

BASIC BIKING TERMS

AERO BARS: Extensions that stick out in front of the handlebars to allow the rider to get into an aerodynamically low position.

ANAEROBIC THRESHOLD: The exercise level where the body begins to switch from aerobic (oxygen-using) to less-efficient anaerobic processes to produce energy.

BONK: To exercise to the point of depletion of the body's energy stores, leaving one extremely weak and giddy.

BOTTLE CAGE: A bracket for holding a water bottle on a bicycle frame.

CADENCE: Pedaling rate, measured in revolutions per minute (rpm).

CAT, CATEGORY: The competition level in USCF-sponsored races. Cat 5 = beginner, Cat 4 = novice, Cat 3 = sport, Cat 2 = expert, Cat 1 = elite.

CHROMOLY: A chrome-molybdenum steel alloy used in bicycle frames.

CLEAT: 1) A slotted shoe attachment designed to grip a rattrap pedal. 2) The mechanism on the bottom of a bicycle shoe that locks into a clipless pedal.

CLIPLESS PEDAL: A pedal designed to lock to a mating device (cleat) on the bottom of the cyclist's shoe by means of a special spring-loaded mechanism. Clipless pedals are so called because they replace toe clips as a means of tying your feet to the pedals.

COG: A rear sprocket. (The normal meaning of "cogs" is "teeth," but bicycle parlance uses "cogs" to mean rear "cogwheels" or sprockets.)

CYCLOCOMPUTER, COMPUTER: A readout that clamps to the handlebars and indicates speed, distance, elapsed time and sometimes cadence, altitude, heart rate, etc.

DERAILLEUR: The assembly that "derails" the chain from one sprocket to another, in order to change gears.

DOWN TUBE: The frame tube that connects the head tube to the bottom bracket.

DRAFT: Riding close behind another rider to take advantage of the aerodynamics.

DROP HANDLEBARS: Racing-style handlebars with curving, swept-down ends which facilitate a low, aerodynamic riding position.

DROPPED, GETTING: When a rider can no longer stay with a group.

DROPPING A CHAIN: Having the chain fall off a chainwheel (on either side).

DROPS: The downward-curving portion of racing-style handlebars. You place your hands here when you want to get aerodynamic for fast riding.

EMERGENCY KIT: Typically refers to a small bag attached to the bike for use in carrying emergency bike repair equipment.

HAMMER: To ride fast.

HYBRID BICYCLE: Also known as "cross" or "fitness" bicycle is a cross between a mountain bike and a touring bike. The best of them have the handlebars and control levers of a mountain bike, with the frame, gears, wheels and brakes of a touring bike.

INTERVAL TRAINING: Training with short periods of very intense exertion.

JERSEY: A bicycling shirt, often emblazoned with team logos and advertisements. Usually includes pockets in the back.

MASSED-START: A race in which competitors start at the same time (as opposed to a time trial.)

MOUNTAIN BIKE: A sturdy bicycle distinguished by wide tires and horizontal handlebars, often used for off-road cycling.

NIPPLE: A spoke nipple is a bicycle part that holds a bicycle wheel's rim to each spoke.

PACELINE: A group of bicyclists riding close together in single file to reduce wind resistance.

PACING, PULLING: Leading a paceline or peloton.

PELTON: A group of racers riding in a close-spaced pack.

PRESTA VALVE: A special air filler valve used on most high-pressure bicycle tires. It is thinner than Schrader-type valves.

QUICK-RELEASE BRAKES: Brakes with provision to easily open up the calipers for quick wheel removal.

QUICK-RELEASE LEVER: A lever used on wheel hubs, and sometimes seatposts, which replaces the locknut for easy, no-tool removal or adjustment.

RAGGED PEDALING: Pedaling in an inconsistent manner at varying speeds.

ROAD BIKE: Lighter than the standard bicycle and distinguished by narrower tires and curved handlebars, used specifically used for riding on roads.

ROAD RASH: Abraded skin caused by a crash.

SADDLE: A bicycle seat.

SADDLE SORE: An abrasion, boil or pressure sore caused by contact with the saddle.

SAG WAGON: A motor vehicle used to pick up tired riders in an organized bicycle ride.

SCHRADER VALVE: Type of air filler valve used on automobile and some bicycle tires. See PRESTA VALVE.

SEAT POST: The removable tube that the saddle mounts onto.

SEAT TUBE: The frame tube that connects between the top tube and the bottom bracket. The seat post inserts into the top of the seat tube.

SPIN: To pedal with a high cadence.

SPRINT, MASS (or field sprint): Sprinting in a large group, often at the end of a race.

STAGE RACE: A race in which a different course is traversed each day. The winner is the racer with the lowest total time.

STEM: The tube that connects the handlebars to the steer tube.

TIME TRIAL: A bicycle race in which cyclists race against the clock rather than directly against each other. Racers start set times apart and are prohibited from drafting each other.

TIRE LEVER: Bike tool typically used to fix flat tires by prying the tire away from the rim.

TOP TUBE: The top, horizontal frame member which connects between the head tube and the seat tube.

TOURING BIKE: Compared with a standard road bike, a touring bike has a sturdier frame, more extended, relaxed frame geometry, and clearance and braze-ons for fenders and racks.

TRAINER, TRAINING STAND: A frame that converts a bicycle into an exercise (stationary) bicycle. Allows training indoors in bad weather.

TRIPLE CRANK: A crankset with three chainwheels.

TUBE: 1) A piece of tubing, usually part of the frame. 2) The tire innertube.

USCF: United States Cycling Federation. Sanctions bicycle races.

VELODROME: A stadium for bicycle racing, usually in the shape of an oval, with heavily-banked turns.