

## **Why Does My Foot Go Numb?**

**RBR 12/15/11**

**Question:** After about 20 miles of riding, my left foot goes numb. If I get off the bike for a few minutes, the numbness goes away but quickly returns when I'm back in the saddle. Strangely, if I'm climbing it doesn't seem to bother me as much. What gives? -- **Byron M.**

**Coach Fred Matheny Replies:** It's unusual that your foot goes numb on the flats rather than on hills when you're putting more pressure on the pedals. It's not too unusual, however, that only one foot is affected. Lots of people have feet of slightly different dimensions, causing one shoe to be too tight if the pair is sized for the smaller foot.

Here are three ideas based on my riding and coaching experience:

--- Your problem could simply be a case of "hot foot" from a shoe that's too tight, compressing the nerves between the metatarsal bones in the forefoot. You could try wider shoes, thinner insoles and socks, or an insole with a "metatarsal bump" under the forefoot to spread the bones and relieve pressure on the nerves.

--- Assuming your shoes fasten with a combination of three straps or buckles, adjust them this way: Simply fasten the bottom strap (nearest your toes) without pulling it tight. Pull the middle strap slightly tight. Snug the top strap as firmly as you like. This technique helps your feet feel secure but adds no pressure to the metatarsals.

--- Standing on hills may result in pulling up more, relieving pressure on the ball of your foot and those problematical nerves. Try standing periodically on flat roads to see if that helps.