

Up and Down the Ladder Cycling Mixes (50 minutes)



Mixes (plural)? Yep, I'm going to bust out of this long hiatus with not one but two new playlists, both based around the same profile.

I've been experimenting a bit with Spinning-style rides; that is, rides where the music is superimposed on a profile and where the music doesn't always support the work. I got the ladder idea from the indefatigable Chris over at Chrispins (check out one of her ladder profiles [here](#)) who, in turn, got her idea from someone over at [Pedal On](#).

My version is made up of three 10 minute "ladders" plus a warm up and cool down. Each ladder starts with a standing climb up to the top:

30 seconds on/30 recovery (seated)

40 seconds on/30 recovery

50 seconds on/30 recovery

60 seconds on/30 recovery

Now, we head down the ladder with a fast seated flat:

60 seconds on/30 recovery

50 seconds on/30 recovery

40 seconds on/30 recovery

30 seconds on/30 recovery

Then we start the whole thing again for ladder #2. I inserted a jump song at the end of ladder #2 for variety and to introduce a longer working interval. After the jumps, we move on to ladder #3 and finish as usual with a cool down and some stretching.

Here's the playlist I used for the first **Up and Down the Ladder** class:

PLAYLIST #1

Warmup

Prayer in C (Robin Schulz Radio Edit) – Lilly Wood & The Prick & Robin Schulz (3:09): Schulz's remix topped the charts in 21 countries this year and made the Top 40 in both the USA and Canada. Ride easy to this finger-tappin' warmup while you explain the day's profile. For new riders or those who've been off the bike for a while, the news that there is only one working interval longer than 60 seconds will come as a relief. Regular riders will need to push during the working intervals and ensure they need the breaks when they come, or they may not find it challenging enough. I coached them to push for something that feels just-short-of-breathless in each working interval.

I've structured the playlist so that the music will mostly – 90-95% – support riders' effort, but there are a few spots in this ride where riders will still need to work when the music slows down or fades. In those situations, it's mind over matter. I like to warn them to expect this and focus on maintaining their effort.

Ladder #1: Dueling DJs

Fine Without You – Armin van Buuren (6:26): Currently the #3 DJ in the world, according to DJ Magazine.

Long Road to Hell – Avicii (3:43): Currently the #6 DJ in the world, but he's a mere pup, born in 1989 to van Buuren's old-timer status (born 1976).

You'll notice each ladder is made up of one longer song and one shorter song totaling about 10 minutes.

Ladder #2: Guitars and Drums

Swamp Thing – The Grid (7:15): Heading back to the '90s for this ladder, Swamp Thing was released in 1993. (This is the song people ask me about after class.) Yee-hahs optional.

Drum Trip – Rusted Root (3:45): Released in 1994.

Intermission:

Jump (Malinchak Dub Mix) [feat. Nelly Furtado] – Flo Rida (7:01): I'm gonna go out on a limb here and theorize that Flo Rida has taken an indoor cycling class or two. 4 count jumps, moderate resistance – basically, anything in the range of 65-75% of riders' maximum capacity is fine with me. This is what I'd call a comfortable challenge – it's work, you know it's work, but it's not hard work. Riders should be able to converse in full sentences.

Ladder #3: Techno v. Metal

This ladder is a shout out to two of my regular riders, one who loves trance, and the other who can't get enough metal. I like both genres, but I think I might be the only person in the universe who does.

Blade (Jon Doe & Kutski Remix) [feat. Red Monkey] – Warp Brothers (6:51): We don't know why it's called Blade, because

the song is entirely instrumental.

Kickstart My Heart – Motley Crüe (4:43): We do know what this song's about. Nikki Sixx wrote it about a 1987 drug overdose in which he was declared dead but was revived by a paramedic. We won't mention that bit in class. Or the bit where the song was used in an episode of The Office when Dwight gets pumped up before meeting a client. BTW, if you haven't seen the clip where Dwight takes over an indoor cycling class, you can watch it [here](#).

Cooldown

ART OFFICIAL CAGE – Prince (3:42): Some new Prince!

Dangerous – David Guetta (3:21): Some extra time for cool down and stretching.

