

biking

Spin Cycle

The fitness phenomenon—start spinning and winning



by Chris Kostman

Imagine working your heart, lungs, muscles, mind and soul in unison. Imagine a fitness journey that takes the real training principles of bicycle racing, blends them with yoga and martial arts, and provides a workout that encourages you to find the champion within.

Imagine an indoor training system that welcomes and nurtures newcomers, exhilarates and challenges even the most seasoned athlete, and yet is totally non-competitive.

Imagine men and women of all ages and backgrounds working together in a communal environment with a common goal: to become the fittest, healthiest,

happiest human beings possible. This is Spinning™. Spinning is a cardio-vascular workout for the whole body that utilizes a special stationary bicycle. Led by an instructor and set to music, Spinning is held in a class environment at health clubs all over the country.

Join a class and you'll find from 10 to 50 Spinners engaged in a 40-minute workout that is,

as the promotional posters say, "part Tour de France, part yoga, and part 12th-century torture chamber."

But it's not just riding a bike indoors or aerobics on a bicycle. Spinners ride, and in some cases, live, by the mantra "Let go, get fit, live life, spin." Spinning simulates all of the experiences of outdoor cycling and presents it in a sweat-drenching, 800-calorie-burning workout that combines a frenzied endorphin high, group therapy and a mental journey.

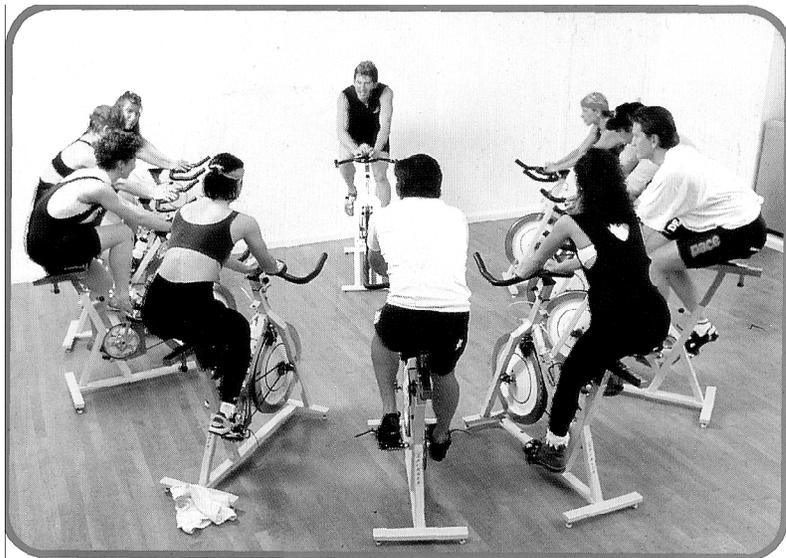
Sweeping the United States and Europe since its formal introduction in March of this year, Spinning was originally invented in 1989 by Johnny G, a

South African-born celebrity trainer, black-belt martial artist and bicycle racer. He saw Spinning as a tool to simulate the challenge of bicycle racing in a controlled environment.

Johnny originally designed Spinning to better prepare himself for the grueling Race Across America bicycle race, a contest which he quit in 1987. Enter Spinning with its ability to rejuvenate and, as Johnny says, "find the champion within." With the boost he got from Spinning, Johnny completed the 3,000 mile race from Los Angeles to New York in a mere ten days in 1989. After he arrived back home in L.A., he faced the proverbial question of "What am I going to do with my life?" Johnny knew what to do: "The answer was right in front of my face. What had helped me and made me successful could make anybody successful if they followed my training concepts and principles. I realized then that everybody should Spin!" So Spinning came out of Johnny's garage and into the world of fitness.

Fast forward some five years. Spinning is firmly entrenched in L.A. and has spread to Sports Club Reebok in New York. Spinners are fanatically flocking to the classes, celebrities on the Tonight Show tout its wonders, *Rolling Stone* magazine and Good Morning America label it "the fitness phenomenon of the nineties," yet Spinning was still an isolated West Coast and East Coast phenomenon.

Enter Schwinn®, the world's most famous bicycle brand and fitness equipment manufacturer, an American company celebrating its 100th birthday of bringing fitness and fun to the world. This heritage made Schwinn uniquely



qualified to turn Johnny's prototype stationary bicycle into a rock-solid piece of fitness equipment, capable of withstanding forty or more classes per week, week in and week out.

This decidedly out of the ordinary stationary bicycle has a forty pound flywheel connected directly to the pedals with a fixed gear system. That means no coasting, EVER, to the uninitiated. Also, the Johnny G Spinner™ by Schwinn® is patterned after the ride and fit of a real road bicycle. The seat is narrow and adjustable — up, down, fore and aft. The handlebars have a multitude of low and comfortable positions and are adjustable, up and down. And the pedals allow the rider to either wear standard shoes or lock in with special cycling shoes.

The bike has no bells and whistles, no computer, no calorie counters, no digital profiles to follow, in other words, no clutter. In fact, the only "gadget" is a twist knob for changing the pedaling resistance. Thus, each Spinner can personally decide the proper level of difficulty for any part of the workout. This allows people of all backgrounds and ability levels to train together. As Johnny says, "This is empowerment! It's YOUR workout. You decide what you want to do. Spinners don't just copycat the instructor, they ride their own road!" The net result is a bike stable enough to allow riding out of the saddle or sprinting like a madperson across an

imaginary finish line. And through it all, Spinners are in control of their own destinies. However, Spinning is much more than an extraordinary stationary bike

It's a com-

prehensive training program that works the entire body, inside and out.

Johnny's philosophy, that permeates Spinning, is that "the body follows the mind." And so it is that each class is designed to teach everyone in the room how to "take adversity and turn it into an opportunity."

The program is taught by specially certified Johnny G Spinning Instructors who undergo a rigorous nine-month training and certification program. Using the latest techniques from heart rate training, sports psychology and nutrition — plus Johnny's own unique motivational techniques — the Spinning curriculum is delivered to all Spinning students in a challenging, yet nurturing manner.

Classes are never boring; in fact, no two are ever alike. One day it's mountain climbing, the next it's "Zen and the art of pedaling perfect circles." One day you're Spinning in a candlelit room with incense burning, and the next it's a wide-eyed, hair-raising, roller coaster ride. Spinning never stops, and neither will you once you get started.

For additional information on Spinning, contact Schwinn Cycling & Fitness at 1-800-SCHWINN.

Chris Kostman is a Los Angeles-based writer and athlete. His work has appeared in *Triathlete*, *Bicycle Guide*, *Over The Edge*, and *City Sports*.