

## CYCLING

Someone who's well-acquainted with cycling injuries – both among triathletes and professional road cyclists – is Rob Palmer, Chiropractor to the Cannondale-Garmin cycling team.

Palmer told *Outdoor Fitness*: "Triathletes commonly present with injuries of the foot, ankle and/or knee, whereas professional road cyclists complain of low back pain, followed by neck pain, then knee pain. Triathletes suffer fewer crashes than professional road cyclists but they make up for it on the injury scoreboard with their repetitive pounding of road whilst running. Swimming injuries – most typically of the shoulder – are relatively uncommon.

So does an injured triathlete have to stop cycling? "No," replied Palmer, "that would be unusual. Cycling is low impact and performed within a relatively fixed range of motion in a closed system formed by the three-contact points with bicycle. Many of the injuries picked up through running and swimming will not be aggravated by cycling. For example, shoulder injuries would not normally be exacerbated whilst cycling, therefore it would be ok to continue on the bike. Lower extremity conditions should be managed on an individual basis, but generally if there is pain then you should not continue."

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### ROB PALMER'S GUIDE TO AVOIDING CYCLING INJURY

- **Have a warm-up/cool-down routine**

incorporating dynamic stretching, especially for the hip flexors, glutes, quadriceps, hamstrings and calves.

- **Have your position assessed** by a certified bike fitter – ideally one with a sports therapy background – who can take your biomechanics into account and reduce injury risk.

- **Spend time training on your race bike**, and keep to a cadence of 90rpm rather than relying on force by pushing big gears at a low cadence.

- **Find a practitioner qualified in movement screening** and the prescription of correctional exercises. A tailored strength and conditioning programme aimed at fixing biomechanical problems will help establish a solid foundation on which to build your training load with reduced risk of injury.

- **Invest in a foam roller and massage ball.** Five to 10 minutes a day keeping your movement clean and free will help prevent injury and let you achieve a more aerodynamic position on the bike.

- **Avoid pro-inflammatory foods** such as trans-fats, saturated fats and sugar.

- **Have more good-quality sleep** and less stress.

- **Nip problems in the bud** before they become an issue. Recommended reading: *Becoming a Supple Leopard* (2013) by Dr Kelly Starrett.

