

Try This: Learn to Do the "Miracle Shift"

RBR 1/5/12

That's what cycling coach **John Teaford** called an energy-saving way to climb short hills fast.

Roadies who excel on rolling hills know how to apportion their energy. They don't sprint like mad at the bottom and then blow to the moon before the top.

To do it right, you need to take a careful reading of your energy on the given ride. You also need to accurately size up the climb's length and grade.

As you approach a hill that'll take 15-60 seconds to get over, shift to a gear that's a bit lower (easier) than you'd normally use.

Stay seated and spin fast for about two-thirds of the climb. If you're with others, they'll probably be standing and pedaling slower in a bigger gear. Maybe they'll pull ahead. Don't worry, because in the last third of the climb you'll have more left than they will.

You've saved your legs, and now you can cash in!

In the final third of the climb, shift to the next smaller cog or two (higher, harder gear), stand, and apply the pressure. Your legs will have some snap, thanks to the spinning that got you to this point.

You'll roll right by your companions, who are bogging down in the relatively big gears they've used for the whole hill. It'll cost them plenty to accelerate and match your speed.

Time this shift right and you'll be amazed at how much you improve your short-hill climbing. You'll be calling it a miracle, too!