

THE CYCLE AS A CURATIVE AGENT

ALSO AN
ARTICLE ON TRAINING

By Thomas Inch.

Britain's Premier Health Culturist.

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INTRODUCTION.



MR. THOMAS INCH
with his "GRUBB" Cycle.

INTRODUCTION.

The writer will take second place to none as a keen cycling enthusiast, his experience as a practical cyclist extending over 35 years.

During this long period he became known as a long-distance tourist, trainer of champion cyclists, and on more than one occasion rode at Herne Hill with a view to establishing a record on a fully-equipped roadster.

Furthermore, correspondence from cyclist pupils has been encouraged for many years past and advice freely given to all such, and many articles on CYCLING have appeared from his pen in well-known periodicals, devoted or partly devoted to cycling, such as *Health and Strength*, *Cycling*, the *C.T.C. Gazette*, etc.

These statements are put forward so that the reader may have every confidence in Mr. Inch's remarks contained in this small booklet; he puts forward a most important aspect of cycling, showing the value of the cycle from a health point of view, in a way never before attempted.

GENERAL.

All my life I have been an enthusiastic cyclist and I have never ceased to wonder why it is that the cycle has failed to obtain the recognition to which it is justly entitled as a remarkable curative agent.

One has only to consider the splendid conditions under which the cyclist takes his exercise to gain some idea of the possibilities of the handy little machine from the health seeker's point of view.

Many sports, such as boxing, fencing, weight lifting, gymnastics and even the practice of scientific physical culture exercises take place indoors; it is only stating a fact to say that the larger percentage of swimmers practice under cover.

But the cyclist *always* rides in the open air, he feels free as air, untrammelled, free from care (for it is impossible to worry when riding your machine along) and, provided he takes care not to overdo matters, *i.e.*, not to ride too far or too fast, he simply *must* receive benefit from this glorious pastime.

As a matter of fact, ever since I established my physical culture business very many years ago it has been my custom to recommend cycling to quite a number of my pupils for the cure of many complaints and ailments, and the cycle has often assisted me in curing difficult ailments.

I have received quite a number of letters couched in the warmest terms of praise from pupils who, on my recommendation, took up wheeling, and it is somewhat significant that many of them are from people who suffered from neurasthenia, and in other cases are from pupils over 60 years of age.

A question frequently put to me in connection with my business is: "What hobby shall I take up?" and whenever there appears no objection to the reply, I advise cycling.

The cycle opens up new fields, gives one a new interest in life.

When preliminary training has been attended to and the cyclist is competent to go anywhere with his wheel, and knows his or her capabilities, how can one spend a holiday better than awheel, no matter whether such holiday is a day, a week-end, or a fortnight or more?

It gives a keen zest even during the dark winter months to map out a tour, decide where one shall go and where one shall stay, what shall be carried and what left behind, whether the old, trusted friend one has ridden so many thousand miles shall be replaced by a more up-to-date model, or whether it shall carry one a few thousand miles further before the parting shall take place.

For one comes to regard the machine as a trusty friend which seldom lets one down. Machines to-day are not only extremely reasonable in price, but some makers practically guarantee them for ever; apart from tyres and an occasional chain replacement there is little to wear out on the modern machine.

There are "pots" to be won by the youthful enthusiast who aspires to cycling fame as a record breaker and winner of open competitions; there is health and a hobby for the health seeker.

It is perhaps not for me to touch upon the utilitarian qualities of the cycle except to say that many who ride backwards and forwards to business find that the machine quickly pays for itself by saving 'bus, train or tram fares, and, of course, it is most convenient for shopping and for those little errands which crop up from time to time where time is valuable; also for getting the sportsman backwards and forwards to his golf, for his swim, or his game of tennis.

During the course of this booklet I will endeavour to specify some health ailments in connection with which the cycle may be specially recommended, I will give a few hints on training for cycle racing and touring, and if the perusal of the work gains only one convert to the cycling game I shall be satisfied.

