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HITCH A COACH

How necessary is bike fit? What are the benefits?

For this issue, we interviewed expert Nate Koch of ERO Sports, located at the VELO Sports Center in Carson, CA. Koch's background in athletics dates back to his start in track in field, which led to being a scholarship decathlete at Cal State – Long Beach. He then earned his way to the U.S. National Cycling Team, where he set American records and became U.S. National Champion.

Why is proper bike fit important? Each of us is a unique asymmetric individual trying to fit on a symmetric machine. A proper bike fit will correctly balance your body over the entirety of the bike, placing you in the most biomechanically efficient position. It will not only protect you from injury, but can fix issues such as foot numbness, lower back pain, and saddle problems.

What three objectives are you trying to

achieve as a fitter? First and foremost is comfort. If you're not comfortable on your bike, you'll be unable to hold your position and therefore, use energy in an unproductive manner. Second is sustainability. What feels good at 20 miles may not feel good at 80 miles. It's my objective to make sure your position is sustainable at mile 1 and 112. Third is economy of effort. I want your position to be a rest from the swim, competitive on the bike, and warmup for the run. We want to keep energy in the areas where it's necessary.

How do you decide if you need a bike fit? Our bodies are constantly changing. I recommend my clients come in for a follow up at least once a year. Of thousands of fits, I have seen major issues fixed with incredibly small adjustments. There have only been one or two where I haven't changed anything. Every athlete responds differently to

changes, so you can even have your coach and fitter communicate, as they both have your best interest in mind.

What are the differences between sprint and Iron distance set up? Road and triathlon bikes?

No matter the distance, we need to know you will run well off the bike. I need to make sure you feel tall, relaxed, and have good knee lift. Whether it's sprint or Iron distance, I want to ensure your hip angles are open and have good extension. More often than not, this will create not just an aerodynamic position, but one that is comfortable and sustainable over the entirety of the race.

Comparing road fit to aero fit is like comparing a pickup truck to a sports car. Road is more upright, while the TT involves hips rotated over the bottom bracket onto elbows. It comes down to which is most comfortable.

Is it better to get a bike fit before or after you purchase a bike? BEFORE!

It's not just about position, but understanding the set up of your bike and how geometry, stack, and reach work best with your position. Using the Fit Bike, we can find your exact position and then use the Retul System to measure that position down to the millimeter. Once we know these numbers, we can look together to find a bike that fits you best and is within your price range.

How should one purchase what is necessary after a bike fit on a budget? I will explore all options within your budget. I can get deals on certain products that I can offer to my clients. I don't make suggestions to gain money from it; I know it's necessary to help you achieve your best and prevent injury.

-By Kathy English, Michellie Jones Coaching