

# Q&A's

With Sara Carrigan  
www.saracarrigan.com

*I find it hard to stay in the aero position for more than five minutes because it's so uncomfortable. What do you recommend?*

The reason you may be experiencing pain depends on where/why you are so uncomfortable. Three things to look at are:

**Saddle.** You may need a different saddle to offer better support and comfort. Choosing a saddle can be a difficult and frustrating process because it is such a personal thing and what might be someone's favourite is totally uncomfortable for you, and vice versa!

When I went through the process of trying to find a saddle it took a while! The great thing is that many bike shops now offer the service of test saddles, which can help in the search of the most comfy. The secret is getting a saddle that allows your sit bones (ischial tuberosities) to be on the saddle and not our soft parts. So identifying the measurement of these bones can help to ascertain the type/width of saddle that may suit.

**Bike set up.** Your position on the bike may not be what your anatomy allows. When setting up a Time Trial (TT) bike it is always a compromise between being aero and powerful! There is no point being set up in the most aero position where you look damn fast but then not be able to drive power through the pedals! Conversely, if you are in a position where you are your most powerful, it may not be very aero and so some of your power production is lost in pushing your larger Frontal Surface Area (FSA) through the wind.

I see some riders getting around in their aero bars that are not at all aero and the rider looks unsteady. So, they would be better off in their drops where they feel more confident and have better bike handling!

**Stretching / core.** Let's get one thing straight... a proper TT position is never the most comfortable and it is not a relaxed position! There is extra strain through your back, hamstrings, glutes and neck so you must strengthen your muscles and you must do core strengthening exercises so that you can be efficient and reduce the chance of injury. If you plan on racing in a TT position, you MUST train in that position for some of your sessions at least a month out from your event so that you are used to how the bike handles in that position and that your muscles are primed for being on the rivet in that position! Not doing so, will only invite injury and you will be very sore afterwards!



*How often should you have a bike fit or adjust your set up?*

**New to cycling.** When riders are first introduced to cycling, it is best to get a bike set up from the outset to help with bike handling and being comfortable. This also ensures you get the right size bike. Beginners are usually set up in a more upright position but as time goes on, the body changes, adapts and gets stronger in the cycling position so the position often needs to be altered.

**Weight loss.** Some riders start cycling to lose weight and so may start with a little 'pot belly'. As fitness increases and the tummy disappears, the bike position often needs to be altered.

**New saddle.** Swapping from one saddle to a different model saddle requires careful measurement due to different rail heights. Additionally, varying saddle softness changes the effective seat height.

**New bike / new shoes.** You may already have a record of your bike measurements / cleat position that allows you to transfer the set up straight to your new bike/shoes. However, bike frame geometry differs from bike to bike and therefore it can be a bit 'off' if you don't know exactly what you are doing.

**Kids.** Young riders are growing all the time and therefore they often need to have the bike position looked at to ensure it keeps up with their expanding limbs!

**Repetitive injury.** If you are experiencing similar injuries time and again, it may be worth looking at your set up. It may also be a sign that you need to do some stretching or body/core strengthening exercises!

*Where's the best place on the Coast to take my teenage kids for a decent ride on their road bikes? They are too young and inexperienced to be out there in that traffic.*

There are two traffic-free, purpose built cycling venues on the Gold Coast that are perfect for beginners:

- Gold Coast Cycling Centre, Nerang
- Luke Harrop Cycling Circuit, Runaway Bay

A quiet on-road precinct that is also a great place for new riders is Emerald Lakes, Carrara.



Do you have a cycling question for Sara? Post it on our facebook page today!