Those who have already benefited by cycling will bear me out that a short lapse of only one or two weeks brings it home what benefits are lost by those who don't cycle. Cycling gives better appetite and digestion, a more alert body and mind, better general fitness and *appearance*, a better figure, and keeps fat at bay.

Often I have been asked where I have been for my holidays on account of my bronzed appearance, when the fact is that I am simply awheel every day for a while.

Ever since I came before the public as an athlete, winning a world's and British championship, and making many world's records at weight-lifting, I have *always* given credit to the cycle for the wonderful assistance it has been to me.

Hundreds of physical culturists come to me for leg development; where on earth can one get better development than from cycling?

For weight-lifters, wrestlers, boxers (provided it is not overdone), tennis players, swimmers, and for those interested in general physical development, I defy anyone to name a better means of quickly obtaining the desired strength and development.

And there is not a cheaper means of exercising and enjoying oneself extant.

OBSESITY.

Provided that a person overburdened with weight will work in a certain and special fashion, which I will proceed to outline, there is no better way of reducing weight and bodily girth than cycling.

I have had many testimonials to this effect, and in my own case can get weight off at an almost unbelievable rate by means of cycling alone.

In the first place it is a very easy matter to induce perspiration when cycling, especially if one dresses with that end in view, wearing heavy woollen under-garments (vest and pants) with a sweater over or beneath the waistcoat. Then, if one puts a little "go" into the riding instead of "pottering," and works on a system of gradually increasing the severity of the rides, your weighing machine will show you a noticeable daily decrease, and the tape measure passed over such parts as the waist, neck and hips will endorse what the weighing records.

Of course you must not under any circumstances carelessly quench your thirst after your daily ride.

It is here that the pupil often goes wrong; it must be realised that any kind of fluid rapidly puts on weight. It is far more important when obesity threatens that the allowance of liquid per diem be watched, than that diet itself be studied to any great extent.

In fact, so that there shall be no misunderstanding in connection with this very important point I would say that your efforts are completely wasted if you have induced free perspiration and return only to indulge freely in some thirst-quenching drink.

If you do, up goes your weight immediately; you could, if you so wished, watch your weight increase on the weighing machine whilst you drank the liquid.

So that there must be a little firmness of mind exercised here if you are really desirous of getting good results in a surprisingly short period of time.

The juice of an orange, just a little lemon water or lemon juice, and a very small allowance of soda-water; or wash the mouth out with water, gargling a moment, then spit the water out as you see boxers do in their gym work when in strict training.

You will soon come to enjoy the feeling that you are proving yourself to be possessed of a strong will and that you can resist the very natural desire to drink heartily of whatever is handy after your ride.

Of course, it will further pay to give a little attention to diet. If you will do what I am constantly advising my numerous pupils interested in general fitness, and particularly reduction of obesity,

make Hovis the basis of your meals and be content with, at any rate once a day, a few Hovis sandwiches or buttered Hovis, lettuce, cheese, and perhaps a tomato—you will have all the nourishment and energy required; and you will certainly get your weight down.

What I call the "prince of sandwiches," *i.e.*, buttered Hovis lightly smeared with Bovril, ought to interest all weight reducers. It has been of remarkable assistance to me in my health cases; hence this reference to same.

I will conclude this chapter with a special hint which I fancy has never appeared elsewhere, and which will hurry along reduction of waist measurement and bodily weight to a surprising extent.

No matter what handle-bars you use or what particular balance you have on your machine, study how to make a slight body roll as you ride along, first pressing on the handle-bar with the right hand, then with the left—a very slight swaying movement which you regulate so that it first contracts and then relaxes the abdomen.

If you master this—and it will not take long—it soon becomes mechanical. It has a really wonderful effect on the following troubles:—

Obesity and dropped stomach.

Indigestion.

Weak abdominal muscles.

It helps if the handle-bars are lowered slightly so that you can get weight into the movement, otherwise you must bend the arms rather considerably in order to get the effect aimed at.

The only people to whom I do *not* recommend this wonderfully effective movement, one which I personally discovered many years ago, are those who suffer from rupture.

RHEUMATISM.

