

Virtual Cycling Studio Program

Toolkit 1.0

Build you own world class Virtual Cycling program.



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Introduction

As the producer of the **epicRIDES** line of virtual cycling DVDs, I've seen a significant increase in sales over the last year to instructors and studios in the U.S., Canada and Europe. I believe the 2011-2012 indoor season will be a tipping point, with virtual cycling classes becoming a common option in innovative indoor studios worldwide.

We've received a lot of great reviews for **epicRIDES** from instructors and students, which is VERY gratifying. Shirin Beckett, one of our profiled instructors, has been one of our most enthusiastic supporters and (with her husband Mark) even suggested and then helped produce our Epic California - Mt. Baldy DVD.

At this point our biggest problem is we can't crank out new titles fast enough!

As we go forward, more and more clubs will find that virtual cycling classes are a great way to differentiate themselves from the competition and re-energize their program. Because of that, clubs will be investing in video equipment for their studios. After all, a good projector, screen and DVD player today cost about the same as ONE good indoor bike!

Ride on.

Allen Jones
epicPLANET.tv
Producer/Director



Why Virtual Cycling?



- Add more value for your indoor cycling program.
- Differentiate yourself and your studio from the competition.
- Re-energize your Indoor Cycling program.
- Bring a new group to your studio - attract the “cycling” crowd.
- Make Indoor Cycling a profit center.
- Garner valuable press coverage for your business by giving the media something new and innovative to talk about.





Virtual Cycling Instructor Profiles

Shirin Beckett - Claremont, CA, USA



*“They more
than love these
rides!”*

- **Studios** - [Pedal Spin Studio](#), Claremont and South Pasadena, CA, U.S.
- **Experience** - I have been Spinning® for over 10 years. I ride my road bike daily as well.
- **Certifications** - I am a Star3 Mad Dogg Athletics Spinning® certified. I also belong to ICIPro and ICA.
- **AV setup** - HD projector, Mac laptop, 7x7 screen, stands, weights to support stands, cables, electrical tape.
- **Virtual cycling class description** - I use virtual cycling videos to simulate real riding and real roads indoors. Some of my riders have never been on a bike; this gives them the opportunity to actually see, feel, understand what riding on hills would be like. It has a very powerful effect.
- **Instructor position** - I sit to the side, both facing my riders and with a view of the screen. We move the bikes around so everyone has a comfortable view of the screen.
- **Class frequency** - I offer the rides once a month due to all the work and setup requirements. The studio I work for is not yet equipped for the adventure.
- **Teach to the profile?** -Yes, absolutely. After all, isn't that the purpose? We put ourselves on that particular road and face all its challenges. I personally use the "speed" segments (coasting by the riders on the DVD) and teach them as our "LT" training segments. Or I use them as "team trial" segments, still with resistance. Coasting without resistance does NOT belong on an indoor bike!
- **Extras you bring to classes** - I add my own music. Depending on where we ride, I try to use the local music if applicable (e.g. our epicPlanet ride in Louisiana was energized by zydeco music!). I also bring extras to add to the room's feel and create a bit of theme for the ride (i.e. decorations matching the location we would be riding in). Sometimes, if it is an impossibly hard ride, e.g. Epic California-Mt. Baldy, I raffle something for the guys and something for the ladies on the ride, as a little reward. We finished our Tour de France multimedia ride with wine and cheese and chocolate afterwards.
- **Student feedback** - They more than love these rides! The registration opens a month before each ride, and closes within a few hours because it's full! We always have a long wait list that stays on up to the start of the class because other riders hope someone cancels. So, I believe they are quite a hit!

Kathy Burke - Calgary, Alberta, Canada



westside

“Our participants really enjoy the virtual rides, the scenery and the other cyclists on the road.”

- **Studio** - Westside Recreation Centre, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- **Experience** - I have been teaching indoor cycling for 10 years. I am an avid outdoor cyclist and raced for 9 years on the mountain bike, road cycling and track racing both in North America and Europe.
- **Certifications** - Bachelor of Kinesiology, FIS through Can Fit Pro and Keiser certified for indoor cycling.
- **AV setup** - We have a large cycling studio at Westside that accommodates 45 participants in 3 tiered rows and has a theatre-style set-up. There is a video projector that plays the DVDs onto a screen that is 7 ½ feet by 9 ½ feet at the front of the room. The room is lit by spot lights during the virtual ride.
- **Instructor position** - When teaching virtual rides the instructor sits off to the side so he or she can see the screen and the class all at once.
- **Class frequency** - We offer 25 drop-in cycle classes per week, and between 5 and 12 of them will be virtual rides.
- **Teach to the profile?** - We generally teach to the profile and also have developed cheat sheets for our team of instructors so they know when the hills are coming.
- **Student feedback** - Our participants really enjoy the virtual rides, the scenery and the other cyclists on the road.

