

## Basic Bicycle shoe-cleat Positioning

by Jim Langley

**Please note:** This article is about positioning bicycle cleats on cycling shoes. If you are looking for information on how to install and remove pedals, please go [here](#).

A good neutral starting cleat position that works for most riders is to place the cleats so that when the shoes are clipped into the pedals, the balls of the feet are directly over the center of the pedal axles (also called the pedal “spindles”).

It can be tricky to locate the exact ball of your foot and place the cleats so that the balls are directly over the pedal axles. Note that the ball of the foot is defined by [Biology-Online.org](http://Biology-Online.org) as “the padded portion of the sole, at the anterior extremity of the heads of the metatarsals, upon which the weight rests when the heel is raised.”

So, if you stand with your bare feet fully on the ground they touch at the heels, the balls of the feet and the toes (assuming you’re not completely flat-footed). And, if you stand on tip toes, you are standing mostly on the balls of your feet.

Again, you should position your cleats to center the balls of your feet over the center of your pedals axles (see diagram).

Here’s an easy way to get it right

1. With your shoe nearby, and with bare feet, place a dot of paint or a drop of whiteout (correction fluid) on the center of the ball of one foot. If you can’t see

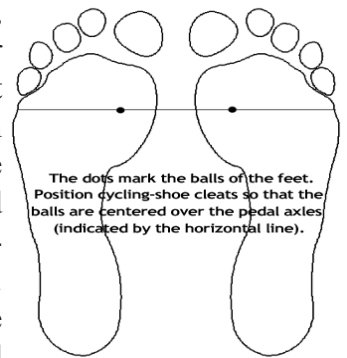
the bottom of your foot well enough to do this accurately, have someone help you.

2. Immediately, so that the paint or whiteout doesn’t dry first, slip on your shoe, close the straps and stand to put pressure on your foot.

3. Remove the shoe and you should

find the paint dot transferred to the inside of the shoe clearly marking the ball of your foot. Repeat steps 1, 2 and 3 with your other foot.

4. You can’t see the dots on the insides of your shoes from the outside when you’re positioning the cleats so use this workaround: simply stick a straight pin through the side of each shoe (the side next to the crankarm). Make sure the pin exactly bisects the mark inside the shoe and sticks straight out of the shoe, not at an angle. Now, when you flip the shoes over to position the cleats you will have a pin in each as an indicator telling you exactly where the cleats needs to be positioned to put the balls of your feet directly over the pedal axles (note that you could also look at the pins and paint a line on the shoe soles if you prefer). Usually centering the cleats over the pins will be the right spots to center the balls of your feet right where they should be directly over the pedal axles.



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# Banquet News!

The price, which will be borne by the club includes tax, tip and will include wives/husbands or one guest. All the poop is below!

There will be a cash bar wherein drinks will be priced as follows: Wine and call drinks at \$7.00, beer at \$5.00 and coffee and/or soft drinks at \$3.00 each.

Debbie needs to know if you're coming (or not) so let her know. Her e-mail is: moendeb@hotmail.com. Her phone number is: (440) 988-8918 (home) or (440) 225-8095 (mobile).

The menu will be:

## **Lorain Wheelmen Banquet** **Saturday, April 16, 2011**

### **First Course**

Cream of English Pea Soup Cappuccino, Goat Cheese Espuma  
Puréed English pea soup topped with goat cheese foam.

### **Second Course**

Chez François Seasonal Salad  
Seasonal field greens tossed with a champagne vinaigrette dressing, wrapped in an English cucumber,  
topped with toasted honey roasted pecans, dried cranberries and Asian pears, garnished with a tomato.

### **Third Course**

Braised Kobe Beef Short Rib, Sauce au Naturel

Braised beef short ribs simmered with a jardinière of root vegetables with sauce au naturel and mousseline potatoes topped with a radish curl.

**Or**

Char-Grilled Jail Island Salmon, Ohio Apple & Golden Raisin Fruit Chutney  
Jail Island salmon served over a sweet potato mousseline topped with a seasonal golden delicious apple and raisin chutney, garnished with micro greens.

### **Fourth Course**

Delarobi Fruit Tartlet, Madagascar French Vanilla Bean Ice Cream  
A seasonal fruit tartlet filled with raspberries, strawberries and kiwi, topped with an apricot glaze, served with French vanilla bean ice cream and a berry coulis.

### **Beverage**

Coffee, Tea, or a Soft Drink

555 Main Street \* Vermilion, Ohio 44089 \* (440) 967-0630

## Wicked Wednesdays

SCOTT'S SPIN RBR, 8/26/10

Every Wednesday evening, my bike club hosts an interval workout on a hill at the local university. The climb takes 5-6 minutes and we do it 6 times. Rain or shine, darkness or daylight, forest fire or student protests.

