**Amashova Durban Classic**

**Supplemental Content**

**7 fixes for common cycling pain**

If you’re training for a big cycling event like the Amashova Durban Classic – there’s a good chance you’ll suffer some aches and pains along the way. The bad news is those pains are an inevitable part of training. The good news is most of them can be fixed with a few simple adjustments.

Most training injuries are caused by poor bike fit. Before race day, make sure you’ve adjusted your bike to fit your body (you won’t get far trying to get your body to fit the bike!). On race day, don’t suffer it out – make use of the medical resources on offer.

The Amashova is a mass-participation event with many cyclists who don’t often get to spend four or five hours cycling, so their endurance ability is tested on race day. In some cases, riders will find that their hands, wrists and so on start feeling sore. There are medical stations along the route, make use of them.

Here’s a list of the tweaks and twinges you’re likely to feel – and how to fix them!

**1. Tingling hands**

Why they hurt: You might be putting too much weight on your handlebar, and the excess pressure on the nerves in your hand can hurt your wrist and make your fingers go numb.

How to fix it: Wear lightly padded gloves and change the position of your hands frequently while you’re riding. Also, check that the nose of your saddle isn’t tipped too far down – this could shift your weight too far forward, putting a lot of pressure on your hands.

**2. Aching neck**

Why it hurts: You’re probably stretching too far – and this is often as a result of incorrect bike fit. An ill-fitting bike can be (and cause!) a pain in the neck. The stem might be too long, the saddle too far back, or the handlebar too low. Whatever the cause, you’re over-reaching and that’s causing tension in your shoulders and upper back.

How to fix it: Get a fit check at a cycle shop. You may need to change the saddle setback or the stem length. And while you’re riding, relax your shoulders.

**3. Pain in your lower back**

Why it hurts: Two possible reasons: either your core is weak, or your bike fit is wrong. If it’s the latter, then it’s the same story as with your neck – you’re stretching too far.

How to fix it: Get a fit check for your bike and make the necessary adjustments. (Remember, road race bicycles aren’t a one-size-fits-all deal!) In the gym or at home, strengthen your core by doing plank exercises, and also stretch your hamstrings.

**4. Sore hips**

Why they hurt: You’re pushing too hard in the high gears, and/or you have tight muscles and weak glutes.

How to fix it: Gear down! Dropping a gear and increasing your cadence will ease the pressure on your hips. Strengthen your glutes in the gym by doing lateral leg exercises such as side lunges.

**5. Burning feet**

Why they hurt: More often than not it’s because your shoes are too tight!

How to fix it: Loosen your shoe straps and move your cleats back a bit. If the pain persists, see a podiatrist – you might have a foot misalignment, or you might need an orthotic insert or shoe.

**6. Your butt hurts!**

Why it hurts: The most common causes are ill-fitting shorts or (even more common) a poorly positioned saddle. The saddle could be tilted too far up, too far down, or too far back.

How to fix it: Adjust your saddle – or, if necessary, get a new one. Remember, your weight should be supported by the bones of your butt and not by the soft tissue.

**7. Your knees are killing you**

Why they hurt: Your pedal stroke is all wrong, so you’re either over-extending or under-extending. As a general rule: if the front of your knee hurts, your saddle is too low; if the back of your knee hurts, your saddle is too high.

How to fix it: Adjust that saddle! If the problem persists, see a doctor – you could have a muscle imbalance (one side of your body is stronger often caused by desk work). That’s rare, though, so start by sorting out your bike fit.