Vivian Dunlop - Houston, TX, USA



“Most of my followers really like the videos as many of them are cyclists themselves.”

- **Studio** - Life Time Fitness, Houston, TX. U.S.
- **Experience** - Road cyclist since 1989; started triathlons in 1995; took indoor cycling classes starting in 1999. Started teaching classes in 2003.
- **Certifications** - ACE group Fitness Instructor and Mad Dogg Athletics Spinning® Certified
- **AV setup** - Room set up in a stage style: five rows of bikes – 60 bikes. Two big screens on each side of the instructor bike. I leave one screen up and one down so the members have a choice of video or mirrors.
- **Virtual cycling class description** - Four formats: hills, speed, aerobic threshold intervals and endurance. 55 minutes on the bike, 5 minutes stretching. Warm-up to aerobic threshold in 12 minutes, then follow the day's format that is decided by the corporate schedule. I start a video and music 10 minutes before the class starts.
- **Instructor position** - Facing the class. Occasionally I walk the class when I want them to go anaerobic and they need a “push.”
- **Class frequency** - Twice weekly.
- **Teach to the profile?** - With some of the videos I do, and with others, not always. If it is a straight hill for an hour, I break it up.
- **Extras you bring to classes** - During the Tour de France I play Tour de France videos and ride the profile of that day. I draw the profile on a large piece of paper and post it.
- **Student feedback** - Most of my followers really like the videos, as many of them are road cyclists themselves.

John Macgowan, Minneapolis, MN, USA



“I never leave home without them.”

- **Studios** - Life Time Fitness, Cycle Quest Indoor Cycling, Minneapolis, MN. U.S.
- **Experience** - Former competitive cyclist/endurance athlete, 12 years as an Indoor Cycling Instructor and three years as host of the Indoor Cycle Instructor Podcast.
- **Certifications** - I have Heart Zones Level 2 and Schwinn ICI certifications.
- **AV setup** - LifeTime standard studios include twin drop-down screens, HD projectors and DVD player and an excellent sound system.
- **Virtual Cycling Class description** - I never leave home without them. There was a time when I detested using (bicycle racing) videos. Now I use virtual cycling videos in almost every class I teach. I love to incorporate the structure of the video to complete my class experience.
- **Instructor position** - I prefer to ride with the class, using the mirrors to keep an eye on everyone.
- **Teach to the profile?** - Yes, I have a large catalog of videos so I can select the perfect profile to fit that class, based on our periodization schedule.
- **Extras you bring to classes** - An extra DVD or two, a backup CD and the attitude that everyone in my class is capable of finishing with the others.
- **Student feedback** - “Finally a class I can understand!” “It’s awesome to actually see the imagery of the ride we are on that day.”

Jennifer Sage, Eagle, CO, USA



“I think students are surprised at how much fun this is.”

- **Studio:**- Homestead Court Club, Edwards, Colorado, and various clubs in the Vail Valley as consultant and sub.
- **Experience:** - I have been a personal trainer for 18 years, and have been teaching indoor cycling and coaching for 15 years. As a Master Instructor for the Spinning program for 12 years, and now as the founder and MI for the Indoor Cycling Association, I have certified, trained and educated many thousands of instructors around the world at orientations, workshops, conferences and through an online educational resource. I authored several CED workshops for Mad Dogg Athletics and Spinning®, and wrote an eBook called Keep it Real™, which has become the definitive guide for indoor cycling instructors who want to teach safely and effectively. I am an avid cyclist (over 30 years) and also own a bicycle tour company called Viva Travels, guided and self-guided bicycle tours in Europe!
- **Certifications and Education** - Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (NSCA), Certified Personal Trainer (ACE), 12 years Master Instructor for Mad Dogg Athletics and Spinning®, Star 3 Spinning® Instructor, Stage 5 Indoor Cycling Certification, and the Real Ryder Certification.
- **Virtual Instructing** - While there are no facilities in my area that currently have a virtual set-up (something I'm trying to change), I've had the pleasure of co-teaching several virtual rides in my travels and have really enjoyed the experience. I believe it is a fantastic tool in an instructors repertoire, and that it enhances the experience for the student. At the Indoor Cycling Association, I hope to inspire instructors around the globe to try teaching virtual rides and to convince their clubs to install the equipment. On the website, I will be providing tips on how to more effectively coach a class using a virtual DVD. Virtual riding aligns perfectly with my philosophy of **Keeping it Real™!**
- **Instructor position** - I've tried both facing the screen and facing the riders. There are benefits to both, but I think I preferred facing the riders in order to interact with them and better coach them (the instructor bikes were off to the side and turned to see both the screen and the riders).
- **Teach to the Profile?** - This is a very effective way to use a virtual DVD, while still leaving room for the instructor's style. The instructor should have a written profile for every ride so he or she knows exactly what is coming next.
- **Student Feedback** - I think students are surprised at how much fun this is. Many come in with doubts and leave excited, feeling much more engaged in the ride. Some have told me they really enjoy having a wide variety of DVDs so that every ride seems different.

