



Diary of the Bike Like Me — 7 Week Online Training Programme



Rider: Orla Quigley
Age: 62
Province: Ulster
Club: None
Discipline: Leisure Cycling

Why did you get involved? I looked at the email...and it just stared right back. ' Nah, that's probably not for the likes of me' , my 'now dear, remember what age you are!' gremlin chimed in. Cycling Ireland was offering a (um...FREE) online training/ coaching programme for women cyclists... up pops mental image of a '20 something', of svelte physique and equally at home on the bike, running track, hockey pitch...And then there's poor little old uncoordinated 'me'! Retired, in my sixties, a little too fond of the chocolate, having avoided 'team sports' at school, (um, hand to heaven, I can't

catch a ball), and a late (by which I mean VERY late) convert to cycling.

Thankfully, that morphed into a 'sure what if the other participants virtual cycle halfway to Holland (to paraphrase CJ Cregg in 'The West Wing') and I'm puffing away trying to get into a new virtual postcode, who's to know?' realisation... I stood on the gremlin's head when it reminded me it'd be on Zoom...and decided to worry about the 'no haircut since lockdown' look (not good!) another day...

I signed up. Each week I would commence the workout like a 'Duracell Bunny'®, but by the end of the session I slid off the bike like a snake, totally 'wiped'. But oh, the buzz. I didn't care that my large labradoodle (part kangaroo, part octopus) seemed totally unimpressed with the whole thing. I was a legend! (well...in my own head anyway).

How did the sessions go? The carefully constructed sessions were professionally delivered by the most charming of people (nice as well as talented, not bad eh?). On the Zoom screen I was eyeballing my 'personal' coach - I felt she was speaking directly to me. I felt I wanted to try my best, I was given such great encouragement, and I was for sure not going to give up! A warm up section was followed by repeating intervals concentrating on stamina/ sprints and concluded with a cool down.

Bike Like Me — Participant

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Do you have a quote that you live by or inspires you? 'Didn't have one! But then as a result of the 'Bike Like Me' course I read an article profiling Imogen Cotter(1), in which she said her favourite one was 'Win the Day'. That resonated with me - I tend to allow 'forward planning' to become cover for procrastinating!

(1)<https://www.welovecycling.com/ie/2020/02/03/imogen-cotter-reveals-her-goals-for-2020-and-what-she-misses-most-about-home/>

What did you gain from completing this programme?

My fitness levels increased-well that was to be expected. Starting from a very low base I found the discipline of my weekly training paying great dividends. Some of my bete noire climbs (mere 'pimples' to proper athletes) were becoming easier. I would have gladly and gratefully called that a 'result'. However, what caught me by surprise were the unexpected benefits. I gained knowledge and a better understanding of what I was trying to achieve.

I was told I could use my Training Peaks account. That's nice, I mused , my... what? Now remedied.

Having suffered from 'hypos' (ugh, ugh, ugh!) on a long (for me) cycle, I had learned (the hard way) about eating properly before setting out. However, I tended to pay scant attention to post cycle nutrition, regarding it as a bit of an indulgence/ treat - a reward for all my effort (chocolate rearing its ugly head again).

I didn't really understand the 'science' of the recovery interval during training. I felt it was there just to stop me expiring - and that 'real cyclists' didn't need this as much as me. I laughed when one leader commented that although of fixed duration, the recoveries tended to feel shorter and shorter as the session progressed! I could so identify with that! The phrase 'stay on top of the power' was used more than once by the leaders - that really 'clicked' with me, and had the effect of aborting the negative pre-emptive 'oh, this is getting tough' thought spiral. Ditto, the 'replace a negative thought with two positive ones' advice. The physical and psychological strands of cycling are symbiotic.

I didn't know our elite female cyclists. I did some background reading. They wear their achievements lightly and are great ambassadors for C.I. Similarly, I found lots of useful information from various sources aimed at the 'leisure' cyclist. It really is an inclusive sport/ hobby. I'm really most grateful to Cycling Ireland.

What would you say to other females who may be interested in cycling?

I really only began to cycle regularly when I retired. If you're starting out, or returning after a long break, try to seek out local introductory bike skills courses. I learned so much on them, and remain grateful to those who gave so willingly of their expertise. I found they did wonders in helping overcome my apprehensions and concerns.

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