

Indoor Training—Trainer and Treadmill Combination Workouts

With races occurring earlier and earlier each spring, longer indoor training sessions are often necessary for athletes who live where the weather prohibits productive outdoor riding and running or when daylight hours are short. Often, for athletes dealing with these training constraints, thoughts of long sessions on the trainer or treadmill keep them from sticking to their training schedule. By breaking up these sessions with combination workouts, athletes can prevent the boredom that is often associated with indoor training. This article will discuss your equipment options for indoor training and provide several combination workouts to help spice up your indoor training routines.

First, you must have the proper equipment at home for these workouts, and the different equipment options are listed in this article. If working out at home is not an option, combination workouts can also be accomplished at your gym, utilizing a stationary or spin bike and a treadmill.

Indoor equipment options:

- **Stationary trainer (magnetic fluid, air):** These trainers are readily available at bike shops, sporting goods stores or online. They are the most economic choice and do not take up too much space.
- **Rollers:** These require a bit more expertise than stationary trainers, as your bike is not locked in. An advantage to rollers is that they can provide instant feedback; for, if your stroke gets choppy or you lose your balance, you may find yourself sprawled on the floor. Proceed carefully if you choose this option, as there is a bit of a learning curve involved in mastering the use of rollers.
- **Spin Bike:** There are lots of different makes and models of these fixed-gear, adjustable resistance bikes that are most often used in organized spin classes. An at-home model allows you to have a designated bike that is made for the stresses of indoor riding, and it also provides you a fully adjustable bike that can accommodate multi-users.
- **CompuTrainer:** This is a trainer/ergometer that works with Windows PC software. It has many interactive capabilities and also allows the user to use power-based training. Although costly, it is a great tool for measuring performance improvement, perfecting pedal stroke, simulating riding on real race courses and completing specific workouts (hill climbing, intervals, time trials, recovery rides).
- **Velotron:** This piece of indoor equipment, manufactured by the same company as CompuTrainer, is a computer controlled electronic bicycle ergometer that works with Windows PC software. It offers all of the bells and whistles that the CT does, but has a broader load-range (5 to 2000 watts) and tops out as the most expensive option for indoor training.
- **Treadmill:** There are two types of treadmills, manual (the least expensive) and motorized (more expensive, but a better choice), and they vary greatly in cost and options. Since this may be a significant investment, you should do your homework when looking into buying a treadmill. The price ranges generally break down as follows: Budget = \$500-\$1,500, Mid-Range = \$1,500-\$3,000 and Quality = \$3,000-up. When making this type of investment, you need to be sure that you are buying the best option within your price range. If you are looking to add a treadmill to your indoor training

arsenal, be sure to consider: the **motor** and **horsepower** (1.5 to 2.5 HP "continuous duty" is best), **stability** and **smooth ride** (look for a steady platform and a belt that accommodates your stride), **workout features** (various programmable workouts, heart-rate monitor, simple console, water bottle holder, speed and incline range), **noise** and **space** (a quiet ride is key, and, if space is a concern, choose a folding model).

Treadmill buying tips:

- Shop for your treadmill at a specialty fitness equipment store—low end treadmills are generally found in department stores, while specialty stores carry a variety of treadmills for you to compare.
- Try out the treadmill before you purchase it—bring your running shoes to the store and test run the treadmill.
- Check out the warranty and service agreement—read the fine print so you know what to expect if you have trouble with the treadmill down the road.
- Have the maintenance program for your treadmill demonstrated for you—know how to maintain the health of your treadmill to prolong trouble-free use.
- Be sure that the treadmill will fit in your space before you buy—measure your space and also the doors that the treadmill will go through when it is delivered to your home.

Once you have the proper equipment, setting up a functional workout area is key to the success of completing your indoor sessions. Having a designated space for your sessions allows you more time to workout, rather than setting up the area before each workout—think garage, basement, porch, or spare room. Follow these tips to set up your indoor area for comfortable training sessions.