Student Feedback



Here's what some students have said about their Virtual Cycling class:

- “Last night’s virtual reality ride was definitely the toughest ride. As much as I was suffering, I love the challenge. You prepared us for this virtual reality ride perfectly and you defined the expectation for the ride prior to last night.”
- “High cadence with resistance is definitely challenging, but it gives you so much in return. I would definitely like to do it again given the opportunity.”
- "I was really impressed. I usually close my eyes when I'm spinning, but I kept looking up to see the scenery. I have to admit I took the last climb to my "10," and that damn clock on the screen was way too slow!"
- "The Mt. Baldy ride was also outstanding, as this is a ride I have actually done, so I could really relate to it. I was able to make this ride feel very real, as the video was very well done and made me feel like I was right there, doing this painful ride again. Two thumbs up to you and the producers."
- “I like the terrain profile and the current position info so I know what's coming and I can (kind of) prepare for climbs (although in real life sometimes you don't really know what's ahead of you). But then I'm the type to look up the ride info [at mapmyride.com, etc.] right before I ride so I can match my energy level that morning with the ride I'm about to take. I like seeing on the screen the climb's segments and its duration as well.”



Instructor Feedback



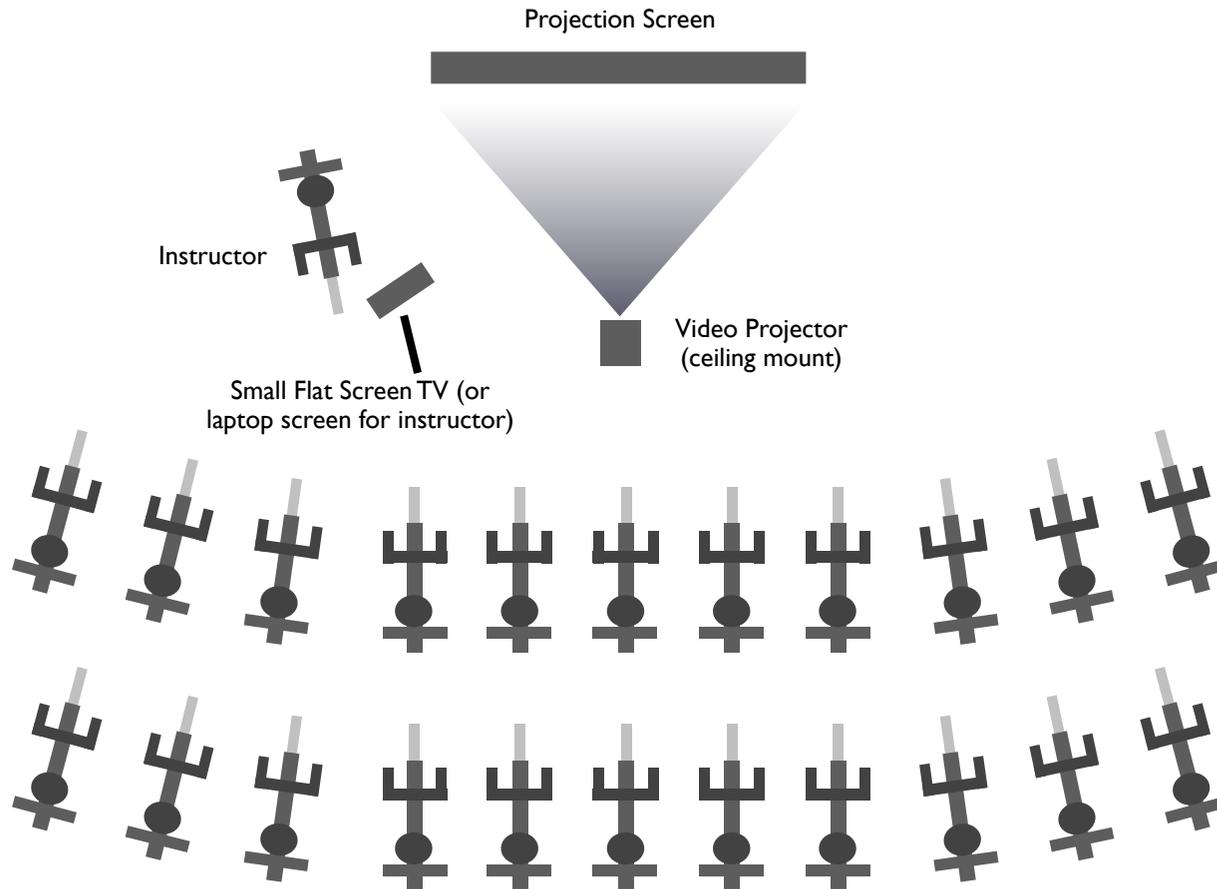
Here's what other instructors have said about their Virtual Cycling class:

