



FIT FOR LIFE

Be a Smartie

Carol Westmorland gets even fitter thanks to her new toys: high-tech virtual cycling aids

If you were a light bulb how bright would you like to shine? Me? Naturally, I would like to be high wattage and dazzle. I would certainly prefer that to being a low light.

Having very nearly encountered wildebeests (well, cows) in recent times, it is in my interest to have a good turn of speed. My life may well depend on it.

There is more to my earlier question than simply being a light bulb, but I expect you knew that. Being high in wattage is not just about shining brightly, it is about being able to kick butt (if you will excuse the phrase).

I may be slow off the mark here, but it is now essential to our wellbeing to take an interest in our wattage output. Step forward 'Smart Trainers'. No, not clever running shoes, but an inanimate object that is the future.

I fix my bike to mine, plug it in to a wall plug and it talks nicely to my Garmin. I believed I was a purist, in my cycling world, but this meets my needs in the winter months.

My bike, minus the back wheel, is fixed to this beautiful piece of hardware. We, the bike and I, are no longer assaulted by mud. It is no substitute for the real thing but winter can be brutal.

The creature of habit that I am means I am not looking for variety; I am working at improving my wattage output. I could, should I wish, head off into a virtual world anywhere I please. I could team up and go on virtual



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group rides with fellow 'Smarties'. It can simulate slopes of over 20 per cent and is can also simulate the feel of cobbles through the pedals. I am happy just to push hard and monitor my wattage output and cadence.

The world of virtual smartness is not dull. It is enlightening and hugely motivating.

With the ease of flicking a switch you could be transformed from dimness to a world of dazzling possibilities.

I'm on full beam.



Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.uk