Setting up your indoor training area:

- Purchase a fitness mat to place under your bicycle and treadmill to protect your floors and carpets from pooling sweat. An old rug or towel will also work on a hard floor and then all you have to do is throw it in the wash for an easy cleanup.
- If using a trainer, level your bike by placing a block of wood or telephone book under the front wheel. There are also specific risers that are available which level and stabilize your bike—search for "indoor bike riser" on the internet.
- Make sure that your room is well ventilated and that you have at least one fan (oscillating, wall-mounted or box) to help keep you cool.
- If using your bike on a trainer, be sure to cover your headset and top tube with a towel and have another on hand to wipe yourself off. Place an additional towel on the treadmill.
- Make sure that you have plenty of fluids on hand to drink so that you stay properly hydrated.
- Set up a music system in your indoor area and use a CD player with a "repeat" function to keep your session uninterrupted.
- Use your TV/VCR/DVD system to watch TV and play movies, triathlon races, cycling races and training videos.
- Use a large whiteboard to write out your workout so that you can easily follow the plan for the day.

- Following your workout be sure to wipe all of your equipment down with a gentle cleaning fluid.

The workouts included in this article are heart-rate based (see zone chart at the end of the article) and can be adjusted for those who train with a power meter. These workouts are for athletes preparing for an early season ironman distance race, and if need be the duration of each leg of the workout can be reduced for those training for a half- or Olympic-distance triathlon.

Long Run Focus:

- Run 45 minutes zones 1-2
- Bike 15 minute easy spin (small chain ring, high cadence)
- Run 45 minutes, 15 minutes in each zone: 1, 2, & 3
- Bike 15 minutes spin (small chain ring, high cadence)
- Run 45 minutes, 15 minutes zone 1 and 30 minutes steady zone 2
- Bike 15 minutes spin (small chain ring, high cadence)

Total time: 3.75 hours

Run = 3.0 hours

Bike = 45 minutes

Long Bike Focus:

- Bike 1.5 hours:
Warm-up: 30 minutes easy in the 1-2 zones
Form work: 30 minutes of 45 to 60 seconds left leg, 45 to 60 seconds right leg, 45 to 60 seconds both legs—easy gear, high cadence
Final 30 minutes: steady zone 2
- Run 10-minutes (1-2 zones)
- Bike 1.5-hour:
30 minutes in each zone: 1, 2, & 3
- Run 10-minutes (1-2 zones)
- Bike 1.5-hours:
45 minutes in zone 1 and 45 minutes in zone 2
- 10-minute run (1-2 zones)
- Easy walk 5 minute cool down

Total time: 5.0 hours

Bike = 4.5 hours

Run = 30 minutes

Medium Duration Bike & Run Focus:

- Bike 1.25 hours:
30 minutes slowly building to zone 2, middle 15 minutes steady zone 3, last 30 back to zone 1
- Run 30 minutes focus on cadence and form (1-2 zones)
- Bike 1.25 hours:
25 minutes in each zone: 1, 2, & 3
- Run 30 minutes:
15 minutes focus on cadence and form, building to high 2 zone and then steady zone 3 for the last 15 minutes
- Easy walk 5 minute cool down

Total time: 4.0 hours

Run = 1.5 hours

Bike = 2.5 hours

These are just a few examples of combination workouts that you can perform indoors. When designing your own workouts, think about what aspect of your training that you want to focus on—endurance, form, power, anaerobic endurance and build your workout around that component. Break your long segments of training into smaller blocks and use one discipline (bike or run) to give you a break from the other. These smaller, focused blocks of training will keep your sessions interesting, alleviating the boredom often associated with long dull indoor training workouts. All you need to do is find the space, set up your equipment, make a plan and you will be on your way to your best season yet.

Heart Rate Training Zones:

Zone 1: Recovery

Zone 2: Extensive Endurance

Zone 3: Intensive Endurance

Zone 4: Sub-threshold

Zone 5A: Super-threshold

Zone 5B: Anaerobic Endurance

Zone 5C: Power