- Mark, an Indoor Cycling Instructor from Charlotte, NC - "Your videos keep getting better! I used this for a Memorial Day ride and the class loved it. Didn't hurt to be following the Tour of California."
 - Stephanie, an Indoor Cycling Instructor from Massachusetts - "I really liked this one (Wine Country). I enjoy the ones that change it up. I also really get a lot out of the hill-climbing timer in upper right hand corner. It gives me something to focus on. Once again, the area is beautiful. It would be a long time, if ever, that I would make it out that way, so its nice to have something like this to at least be able to get a glimpse. This was also the first one that I took both the DVD and the download. I really liked the download for my iPod. Gives me something to do when I'm spinning away from home but not teaching a class."
- "Keep the DVD's coming. I'll keep buying them. In fact, I'm going back out soon to get one for a friend for his birthday."

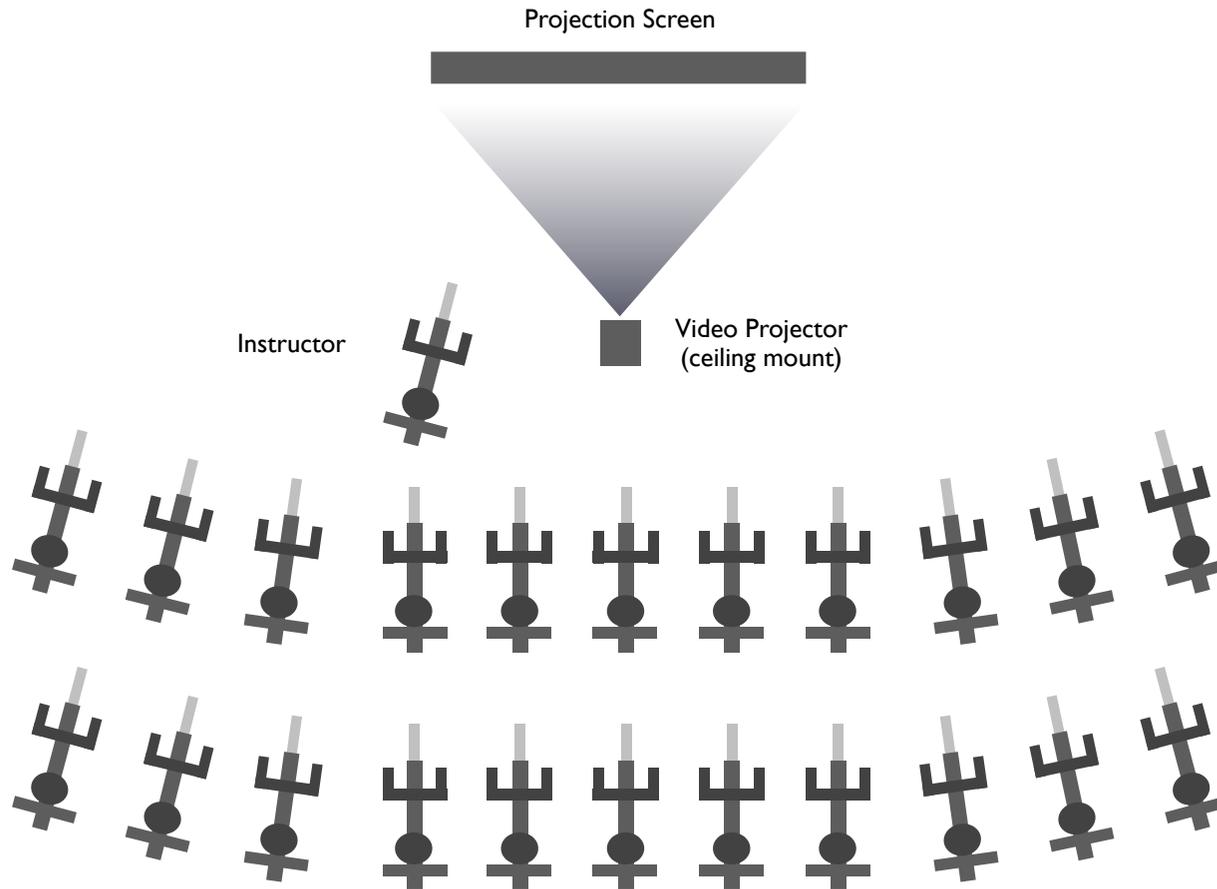


Virtual Cycling Studio Designs

Projection System - Instructor faces class



Projection System - Instructor faces screen



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Projection System Studio Design

