preparation for the next season. Physically, you are exhausted. Sure, you may feel fit, but your posture has likely suffered from thousands of miles in a flexed

position. Small aches and pains may have emerged in the final months of the season. Listen closely, and your body might be telling you, "I need a bit of a break!"

The idea of getting back on the trainer might not be appealing right now, especially if you're tired and achy. This is precisely why the Transition Phase is so crucial. Mentally, you need to reignite the fire you had at the start of spring. Physically, you need to rehabilitate those aches and recover from the extensive miles you've put in. This period is perfect for addressing these issues, whether by seeking help from homeopaths such as chiropractors, massage therapists, or even physical therapists.

How will you rekindle your motivation and prepare your body for the upcoming season? It all starts with reflection. Take a thorough look at where you've been, where you started, and what you've achieved with your previous efforts. As you engage in this process, you'll feel your motivation begin to reignite. It's a powerful mental exercise, one you should engage in daily over the next few weeks. Additionally, consider reading about races, motivational stories, training methods, diet, and travel. You might even find inspiration in shopping for new gear that will enhance your performance and motivate you to train. Revisit your races and events, considering why you may have performed well or poorly. Reflect on where you've been and where you want to be next year. What can you improve? Considering have someone else look at your training data or discuss this past season.

However, during these weeks, there are things you should avoid: *Don't get fat and out of shape*. Remember, there is no true off-season. Review my article entitled "*Hammering vs. Periodization*" to learn more about this. You've worked hard to gain fitness—don't let it slip away. You don't necessarily need the bike to stay in shape. Sure, a long ride once a

week is beneficial, but consider alternatives like running, swimming, hiking, alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ice skating, or even attending an aerobic or yoga class. Keep your aerobic engine stimulated for a few hours each week, and consider focusing on mobility and returning to the gym for some body reshaping or rehabilitation.

How long should the Transition Phase last? Like any phase of development, you can't rush it. The duration depends on how long it takes to achieve your goals. You need to refresh both mentally and physically before moving on to the Preparation and Base Phases. These upcoming phases are grueling, requiring you to be at your best. When you're mentally eager to hop on your trainer for a few hours to build a stronger aerobic base, and your body is fully rested—and possibly rehabilitated—you'll be ready to move into the Preparation Phase. For some, the Transition Phase might last 2-3 weeks; for others, it could take up to 8 weeks.

Just like every phase or period in training, the Transition Phase has specific objectives. Achieving these objectives is crucial for continued progress. Remember, you didn't just get fast on race day. Your speed and fitness were forged in the work you did on the trainer, in the gym, and during all those repeats and intervals but your fitness was also created by well-timed and adequate recovery. Great performances are earned. Don't take the Transition Phase lightly—it's the time to start earning your success for next season.