



Cycle Clips

Clipless Pedal Systems

Bikefit expert and graduate Sports Therapist Nicholas Dinsdale (member of The Society of Sports Therapists) explains the evolution, myths and benefits of using clipless pedal systems.

Mystified

As both newcomers and reasonably experienced cyclists alike take to the beautiful caminos and cycle paths throughout Costa Blanca, I am mystified by the large number that are missing out on the benefits of improved efficiency, comfort and potential safety. Yes, I am referring to those that cycle regularly, covering many kilometres, and for unknown reasons - fail to use a suitable clipless pedal system.

My Challenge

In the UK, I have successfully converted many recreational cyclists of all ages and capabilities, including my wife Carol - notably after only one month of cycling. Therefore, by the end of this short article, I hope at least, to have dispelled the myths

sional peloton.

In 1987, Jean Beyl invented the Time pedal system, which allowed free rotational float and some lateral motion of the foot.

By the early 1990's many different clipless pedals became available.

The introduction of a rotational-float quickly reduced the incidence of knee injuries.

More importantly, injury levels amongst the professional peloton dropped below those of pre-clipless levels.

Subsequently, the use and associated benefits quickly spread to all types and abilities of cyclists, including amateur and recreational riders.

Benefits

Clipless pedals offer cyclists better efficiency along with more power, control and confidence.

They are part of a natural progression in cycling efficiency with a minimum amount of your pedalling energy lost before it reaches the rear-wheel.

With the foot attached to the pedal, you begin to use all the muscles of

your legs to power the bike instead of relying solely on your quadriceps to push the pedal down. Clipless pedals enable a full 360 degrees of drive throughout the pedal revolution. Pedalling with the entire leg distributes the work so your muscles fatigue much more slowly, which means you can ride

when you're clipped in; you're much more secure because your feet won't slip off the pedals.

Arguably, suitable clipless pedal systems are actually safer than toe clips and straps. It is considerably faster, not to mention easier, to unclip than it is to slip your foot back and out of the clips and straps.

If you're cycling short distances and pedalling casually, basic flat platform pedals work fine. As your cycling becomes more serious, say to achieve fitness, the speed you pedal and the distance you cover increases and there's a risk of your feet slipping off platform pedals.

Furthermore, your feet move about on platform pedals, which wastes energy. Clipless pedal systems keep the balls of your feet directly over the pedal spindle.

Purchasing Considerations

Firstly, select the correct shoe and clipless pedal system for your specific type of cycling.

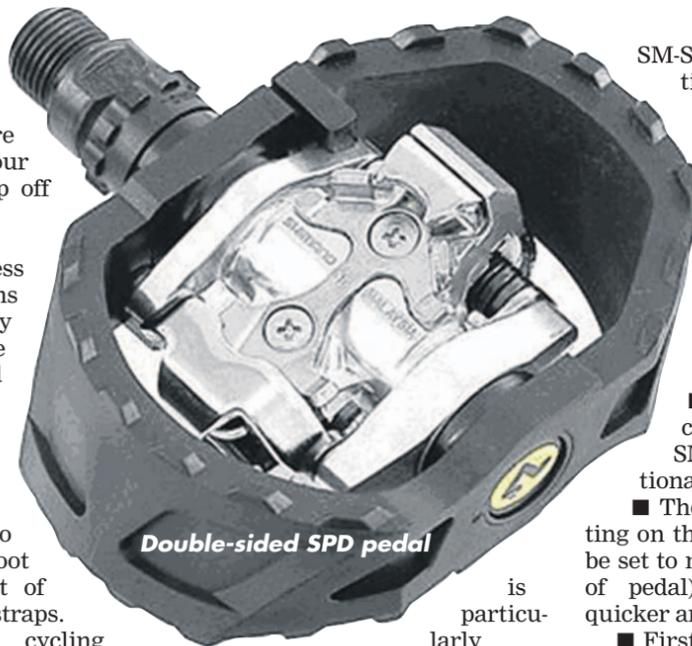
In my opinion, the ideal combination for newcomers and recreational riders considering moving to clipless pedal systems for the first time is as follows:

Shoe type: touring style shoes (see photo). They're flexible for comfort with rubber soles and have recessed cleats for both On-road and Off-road riding. Make sure the shoe will accept a SPD pedal/cleat system.

Pedal type: a double-sided SPD pedal (see photo).

This means you can click into the pedal on either side so you don't have to look down to get your feet in. Also some of these pedals offer a platform

around the piece that engages the cleat. This design



SM-SH51 Single-Directional Release cleat. However, for newcomers or those who want the safest option - consider the silver SM-SH56 Multi-Directional Release cleat.

Safety Considerations

- Newcomers should consider using the SM-SH56 Multi-Directional Release cleat.
- The spring tension setting on the SPD pedals should be set to minimum (both sides of pedal). This facilitates a quicker and easier release.
- First practice riding in a safe environment, away from traffic and obstacles.
- Practice clipping 'in' and 'out' whilst riding along a straight road.
- Prior to reaching junctions or tricky sections - unclip one foot well in advance.

Enjoy your cycling



SM-SH56 Multi-Directional Release cleat

surrounding clipless pedals, and thus, successfully converted the doubters that I occasionally ride with in the Quesada area!

Moreover, I would like to think that I can increase both their enjoyment and cycling efficiency - along with many other readers of the Costa Blanca News.

I consider this as another challenge which I hope to win.

Evolution of clipless pedals

'Look', a French-based ski-binding manufacturer, first tested a rigid floatless clipless pedal with the help of professional cyclist (and five-time Tour de France winner) Bernard Hinault in 1984.

This clipless system was introduced to the market in 1986. However it placed undesirable stress on the knees - increasing the incidence of knee injuries amongst the profes-



longer. Standing on the pedals, like when climbing a hill, is safer

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