- Advantages
 - ▶ Best theater-like experience.
 - ▶ One large screen for all to see.
- Disadvantages
 - ▶ Image can be faded by ambient light from windows and or ceiling light spill.
- Tips
 - ▶ Professional screens will be brighter and have a wider viewing angle than a wall painted white or a white sheet. They are less affected by ambient light.
 - ▶ Get the brightest (in lumens) and highest-resolution video projector that fits your budget.
 - ▶ Go with a 16x9 (HDTV) aspect ratio screen.
 - ▶ Work hard to keep ambient light off the screen! Get room blackout shades. Mask ceiling lighting so that it does not spill onto the screen.

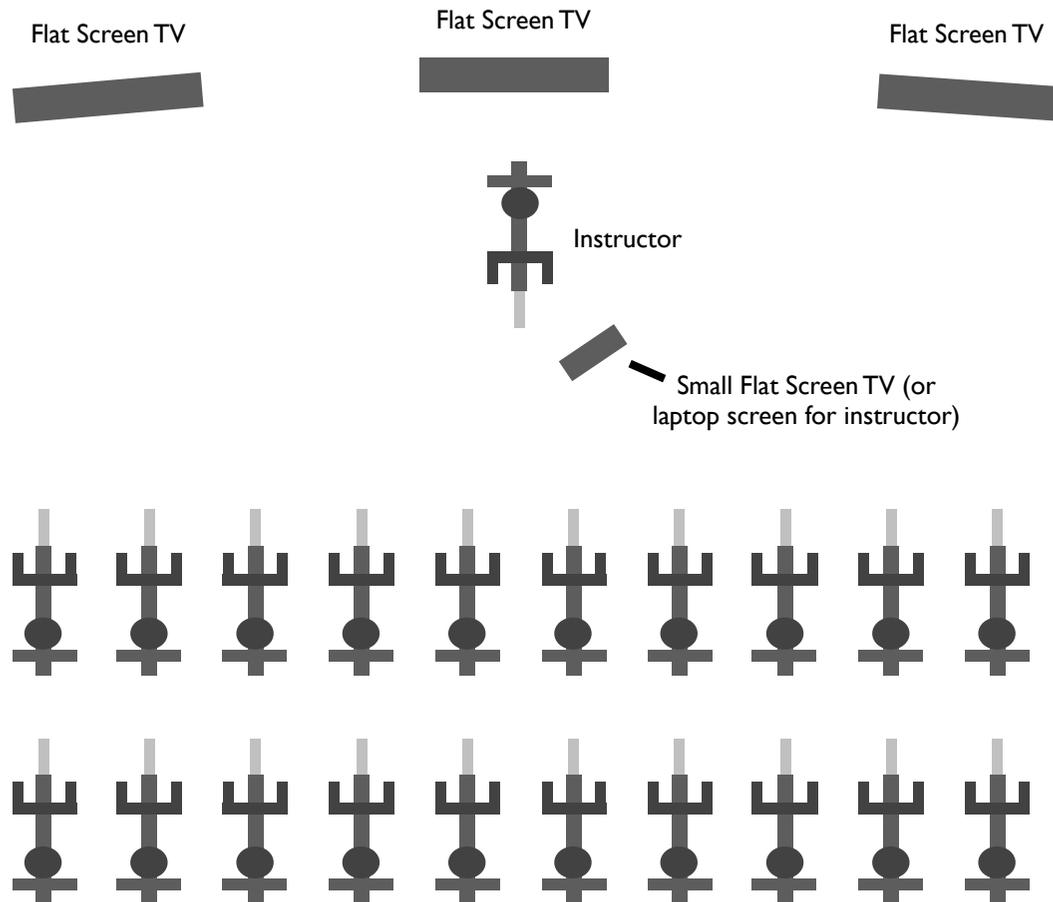
Projection System Equipment List*



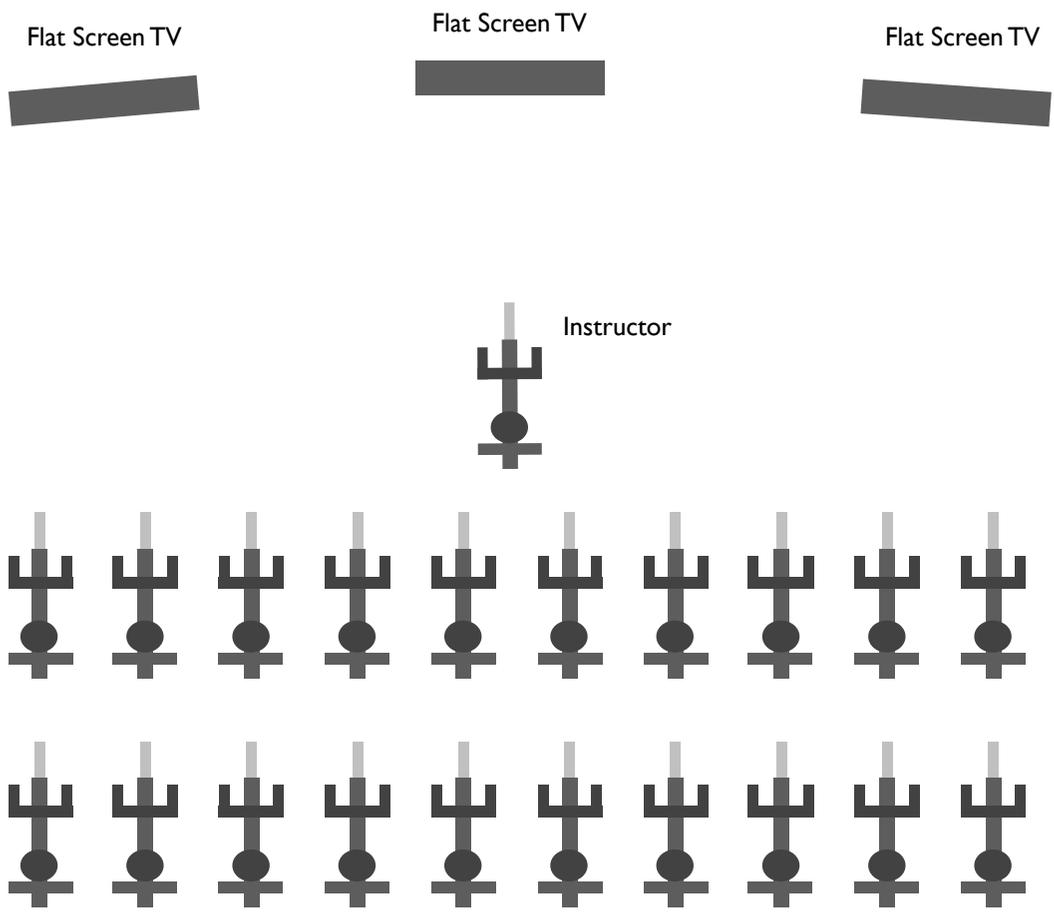
Item	Brand/Model #	Cost
Projection Screen	Da-Lite, 78672 Model B Manual Projection Screen (52" x 92"), HDTV Format, 16:9 Aspect Ratio	\$230.00
Video Projector	Epson - PowerLite 1220 XGA Multimedia Projector, Resolution: 1024 x 768, XGA) 2600 ANSI Lumens	\$500.00
Video Projector Ceiling Bracket	Epson - ELPMBPJF Universal Projector Ceiling Mount	\$100.00
DVD Player		\$100.00
Video Cables		\$100.00
Audio Cables		\$75.00
Design & Installation		\$500.00
TOTAL		\$1,605.00

* Represents an example base system. Costs can vary depending on brands/models/options chosen.
Assumes you already have a good audio system that can be integrated.
Specified products are from B&H in NYC and are for example purposes only.