Our coach refers to these sessions as Level 5 or anaerobic threshold workouts. Even if you pace it perfectly -- negative splits, each interval faster than the last -- it hurts. I'm talking root-canal, tax-audit, "I-think-we-should-start-seeing-other-people" pain.

I begin dreading Wednesday evenings around bedtime Tuesday. By Wednesday lunchtime, I'm feeling nausea that has nothing to do with my midday meal of organic yam and raw kale from my *Biggest Loser* lunchbox.

Then I show up at the workout and scan the group to see what fresh dose of humiliation waits. Last week it was the 65-year-old guy who dropped me like a tub of Grecian Formula. It was inspiring. Really.

A few weeks ago it was the one-armed dude. OK, he had 2 arms, but one was in a sling. He flew past me like a, um, person with fully functioning body parts.

Did I mention the 50-something mom? The 15-year-old lad who I swear was on training wheels last month? They're both quicker than me. A fellow could choke on all this inspiration.

Why keep at it? Like most cyclists, I'm stubborn, masochistic and a little delusional. All this toil and trouble have to make us stronger, right?

Plus, I do eventually finish ahead of some people -- the ones who come to one Wednesday and never return.

I may not be fast, but I'm pretty good at one thing: showing up.

## Product Review

I, like most clubmembers, rely on websites to purchase a number of riding essentials. It never seems like one place has everything you want or they don't always have the best price. I was thrilled a few years ago when I found out about a website that seemed to have the lowest prices anywhere on tires, shoes and a number of other items. Not only that but they shipped free to the US. The website, Probikekit, has been great. That is until my most recent order. Seems that both the UK and the USofA have gotten much more careful about what gets shipped and how it gets checked. My last order, well over a month after shipping still hasn't arrived. The people at Probikekit are being as accommodating as possible but they are also at a loss. Normally, my orders have arrived in 10 – 12 days. Homeland security makes the rules now. I'm told that I could get my order anytime and they've had orders that took nearly two months. Now, I will say that this is the exception vs. the rule but it is a reality of dealing with web companies that are out of the country. I am hopeful that my order is still in transit, somewhere, and that it will appear on my doorstep soon. The lesson here is that if you order something from out of the country make sure it isn't something you need right away. Oh ya, another little nuisance that I've noticed when dealing with overseas companies. My credit card company charges an overseas transaction fee. So much for free shipping.

Some of the Coastal Cruisers order from ProBike Kit and two of em recently (in FEB) got (english spelling) tyres. Their orders came in the usual 8-10 days. I heard from Ralph later that he finally got his tires in about 30 days. - Ed

# cleat

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## E x c e p t i o n s :

Try the ball-over-the-pedal-axle position first and give it a chance to see if it feels right because it works for most riders. If it doesn't feel right, the most common adjustment to make it feel better is to move the cleats back slightly, perhaps 1/2 inch. This puts a little more of your foot over the pedal. This is often preferred by larger riders with longer legs, people who push bigger gears, climbers and time trialists, riders using long crankarms and slower pedalers.

Conversely, if you tend to ride at a high cadence, spin smaller gears, like sprinting, ride shorter crankarms and are a toes-down pedaler, you might move the cleats forward slightly, but don't overdo it. Maybe about 1/4 to 1/2 inch (about 6 - 10 mm). If you get too far out on your toes you increase the risk of "hot foot" and even Achilles injuries so experiment but only a little at a time.



Lastly, if you're an ultra-distance rider you may want to push the cleats all the way back. This type of riding often causes numbness and hot foot. A great solution discovered by long-distance champ [Lon Haldeman](#) is moving the cleats fully to the backs of the slots, which relieves pressure on the feet and has no negative side effects for this type of riding, apart from a slight increase in the possibility of toe overlap with the front wheel if you're riding a bicycle with aggressive front-end geometry.

**A n g l e a d j u s t m e n t**  
Most clipless systems include some "float," the ability of the cleats to move slightly so that you will automatically find a natural angle to hold your feet when pedaling. However, it's important to get the cleats close to the right position when mounting them. If they're angled incorrectly there might not be enough float in the system to allow you to correctly position

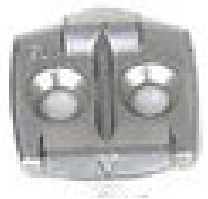
your feet, which could result in pain when riding or even a knee or foot injury. It can also make it harder to get in and out of clipless pedals.

A good neutral starting position that works for most riders places the cleats so that when the pedals are mounted in the shoes there is space between the heels of the shoes and the crankarms that's about 3/4 of an inch (2 cm), or about the width of an average man's index finger.

If you experience any discomfort when cycling that's associated with your cleat position, I recommend visiting a shop with an experienced cleat fitter and paying a professional to dial-in your position.

