

The Power of Mind/Body Training



One of the fundamental components of the Spinning® program is the use of mind/body techniques to enhance performance. But what does that mean? And how do you apply these principles in your classes?

Mind/body training integrates physical awareness by use of mental images. As the body follows these mental images, the participant becomes more aware of physical performance and the connection with the working body parts. Through this enhanced awareness, the participant is able to perform more efficiently and reach desired goals sooner.

As you begin formulating a mind/body class, the imagery should be based on the physical form rather than the trees at the side of the road or the clouds in the sky. Remember that mind/body training is about integrating mental self-image. Try the following exercise during your own personal training sessions: Close your eyes and concentrate on your physical performance. Be acutely aware of the space you occupy as you visualize your toes, legs, hips, spine, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, facial muscles, breathing, etc. As you explore your physical movement, connect with your breathing and release all unnecessary tension from your muscles. Discover the increased focus you develop with this technique and how it connects the mind with the body. Visualize yourself performing, relaxed and powerful. Practice this technique on your own to better enable you to implement mind/body training in your class structure.

When introducing the mind/body connection in class, capture your students' attention from the start using breathing and relaxation techniques. A "noisy" head will not be able to create the focus needed to make the connection. At the beginning of class, ask your students to stop pedaling and take some deep relaxing breaths. As you begin riding, coach them through guided physical imagery and breathing techniques. Although guided imagery is best done with the eyes closed, a strong focus point somewhere in the room can also be used (candle, spot on the floor). Your music should produce an environment to assist with inner focus (new age, world) rather than entertainment (top 40, rock and roll).

Be aware that mind/body training takes time and patience. At first, the mind is distracted and focusing is frustrating. Encourage your students to focus a little longer each time they train. Before you know it, your class will be able to find the connection quickly.

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