Flat Screen TV System - Instructor faces class



Flat Screen TV System - Instructor faces screens



Studio Designs - Multiple Flat Screen TVs



- Advantages
 - ▶ Bright, clear, sharp image.
 - ▶ Not as affected by ambient light.
 - ▶ Getting cheaper every day - good discounts possible.
 - ▶ LED displays are superior to Plasma.
- Disadvantages
 - ▶ Smaller screens necessitate at least two per room.
 - ▶ Can be more costly than a projection system.
- Tips
 - ▶ Go with a High-definition LCD TV.
 - ▶ The larger the TV, the better. Larger sizes are getting more affordable.

Flat Screen TV System Equipment List*



Item	Brand/Model #	Cost
2 Large Flat Screen TVs	Samsung, LN46D550 46" LCD HDTV	\$1,600.00
1 Small Flat Screen TV (for instructor)	Samsung, LN22D450 22" LCD HDTV	\$225.00
2 Flat Screen Wall Brackets	Sanus - VisionMount VMPL50A Tilting Wall Mount for 32-70" Flat-Panel TV	\$140.00
DVD Player		\$100.00
Video Cables		\$100.00
Audio Cables		\$50.00
Design & Installation		\$500.00
TOTAL		\$2,715.00

* Represents an example base system. Costs can vary depending on brands/models/options chosen.
Assumes you already have a good audio system that can be integrated.
Specified products are from B&H in NYC and are for example purposes only.

Equipment and Installation Sources

- Best Buy/Geek Squad - Best Buy offers a wide selection of competitively priced AV equipment. There are over 1,000 stores in the U.S. and Canada, there's probably one near you.