Two tricks that help some riders: If you adjust your cleats carefully and still find that your ankle(s) is too close to the crankarm and sometimes brushes it (or worse), a simple fix is to place an automobile spark plug washer(s) between the pedal(s) and crankarm(s). The washer will slip right over it, not effect the threaded connection to the crankarm and provide several mm of clearance.

If you need more clearance, a great solution is SCOR Productions' KneeSavers. These are custom pedal extensions that allow you to add 20, 25 or 30mm between your pedals and crankarms. You can read all about them and place an order [here](#). A reader also told me about this generic version of these extenders available on Amazon.com (photo, right).



**M a r k t h e p o s i t i o n**  
Once the cleats are perfectly positioned on your shoes be sure to mark them so that when they need replacement it's easy to find the perfect position. Some shoe soles have marks on them for this and some cleats come with marking stickers, etc. Or, you can just trace a

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# cleat

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line around the shoes in indelible ink. Or try a gold paint pen for carbon-sole shoes.

**M o r e t i p s**  
Be sure to lubricate your cleat bolts before installation, which will ensure you can get them tight enough to remain tight. And, be sure to check the bolts/screws after a few rides to make certain they are remaining tight.

If you keep a spare set of cleats on hand you will always have them if the cleats on your shoes become too worn or they break. Spare cleats also come in handy for comparing with your used cleats to determine if they're worn enough to replace them yet.

Speaking of cleat wear, you might look into rubber covers for your cleats, which are offered by a few companies. You carry them on rides and slip them over the cleats when you stop for protection and for additional traction when walking. Here are the ones I use:


Be sure to keep your clipless pedals and cleats lubricated where they meet each other to prevent clicks and creaks. A good cure is the car-care spray Armor All, which you can find in any hardware store. This works on plastic, carbon and metal cleats/pedals.



| Member         | January | YTD   |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Panek, Carl    | 575     | 575   |
| Panek, Carol   | 367     | 367   |
| Krebs, Dave    | 275     | 275   |
| Ballard, Ralph | 214     | 214   |
| Trost, Bill    | 147     | 147   |
| Riggs, Dave    | 110     | 110   |
| Petro, Arthur  | 37      | 37    |
| Totals         | 1,725   | 1,725 |



**Renew  
NOW!, it's  
NOT too  
late.!**

*WHEELMAN*  *TRACKS*

**LORAIN  
WHEELMEN**

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| President                        | John Bachman  |
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| Editor                           | Dave          |
| Krebs                            |               |
| For ride info, call 440.775.1573 |               |

# Calendar

## March 2011

|                  |             |           |      |                     |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|------|---------------------|
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Oberlin Inn | U-Show    | 30   | Arrive like a lion? |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | Oberlin     | Lorenzo's | 7:30 | Meeting             |

### Daylight Savings time Starts at 2:00 AM today!

|                  |             |        |    |                               |
|------------------|-------------|--------|----|-------------------------------|
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Oberlin Inn | U-Show | 30 | A Patty's Day snow?           |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> | Oberlin Inn | U-Show | 30 | It's the first day of spring! |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | Oberlin Inn | U-Show | 30 | It should be getting warm!    |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> | Oberlin Inn | U-Show | 30 | April is around the corner!   |

## Starting Times & Locations

### Oberlin:

The Oberlin start is in the Oberlin Inn parking lot located in the rear of the Inn.

### Amherst:

The Amherst start is the City parking area 3 located between Tenney & Park Avenues just east of Church Street.

### Weeknight evening rides:

We "may" be able to get out at 4:00 or 5:00 for a quick ride AFTER March 13th! Check with Ralph to be sure.

### Weekend & Holiday Starting Times:

Sunday & Holiday rides start at 9:00 AM EST (9:00 EDT starting on Mar 13<sup>th</sup>). Saturday rides will start at 9:00 AM from Prospect School in Oberlin.

Don't forget to turn in your miles to: [mymileage@lorainwheelmen.org](mailto:mymileage@lorainwheelmen.org)

# Lorain Wheelmen Membership Form

New  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Other Family Members \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Ph ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dues (due March 1st) Schedule (1/2 after Oct 1st for **NEW** membership)

Adult/Family \$15.00

**Return To:**

Lorain Wheelmen  
P.O. Box 102  
Amherst OH 44001-0102

**Waiver**

In signing this release for myself or the named member (when the member is under 18), I understand the intent of this release and agree to absolve all of the sponsors, or organizers and associated entities be they individuals or organizations, singly and collectively of all blame for any injury, misadventure, harm, loss or inconvenience suffered as a result of taking part in any Lorain Wheelmen Bicycle Club ride or in connection with any activity associated with or related to said organization. If the member is 18 or over, he/she signs for self. If not, then the parent or legal guardian must sign below.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of member or parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_