

GO FOR A SPIN

The studio's dimly lit, killer legs abound, and everyone's pedaling in unison to the high-energy (and high-decibel) music. When it comes to fitness classes, group cycling rates high on the intimidation scale. Try these tips from Nichelle Hines, an instructor at Cycle House in LA, and no one will know it's your first time. by Laurel Leicht

1/ SUIT UP Opt for fitted shorts (with or without padding) or capris. Sneakers are fine for your first few classes, but invest in cycling shoes if you plan to continue. They clip into the pedals to prevent slipping and give you more power.

2/ ARRIVE EARLY You'll have to sign up in advance at most studios. Choose a bike in the center of the room so you can observe the instructor and the cadence of the other riders. Then head in 10 minutes before class begins to introduce yourself to the teacher. She can help you set up your bike and keep an eye on your form.

3/ GET SET Stand to the left of the bike and adjust the saddle and handlebars to hip height. Next, bend your right arm 90 degrees, form a fist, and place it at the center of the handlebars, (the part closest to theseat); move theseat until it touches your elbow.

4/ COME TO GRIPS The teacher will refer to three hand positions: "first" is hands together in the center of the handlebars; "second" is hands on the curves; and "third" is thumbs on the far ends. Hold on lightly—your weight should be in your legs and core, not on your hands.

5/ CRANK IT UP The flywheel, or knob below the handlebars, controls the tension. Turn it to the right to add resistance and to the left to decrease it. When an instructor says, "Give me one turn," it's simply a suggestion. Put on enough tension to keep up with the pace of the class or rhythm of the song, but not so much that you're breathless.



Cycling Speak WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR INSTRUCTOR SAYS...

- **CLIMB** Increase the resistance to simulate riding uphill. Be prepared to place your hands in third position, lift your butt out of the saddle, and slant your body slightly forward with your back flat (see photo, above).
- **JUMP** Pick up the pace as you briefly lift your butt and then sit back down again.
- **RUN** Place your hands in second or third position, stand upright, and pedal at a quick pace.

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