For a \$149 fee a Geek Squad consultant will visit your studio and come up with equipment recommendations. Some of this fee will be refunded if a purchase is made.

- ▶ 1-888-BESTBUY / 1-888-237-8289 / www.bestbuy.com
- ▶ 1-800-GeekSquad / 1-800-433-5778 / www.geeksquad.com
- B&H Photo/Video - A national, New York-based company. Carries virtually everything AV related.
 - ▶ 1-800-482-8143 / www.bhphotovideo.com
- A local professional AV company - Many medium and larger metro areas have one or more pro AV companies that do home theaters or corporate AV and will provide equipment recommendations.
- DIY - Costco or Sam's Club offer good prices on projectors, TVs and wall brackets. Source your ceiling mounts and cables through B&H Video or Radio Shack.

Our Recommendation



- Projection system keeps class focused on the same “road.”
- Instructor faces class and has his/her own monitor, which allows him/her to better coordinate with on-screen action.
 - ▶ A good option here is to use a laptop as the DVD player and then the instructor can use the laptop screen as the monitor.
 - ▶ Using a laptop as the video source opens up other visual possibilities including YouTube video and still-image slideshows.

Teaching a Virtual Cycling Class

Virtual Cycling Class Formats



- **Ride to the Profile (Strict)** - Use the actual profile for the ride to define the basic workout. From there, you still have a lot of leeway as to what you do in your class. (Note: We feel this alternative offers the greatest reward for the class participants.)
- **Ride to the Profile (Loose)** - Use the ride profile as a flexible guide to your class.
- **Ride to a Theme** - Start with a televised cycling event (which you record or purchase as a DVD), like the Tour de France. Then take a stage, for example the Team Time Trial or a Mountain Stage, and build your ride around the psychology, physiology and drama of riding the event.
- **Eye Candy** - Use the virtual ride video to set a cycling “mood” for your class. (Note: This is our least preferred alternative since the class is often doing an action much different from what they see on screen.)

Leading a Virtual Cycling Class



- **Do your homework** - Preview the video and make a detailed ride plan coordinating your profile with each ride segment on the screen.
 - ▶ Download our free training guides for each ride for training ideas. [Click Here >](#)
 - ▶ Compile 10-15 interesting facts about the ride area in the video to share with the class. Wikipedia is a great place to start. [Click here >](#)
- **Borrow from your own experience** - If you are a road cyclist all the better. Share some of your legendary stories of the road!
- **Build a playlist** - Virtual Cycling DVDs come with a music track, but feel free to create your own motivating playlists from your music library. It's best if you try to make the music sync with the video action by using songs of the same length as that segment, and use faster bpm songs for flats and slower bpm songs for climbs.
- **Use your imagination** - This is a *virtual* ride, which essentially means you have to act as though this is a real ride. The more seriously you take the event, the more motivating and convincing you will be. Don't be bashful. Go for it 110%!
- **Take it to the next level** - Enhance the experience by bringing in props, such as road signs, to set the mood. Paint a yellow stripe (or use wide yellow tape) down the center of the floor. Sound like show biz? You bet! Or bring in some after-ride snacks and beverages (wine country anyone?) for the class to enjoy!



Virtual Cycling Cues

- Flats
 - ▶ Steady cadence and heart rates
 - ▶ Speed (high-cadence) work
- Hills
 - ▶ Long consistent climbs in the saddle, just like a rider experiences outside .
 - ▶ Steep climbs: stand up as needed on the steepest parts, or alternate seated with standing.
 - ▶ Switchbacks: Sit on the straight, stand up on the switchback (long jumps can simulate switchbacks).
 - ▶ Hill intervals: short hard hill repeats of 2-4 minutes, with recovery.
- Downhills
 - ▶ Fast spin
 - ▶ Recovery



Virtual Cycling Extras



- **Use a virtual ride as a training goal** - Use several “normal” classes to prepare for a virtual ride.
- **Hold a weekly scheduled virtual ride class** - One week your class rides in San Diego, the next week Maine, etc.
- **Become your studio or region’s Virtual Cycling Instructor** - Make yourself a portable AV kit and take your show on the road.
- **Use virtual rides as a way of attracting the off-season cyclist.**
 - ▶ Partner with a local bike club or cycling shop on a special offer for club members.
 - ▶ Partner with a cycling or triathlon coach to offer Virtual Cycling training classes.
- **Hold a thematic ride.**
 - ▶ Riding in wine county? Offer a post-ride wine tasting!
 - ▶ Riding in Vermont? - Serve a post-ride pancake breakfast (Maple syrup anyone?).
- **Hold a virtual group ride in your garage, basement, or store** - Everyone brings their trainer, their bike, and some after-ride food and beverages and “have at it”!



