

## **My thoughts for inexperienced riders:**

Wind is just part of cycling life. Bear with it! Wind is like life, you have to bear the bad and enjoy the good. There is hope when there is a wind, you suffer the head winds and enjoy the tail winds. There is no hope when there is no wind. I hope you enjoy your own self made head winds, always in front.

So you want to know how much wind you are biking in. It's easy if it's a direct head wind or tail wind [hopefully parallel to the main portion of your route]. Stop, put the wind at your back then slowly speed up. When your bike speed matches the wind's speed you will feel no wind in your face. Your speedometer will indicate the wind's speed. If it's a gusty day, try measuring when you are in the 'average' wind.

Alas, if the true wind is perpendicular to your course, consider the wind to be of no use except to cool you in summer or really chill you during winter.

I ride the Pungo /Creeds area, usually three days per week, all year round. In general the main roads sort of average south west/north east and I usually enjoy winds that are SW/NE or nearly so. So there is almost always hope during the outbound and return legs of the ride.

The work you put into a ride, energy consumption wise, can be measured by the relative wind in your face, which is the combination of the true wind's speed and direction and the 'wind' you generate while biking. A strong relative wind in the face, even if you are biking slowly, will inform you that you are working hard and you are not enjoying yourself. But maybe later, the wind may be at your back and you will really enjoy your ride. In fact, if you force yourself, you may get up to a very high speed that gets you the same wind in your face as before but your speedometer indicates you are approaching Olympian speeds.

As you plow through the air you feel the air's resistance. Here's a biking fact: When you double your speed through the air, you quadruple air resistance. That's why riding at high speeds or cranking into a significant head wind can be a lot of work.

Another way to look at the effect of air resistance is by this example: Let's say you are biking at 15 mph with a 5 mph tail wind. You will feel 10 mph of wind in your face. Now turn around and bike at 15 mph with that wind, now a head wind. You now feel a 20 mph wind in your face. You have doubled the wind speed in your face and are now working 4 times as hard.

Guess what is the very main cause of air resistance? It's You! You can lower your air resistance by hunching over and use your handle bar drops and ride with your back almost parallel to the ground like racers do.

And that's why wind is just a part of cycling life.

More next month,  
John McKee