Possibly our climate is responsible for the very large percentage of people who suffer from rheumatism. In some districts it thoroughly disorganises whole works through workpeople being oft duty suffering from this scourge.

The arguments and method of cycling advocated in connection with weight reduction apply here.

It is admitted by authorities that regular sweats assist, and people go to much expense visiting Turkish baths and taking special electric baths in order to perspire when following out treatment of this character.

But there is nothing to equal a *natural* sweat, the perspiration induced by means of bodily exercise, and nothing can beat the cycle in this respect.

The sufferer from rheumatism might work a little harder, specially aiming at perspiring quickly, and he might certainly adopt the kind of diet I referred to where red meats are conspicuous by their absence, and keep down alcohol.

He must take care to change into dry things after a good rub down *immediately* he returns from his ride, and this advice applies equally to the obese person or practically anyone who rides in such a manner that perspiration is induced to any extent.

It will help if a little good embrocation is used, such as Ellimans, as advised to the cyclist in training.

Use a rough towel and induce a glow and sense of well-being.

NEURASTHENIA.

When I advise cycling to a nerve patient he sometimes states that he would not be equal to riding in the traffic of to-day. Certainly conditions are very different from say 25 years ago. The cyclist has to be wary and keep strictly to his left.

But, at first, quiet, secluded roads can easily be chosen, and I have proved to the hilt that weak nerves can be made strong this way; lost confidence quickly returns, digestion is improved, general circulation and physical development bettered, whilst the bug-bear of all neurasthenic, over-worked people, worry, is rendered impossible. Once awheel you have sufficient to occupy your mind looking ahead and steering your machine without allowing your thoughts to wander. I have seen some surprising results arrived at in nerve cases by means of the cycle.

A neurasthenic person needs something to take him (or her) out of himself—a hobby. What better hobby could one possibly have than cycling?

Take a real interest in the pastime. Subscribe regularly to one of the papers which devotes itself to the machine, read others' experiences awheel, how to tour, all about speed gears, different types of tyres, wheels handle bars, positions, etc. There is much to interest and instruct once your enthusiasm is roused.

Of course, if run down and "nervy," you must take no liberties with your lowered supply of energy. Be content with short rides at first; don't be ashamed to walk the hills; don't use too high a gear; don't go too fast or ride with cyclists whose strength and training are obviously superior to your own. Shortly, nerves will be a thing of the past, and when it is necessary to ride in traffic you will come to enjoy doing so.

It might sound a heroic measure, but it is really nothing of the kind. The psychology of neurasthenia is that confidence must be restored; the nerve sufferer must be made to feel he can once again do things and hold his own amongst his fellows. This a few cycle rides will achieve for him in a particularly pleasant and health-giving manner.

Try it and see.

HEART WEAKNESS.

As the years go by, science makes rapid strides forward. I am a cyclist of over 35 years standing (if the Irish bull may be excused) and can well remember when we received solemn warnings from the medical profession as to the danger of cycling when there was heart weakness of any description.

To-day the opposite view is taken, and rightly so, and it gives me some pleasure to think that I have played my part in bringing this state of affairs about. I know quite a few medical men who actually recommend cycling for heart weakness.

When the heart is flabby and merely lacks tone because the muscular system generally needs tuning, because exercise is not taken whilst such a person follows a sedentary occupation without care in diet, etc., nothing could possibly be better than *gentle* cycling. Of course care must be taken and the rules referred to in another chapter *re* suitable gears, riding with care uphill, avoiding fatigue and fast riding, must be adhered to, using common sense. Then there will be no danger.

The best and scientific method would be to consult a doctor if there is doubt, but if such a course be followed I have found that it is much better to consult one who has had personal experience of cycling, and many such can be found, for it is often the case that medical men use the machine to pay their visits.

INDIGESTION.

In my chapter dealing with obesity I make mention of a special rolling motion, so slight that no one watching you ride by would notice it, which has a marked effect on the abdominals.

It is equally good for the digestive case as for the obese person, and together with the general benefits which the cycle gives assists materially in curing any ordinary digestive trouble.

