

Muscle Tension Intervals

Muscle Tension work can be thought of as strength training on a bike. The idea is to use a big gear or force, with low cadence to put the legs under “tension” while cycling.

Muscle Tension work is often used at the start of building up for the new season where building strength is a key focus.

Equipment Used

4.5” or 3” rollers with Flywheel or Headwind Fan.

This session needs resistance. It can be done with a Flywheel but Headwind Fan is best. Sometimes (depending on weight of rider, size of rollers etc.) Flywheels can build up momentum. The Headwind Fan provides a constant force.

The Session

Warm up at a lower Z2 level for 10 minutes. Include two low-gear, high-cadence rev outs in the warm up.

Then...

5 min muscle tension, 5 mins Z2 – repeated 4 times

Warm down for 5 mins after final MT effort.

The key is to keep your cadence between 55-65 rpm. The gear chosen should be big enough for you to feel a constant force on your legs. You are not aiming for a power level but it might hover between Z3 & Z4.

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Training sessions provided by
Coach Peter Georgi

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How to Do It

Tension intervals are a key part of building muscular strength and the ability to press hard on the pedals. On the road you would do them on gentle climbs or in to a head wind. So when doing them on the rollers, imagine you are climbing steadily and keep your body still.

When doing tension intervals lock your core and twist your hips forward on the saddle. Hold your arms still and concentrate on keeping your body still.

Cadence for the MT efforts should be around 55-65 rpm.

Progression and Other Thoughts

The simplest progression is to build up the length of the intervals, adding 1 minute at a time up to a maximum of 8 mins (40 mins in total muscle tension).

A further progression is to do some of the intervals in the drops, so in a racing position. Again, lock your core and keep your body still.

You can also do this type of session on a time trial bike.