PLAYLIST #2

I got really good feedback from my class on my first ladder class so I decided to run the ladder ride again a couple of weeks later with a different playlist. I think I might even like this playlist a teensy bit more than the first one.

Warmup

The Days – Avicii (4:38): Goodygoodygoody, a new Avicii song. That's Robbie Williams on vocals. Dare you not to tap your feet to this sunny, upbeat tune.

Ladder #1:

I've kept the idea of a longer and a shorter song in each ladder, but reversed them for this profile so that the shorter song comes first.

Blame (feat. John Newman) – Calvin Harris (3:33): More new

music (released September 2014) from Scotland's Harris, who might have come in at #11 on DJ Magazine's Top 100 poll but was the highest paid DJ in the world this year according to [Forbes](#) magazine, which reported that the 30 year old Harris pulled in a cool \$66 million dollars – more than double the take of the #2 DJ on the list, David Guetta, who earned a paltry \$30 million in comparison.

Pistolero – Juno Reactor (6:14): I've had this song on my on deck list for a while, so I was delighted to finally use it. It has a Latin vibe and great energy.

Ladder #2:

Dangerous (feat. Sam Martin) [Robin Schulz Remix] [Radio Edit] – David Guetta (3:21): New Guetta, released in October 2014.

Tosh (Gosh) – Fluke (6:31): Dates from 1995 but when the drums kick in at 0:45, its relentless.

Intermission:

Uptown Funk (feat. Bruno Mars) – Mark Ronson (4:31): Brand new (released in November 2014) and hovering near the top of the iTunes chart. Everybody needs a little funk now and then. Four count jumps. As with the previous profile, anything that riders can call 'work' with a straight face works for me. New riders might prefer to ride easy and just recover before the final ladder.

Ladder #3:

Divine Sorrow (feat. Avicii) – Wyclef Jean (4:39): A new song from Haiti's Jean, the proceeds from which will benefit the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. I've been sweet on Jean since his 2008 tribute to Venus Williams in **I'm Ready** in which he urges her, "don't stop, even if you clash with the Titans." It's a rare song about a woman that has nothing to say about her beauty or appearance but instead

celebrates that she's a "master of all turfs" and that her "serve is like lightning." If you like, you can swap out **Waves** or **Rather Be** and use it for one of your cool down songs.

Strong – Arno Cost and Norman Doray (5:54): Finish up with some inspirational lyrics and a cheeky, cheeky disco vibe.

Cooldown

Waves (Robin Schulz Radio Edit) – Mr. Probz (3:28): A beautiful, contemplative song. This would be a great track to just close your eyes and ride.

Rather Be (feat. Jess Glynne) – Clean Bandit (3:48): from the lilting beat to the strings and the backup vocals, it's pop perfection. When I first heard **Rather Be** in a shop, I couldn't wait to Shazam it to find out the title and artist. (Yep, I'm that weird person holding her iPhone up to the speaker in the ceiling.)

Other Uses for Ladders

Both of these playlists have lots of energy and would probably work well with a number of different profiles. Any of the six single ladders (2 songs) will also work well if you need to expand one of your own rides to fill a longer class. I subbed a 55 minute early morning class a few weeks ago, and since my lunch time classes are all 45 minutes long, I needed to add 10 minutes to the ride I planned to use. I added a single ladder to the end of a different ride and hey presto, a 55 min ride.

And a confession...



Augh, I know I promised an iTunes widget so folks can preview songs right from the blog. But I can't &%?&? figure out how to insert it, and it's nearly 11:00 p.m. on a Sunday night, so I'm going to have to call Dave Moore (a.k.a. my web guru), and edit this post to

add one later. I neglected to mention that web gurling is actually Dave's sideline – his main gig is [Satya Tea](#). The company tagline is Liquid Wisdom. I don't know if I'm any wiser for drinking the tea, but it is some of the best tea I've ever had. The Jasmine Sunset Green tea is heaven in a cup and they have a delicious Oolong tea called Iron Goddess.

Look for an updated post with an iTunes widget this week, along with a **Christmas Ride**. And stay tuned for The Bike Cafe's annual **Top 25 Indoor Cycling Tunes of 2014** before year-end. What were your favourite indoor cycling songs of 2014?