It stands to reason that if a person gets out in the fresh air for his exercise and burns up tissue, giving himself a natural appetite and ridding the system of waste matter through the pores of the skin, and also by evacuation, he must become healthier and stronger, and the tonic effect on the general digestive system is marked right from the start of the cycling exercise. I have known long-standing cases, where much money has been wasted on useless drugs and patent foods, respond quickly to cycling treatment, much to the joy and surprise of the sufferer.

If he will include a little general physical culture exercise along with the cycling and study diet (I will gladly send reprints of my own articles and a little book on the subject free to anyone sending two stamps and mentioning this booklet), indigestion will soon be a thing of the past.

LADIES AND CHILDREN.

I am often asked if cycling would be too severe for ladies and children. Possibly on the machines of 30 years ago they might find it hard work. To-day machines run with little effort. Provided the right machine be chosen, almost *anyone* can ride a cycle.

It is noticeable that when a machine is purchased for children the little ones quickly assume a bright, healthy appearance, and in the case of ladies I have known some surprising results. Certainly cycling gives a bloom of health which no cosmetics, face powders, or lip sticks could possibly duplicate.

I have known sallow girls alter to such an extent that they are almost unrecognised by their friends and acquaintances.

It is a pity in one way that motoring has become so popular, because in some circles it is considered the thing to look down on cyclists. There is no reason whatever why this should be so, and to people who make this mistake I would say that in a corner of most garages of titled people or people occupying a high social position there is room for the nimble cycle, which is gotten out when it is not worth while starting the car up for some short errand.

Where a girl wishes to excel at sports or games such as tennis, golf, etc., the cycle is an aid, the worth of which cannot possibly be over-stated.

Yes—*emphatically* so; cycling *is* suitable to most ladies and children. Incidentally, there are *no age limits*.

I had meant to devote a special chapter to cycling in connection with longevity, but unfortunately space forbids.

I will content myself in this chapter with stating that I often meet on the road cyclists between the age of 70 and 80, and occasionally one reads about such people in cycling periodicals.

It is well-known that cyclists live to a great age; I am convinced that cycling conduces to longevity.

TOURING—THE MACHINE AND ITS EQUIPMENT.

It is difficult to deal with what is really a big question in the amount of space at my command. Nothing gives the keen cyclist more pleasure than planning out his tour, marking out his route, and making his list of what he shall take and what he shall leave behind. And there is nothing to beat the cycle holiday.

Generally speaking it is wise to take as little as possible, and instead of continually adding to one's list until it is as long as your arm, keep cutting down, taking out all which can possibly be dispensed with. For the idea must be—*ride light*.

A weatherproof saddle bag to hold all you need is the best way to carry your requirements, and you can easily arrange for changes of clothing to be sent along to some pre-determined address (possibly c/o a Post Office) whilst you can send back through the post garments you have finished with.

If you carry a little fruit and a few of the special Hovis and Bovril sandwiches, you will be independent of hotels and restaurants for meals, and can enjoy an al fresco picnic whether you are riding over the week-end, a single day, or a long tour. These sandwiches, by the way, are of equal value to the cyclist record-breaker or long-distance competitor, as has been proved on more than one occasion at the Herne Hill track.

Dealing with the machine here, we are on delicate ground for this reason. There is still a woeful amount of ignorance even among so-called cycle agents as to what constitutes an up-to-date machine, and nothing could be more disastrous than for the cyclists just commencing to find himself astride a "dreadnought," heavy running, weighty, far too large in the frame, with large-sized tyres and wheels and everything possible present which will interfere with ease of running and lightness and freedom from fatigue.

Briefly, even a man of 5ft. 10in. would not need more than a 22- or 23-inch frame, a light Brooks or Terry saddle, open-sided Constrictor hand-made tyres, 26- not 28-inch wheels, and further it pays to have a machine made to measure. There is just the same difference between the made-to-measure machine and the one taken out of a shop window and made by the thousand, and the made-to-measure and ready-made suit, and you don't need to be told how much difference there is in the latter.

Further, it pays to go to a man with practical experience, and one who will take a real live personal interest in you.

