

A Bike Ride Around Conesus Lake Proved To Be Invigorating

By Lou Lombardo, LMT, NCTMB

When you think activities to stay in shape, what do you envision first? Maybe some brisk walking, or jogging or working out on the Nautilus.

Those things immediately came to my mind when Maria suggested that we do some exercising last Friday. She thought that a bike ride would be nice.

That was okay with me. We each have a 21-speed bicycle that we bought seven or eight years ago. At that time I paid more for mine than I did for my first car- a red '59 Ford. In those days gasoline was 29.9 cents per gallon.

I used to pull into a station, order three dollars worth of gas and they would check my oil and water, too! I just filled up today and gas was \$3.02/gallon. It cost me \$37 to fill up! But I digress.

I had been on my bike only once this year. We had ridden up the road with our daughters to the dairy farm and back- a distance of about three miles. So I figured if this is what Maria was proposing, it was something I could handle with no problem.

Then she laid the bomb on me. How about riding around Conesus Lake?

I don't usually back down from a challenge if I think I am physically able to do it. I know my personal limitations. So, after careful consideration I agreed not really knowing how long the trip would be but figuring, it can't be too bad.

Now, if you have ever read some of my columns before, what advice have I given you before undertaking some strenuous activity? Move to the front of the class if you said "STRETCH YOUR MUSCLES"

Biking obviously involves peddling (unless you're on the back of a Harley hog.)

This means that the ankles will be plantar flexing (bending the foot forward) and the legs will be doing a lot of flexing and extending. Those calf muscles (soleus and gastrocs), peronius brevis & longus, tibialis posterior and flexor muscles as well as the quads and hamstrings will certainly need to be stretched before participating in such a ride.

My stretching consisted of finding my bike, lifting it up, taking it out of the garage and filling the tires with some air.

I'll bet you know how this story is going to end.

We (Maria) decided to take the long way around. From our house we rode down Lakeville-Groveland Rd. all the way through Lakeville and down East Lake Road. It was pretty easy going and it only took an hour to get through Lakeville. All along the way I kept trying to keep my shoulders back and straight to maintain good posture- another practice I have stressed in the past.

But, it didn't make any sense to do this while riding a bike. And, besides, it creates more wind resistance which ultimately slowed me down. And I wanted to finish this "project" as quickly as possible.

As we proceeded down East Lake we experienced some gradual inclines but none were very challenging.

I kept seeing that some houses and cottages already had firewood piled up along side of them. That got me thinking about another major project I had to face in the upcoming months.

At times I felt my fingers becoming numb. That was from applying too much pressure leaning into my wrists. The carpal bones that make up part of the carpal tunnel were pressing on the median nerve that passes through the tunnel, thus causing the numbness. I found myself easing up at regular intervals.

We got half way down the lake when we came upon this very eclectic general store. So we stopped for a drink. It was like a page torn out of the 1950's.

The front porch included several bar stools, an old fashioned restaurant counter, three old barber chairs, an old drive-in movie speaker, a mounted fish, a stuffed raccoon and what appeared to be an original Coke dispensing machine along with two Coke coolers. There was an amusing small sign on the front door that announced "Hippies use back door"

The owner was very pleasant and we chatted with her for a while.

After downing our quaff we finally took leave to continue on our journey. All the while I had been dreading what lied ahead at the end of the ride- a very, very steep road that, although it was named Maple Beach, kept reminding me of "Heartbreak Hill", that almost insurmountable incline we marched up while in the Army as part of our weekly 5-mile hike.

But I tried to enjoy the last leg of our journey and the wonderful beauty that surrounds the south end of the lake. And then it struck me-we had just spent two hours biking and I hardly felt any pain.

When we made the turn and headed to West Lake Road we had faced only a few mild inclines. Then, as we entered a slight curve to the left, there it was staring us in the face. To me it looked as steep as the Alps that we saw while flying to Italy or the pyramids of Egypt.

But it was the only way home, which, at that point was just two miles away. As we approached, I began to feel pain in my quads. They ached and they burned and I was leery of pulling one of those four, large muscles. So, I'm not so proud to say that, after careful consideration, I wimped out in the interest of my safety and comfort.

When we got to Mount Maple Beach I started to walk my bike. At about half way up we heard this voice from beyond the trees calling for some help. Upon investigating we encountered a man who was on the roof of his house doing some repairs to his chimney.

He had just dropped his trowel and when he heard our voices, called for some assistance. In the process of our conversation with him we found out that he too was a free lance writer for this newspaper.

Small world.

Upon leaving I was able to get a good running start down his driveway and decided to try to finish the climb up this mountain on wheels.

It was quite a relief when we cleared the crest of the hill and I saw Barber Hill Road. From there it was a breeze to get to our house.

Since I was the first one to drive in the garage I considered myself a winner of sorts- so I went in the house and put on my yellow shirt, much the same as Lance Armstrong has done for the past 7 years. I finished my feat without enhancing drugs, too.

Afterwards, we went down to the local watering hole for a few pops. I figured as long as I had my body geared up for some calorie burning I didn't want it to run out of fuel.

I must say that I wasn't as sore as I thought I'd be after this endeavor. No real aches or pain in the quads or hamstrings. There was some moderate aching in my Achilles tendons. The source of that pain was the tight soleus and gastrocs resulting from all the plantar flexing

These muscles attach to the Achilles tendon that ultimately attaches to the calcaneus (heel). I did experience some pain in the lower lumbar region due to all that bending over while riding. If I would have stretched those muscles, like I always preach, I probably wouldn't have been in that condition.

A few days later I retraced our journey and discovered that we traveled 20.6 miles in 2 ½ hours. Not a bad feat, I thought, for a man my age.

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