

FITNESS NEWS!

SIT DOWN V STAND UP

Is your out-of-the-saddle climbing technique OK?

Kenny Pryde

When it comes to long climbs, is it better to sit in the saddle and spin a low gear, or to ride out of the saddle and grind up in a higher gear?

There has been very little analysis of climbing seated versus climbing out of the saddle, which is why Dr Frédéric Grappe of Besançon University (and chief coach with the FDJ.fr pro team) decided to investigate.

Working in the sports science lab at the university of Besançon, Grappe set

up a treadmill to simulate different slopes of five to 11 per cent, enabling the riders to ride their bikes in or out of the saddle, and allowing him to carry out a battery of tests in 'real world' conditions with a top 10 WorldTour climber and a group of non-climber elite cyclists.

Grappe discovered that a gifted out-of-the-saddle climber is fundamentally more efficient, both in terms of biomechanics and oxygen consumption, than a 'standard' pro climbing out

of the saddle. The climber appears to have learned to optimise his out-of-the-saddle style compared to his fellow pros.

"When you are out of the saddle, in addition to the muscular strength in your legs, we observed that in a standing position, the top-10 climber can better transfer mechanical energy during the pedalling cycle compared to the other cyclists. His mechanical efficiency was also better. He also has body weight energy pressing down on the pedals and it turns out that a good climber is far better at making use of this weight than a non-climber also out of the saddle."

The good news is that you can improve your out-of-the-saddle style. "When you climb out of the saddle, how much energy you can use varies a lot, depending on your riding style," says Grappe. "For example, if you look at Cadel Evans, he tends to be positioned quite far back and keeps his hips quite low, which isn't ideal. Compare that to Alberto Contador, who is much further forward and higher over the bars — that's a more efficient position when climbing out of the saddle."

So you can improve your efficiency when climbing out the saddle by changing your position? "Absolutely," says Grappe. "I've been trying to incorporate that into training plans for the past couple of years. But you need to identify the problem and be prepared to work at it and that's not always easy!"

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"There has been very little analysis of climbing"



PRO PROTEIN

Red meat helps prevent functional decline

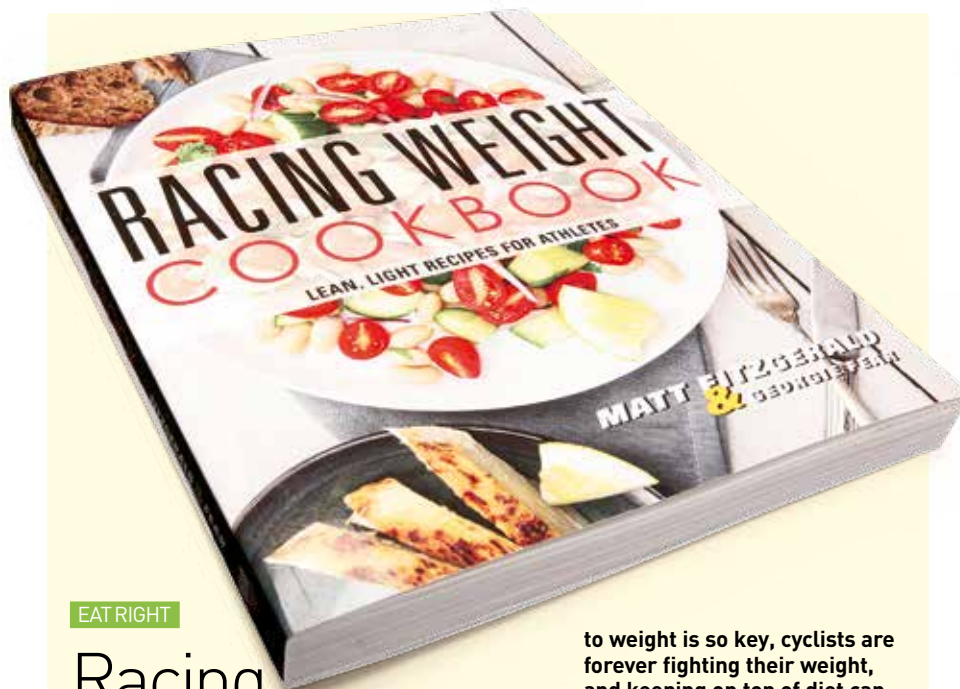
Over recent weeks, protein, and specifically red meat, has been roundly condemned in the media, with a body of research stating that it can be as harmful as smoking 20 cigarettes a day. While the research has been largely disproven, a new study has now stated that the consumption of red meat can significantly help older individuals function at higher levels of physical activity.

The study, in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, analysed 1,007 individuals through food

questionnaires over a seven-year period to find out whether protein intake might affect functional capabilities.

Results showed that men with a higher animal protein intake had 39 per cent decreased odds of experiencing higher-level functional decline than those in the lower category. No relationship was found with women.

"Identifying nutritional factors that contribute to maintaining higher-level functional capacity is important to help prevent future deterioration of activities for daily living," said researcher Dr Tsubota-Utsugi.



EAT RIGHT

Racing Weight Cookbook

According to a recent survey of endurance athletes, 75 per cent said they were concerned about their weight. In a sport such as cycling, where power

to weight is so key, cyclists are forever fighting their weight, and keeping on top of diet can become a tedious affair.

Racing Weight Cookbook delivers more than 100 flavourful, easy recipes that will help athletes hit their ideal weight without compromising performance. The book is the third in the best-selling *Racing Weight* series written by Matt Fitzgerald and dietician Georgie Fear. Price is £16.95.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Elivar Endure £19.99

Elivar has designed a batch of products specifically to suit the needs of those over 35. It is thought that as the body grows older, the speed and volume of protein it can use starts to decrease, which is why Elivar's protein drinks have an above average amount of protein. Elivar's carb drink Endure contains 32g of carbohydrates, per 45g sachet, similar to most energy drinks. However, it also contains 8g of protein, which may help trigger the recovery process sooner and prevent muscle protein being used to fuel exercise. The new flavour, watermelon, which is gluten free, is extremely palatable and refreshing while riding in warmer climes.

www.elivar.com £19.99 for box of 12 sachets



POSITIVE MEMORIES, POSITIVE ACTION

Struggling to get out and ride? Remember the good times!

Occasionally, we just can't be bothered to go out and ride, unable to shake off our lazy ways and before we know it, it's been two weeks since we last went out. It's a trap many cyclists get caught in, but according to new research from the University of New Hampshire, simply remembering a positive exercise experience could provide the motivation to get back out there.

The researchers examined the effects of remembering past exercise experiences on college students' subsequent exercise intentions and behaviours. They found that students who had a positive exercise memory reported significantly higher levels of subsequent exercise than those who

remembered negative experiences.

"From a public health perspective, identifying factors that can motivate individuals to engage in regular exercise is vital," says the study.

Next time you find your motivation levels running low, think back to a time where you enjoyed your ride. It could be the kick up the bibshorts you need.