I only know one such person, and he has the additional advantage of (1) being a practical engineer, fully qualified, and (2) being an old-time cyclist and record-holder—F. H. Grubb, of the Grubb Works, Twickenham.

Grubb made me a machine at once the lightest and easiest-running which I ever had in my life, and I have had thirty.

Weighing only some 24lbs. stripped, with Constrictor de Luxe open-sided Tyres and special light-weight rims, this machine has carried me many thousands of miles with really wonderful ease and comfort. It is the envy of my cycling friends, and many of them have followed my example and ordered a similar machine.

It has the up-to-date drop-out wheels, with one fixed and one free wheel gears just over 60 (free) and over 80 for training work (fixed).

I have ridden 200 miles in a day on this machine at 16 stones weight and age 46. Need I say more?

Grubb took a special interest in making this machine, which I believe he terms the "INCH MODEL," but no more pains or personal care than he takes with *any* customer who calls to see him or orders through the post.

I cannot recommend him too strongly. His slogan, "It's easier on a Grubb" is truth itself, and in connection with the heart cases, neurasthenia, obesity, etc., where vitality and physical power is at a low ebb, it is of vital importance that an easy-running machine be chosen.

Therefore I strongly recommend anyone thinking of going in for cycling, no matter for what purpose (for Grubb also makes wonderfully good track and road racing cycles) to get in touch with him at once, and the machine he will supply will last a lifetime and will carry you anywhere almost without effort.

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HOME TRAINING FOR CYCLING.

Some time ago the writer was responsible for a simple system of home training for cyclists which appeared in a series of articles in a well-known periodical, and on account of the large number of letters received thanking the author for benefits received it is judged well worth while including something of the kind in this booklet.

With modifications to suit the case the same system which suits the young athlete for preparing to participate in cycle racing will also apply to the enthusiast who wishes to fit himself for a long tour when it is essential that the powers shall be at their highest, so that an average of say 100 miles per day can be maintained without undue strain or fatigue.

In any case those who adopt the simple system outlined will be certain to notice their general riding improve, they will have, as the motorists say, "more power on hills," greater speed, and the ability to ride an increased distance without effort.

First let us include body-bending exercises, because they maintain abdominal tone, rid one of fat, improve "wind" and, although not generally known, it is a fact that the abdominals play an important part in riding and in breathing.

So try lying flat and first bring up the legs as in cycling; work them just as you would when a wheel and then vary by bringing up first one leg, then the other; after about fifteen movements like this, bring up both legs together.

A rather more advanced movement is to bring up the body from a prone position till finger tips touch the toes, then return and repeat say 10 or 12 times, if necessary placing the feet beneath a heavy article of furniture.

Then rise and do a little skipping, shadow boxing, or stationary running.

The last three exercises are not for the obese or those over 40 unless they know their powers and are fit enough to stand the strain of what are rather strenuous exercises.

Then, standing near an open window, try a little deep breathing; just a few deep breaths, going through circular arm movements at the same time. Not more than 20 breaths altogether.

For body and arm development you cannot do better than take the weight of the body on toes and hands, and then try to touch the ground with the chin without allowing the body to bend or "sag" in the middle.

Leg development being of great importance to the cyclist, you should include what is known as "the deep knee bend," *i.e.*, place hands on hips, then sit down till buttocks touch the heels or nearly so; rise and repeat about 20 times, gradually increasing up to 50 times. Some cyclists, anxious to improve at hill-climbing or racing, perform this exercise with a weight seated on the shoulders. For this purpose nothing is better than a disc bar bell, the weight of which can be gradually increased.

A further very useful leg exercise is to walk round your bedroom on your tip toes several times, finishing by raising as high as possible on toes, balancing by holding the back of a chair, and this exercise (as can the deep knee bend) may be rendered much more severe by standing on one leg.

After all exercise employ self-massage if the services of a masseur are not available, and during your massage you will derive considerable benefit if you use the well-known embrication made by Ellimans.

I understand that the firm, from their address at Slough, send out leaflets giving instructions regarding self-massage, a special self-massage booklet, and also a book on training for athletes, free to all who write, *especially cyclists*.

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