Virtual Cycling in Events

Virtual Cycling
Studio Program

- Virtual Cycling is IDEAL for big events.
- Often there already are one or two big screens with projectors and a good sound system.
- An event can be several hours long, so breaking it up with one or two virtual rides helps give everyone a break!
- You need to recruit an instructor who embraces Virtual Cycling.
- Make clever tie-ins with the ride, such as partnering with a bicycle tour company to offer discounted tours to the virtual ride's area. Team with a local restaurant that offers the style of food from the virtual ride's region (Tex-Mex for Texas Hill Country, Cajun food for Rouge Roubaix, lobster dinners for Acadia, etc.).





Promoting Virtual Cycling Classes

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Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Promoting Your Virtual Cycling Program

- Press coverage is vastly more valuable than advertising.
 - ▶ More credibility.
 - ▶ Little cost (if any).
- The keys to getting press coverage.
 - ▶ Give them a story with a unique angle (Virtual Cycling is unique!)
 - ▶ Give it to them at the right time (as the indoor season starts or after the first of the New Year's fitness craze hits).
 - ▶ Be nice, but persistent. After all, you're helping them by bringing them a great story!
- Issue some press releases to local newspapers, TV and radio.
 - ▶ Use our press release template as a starting point.
- Offer in-house competition for new ways to develop, promote and present "virtual" events. Participants who feel ownership in the activity will provide enthusiastic motivation and creativity.
- With current economic cutbacks, word of mouth may provide the most efficient and effective marketing. Be sure to hold a well-organized and exciting event. Watch the participation and energy multiply for your next one!



Press Release Template

- Download and then modify as desired.
- Distribute to local newspapers, TV and radio.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Studio Name
Studio Address

Contacts:
Your Name
Your Telephone

Press Release

Fighting Winter's Boredom - (Your Studio's Name) to offer Virtual Cycling Classes

(Your City, State) –

(Your Studio's name) now is offering Virtual Cycling classes as an innovative new feature for it's Indoor Cycling program.

Virtual Cycling at (your Studio's name) offers a visually stimulating and exciting virtual ride experience that instructors use to guide and motivate their class. Instructors will take their classes on virtual training rides around the U.S. and the world, adding a tremendous amount of variety and stimulation to help students get through a bleak winter.

Variety is a cornerstone of training and because of that (Your Studio's name) will be offering over a dozen virtual cycling locations for classes to train to.

Virtual Cycling Classes will be offered (add schedule here).

Virtual Cycling Becoming a Worldwide Trend

2011-2012 indoor season promises to be a tipping point where Virtual Cycling classes will become a common option in innovative indoor studios worldwide and (Your Studio's Name) is leading the charge in this area.

Spinning® and Indoor Cycling Instructors all over the U.S., Canada and around the world are now using Virtual Cycling videos to motivate and excite their indoor cycling classes. From Arizona to Minnesota, from North Carolina to New Hampshire, from Vermont to California, all across Canada and in Europe, Indoor Cycling Studios are embracing the virtual cycling concept for their classes.

Many of the Virtual Cycling DVDs provide additional ride related information to assist the instructor including an on-screen digital dashboard with terrain profile and countdown timer providing visual cues for classes.

[Click to download Word template >>](#)



Virtual Cycling Class Resources

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Virtual Cycling Class Resources

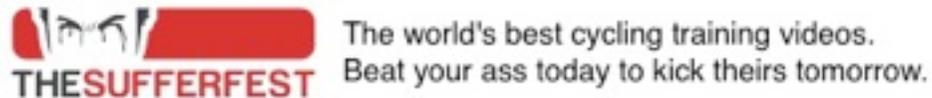


- Indoor Cycling Association - An educational and motivational resource for indoor cycling instructors created by one of the top Master Instructors in the Industry.
- Indoor Cycle Instructor PRO - A podcast, full menu of instructor resources, and Virtual Cycling proponent
- Pedal-On Indoor Cycling Forum - Meet and converse with motivated instructors like yourself!
- Cadence Revolution - Music mixes for indoor classes
- CyclingStudio.org - Indoor Cycling Studio Owners Group
- Spin Room Design - Specializing in indoor cycling studio design



Virtual Cycling DVD Producers

Click on the images below to go to each producer's website.





Join the epicPLANET.tv Virtual Cycling Studio Program

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Join the epicPLANET.tv Virtual Cycling Studio Program!



- Open to Virtual Cycling Instructors and Studios worldwide
- Free membership, no obligation
- Discounts on DVDs and downloads
- Disk replacement program
- Discounts on **epicRIDES** clothing (coming)
- And more to come!

[Join Here >>](#)



Comments, ideas, feedback?

We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at:

info@epicplanet.tv