

WOMEN IN CYCLING

Girl power is alive and well in cycling. Women across the country love to show off their talent and enthusiasm for the sport. Check out our snapshot of women's initiatives, including female-led bike-repair workshops, women-only cycling clubs and organizations promoting female empowerment in competitive cycling — rounded off by a Q&A with Olympic hopeful Catharine Pendrel (Luna Pro).

by Lisa Evans



Cycling inspires women to travel the world, stay fit and make new friends.



Fast and Female empowers girls to participate in competitive sport

Fast and Female

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When Chandra Crawford, 2006 Olympic gold medalist, was at the height of her competitive cross-country skiing career, she noticed a generational gap — an absence of future female medalists in the sport. Her desire to get girls excited about sports was the impetus behind Fast and Female, a non-profit organization that empowers girls to participate in competitive sports. The group organizes day camps across Canada that engage girls in mini-clinics and fun activities led by Professional female athletes. The emphasis is on connecting girls with inspiring female figures. "You can't be what you can't see," says Executive Director Marie-Hélène Thibeault. www.fastandfemale.com

Cycling Silk

Childhood pals Kate Harris and Melissa Yule completed a rigorous 10-month journey throughout 10 countries along the Silk Road in November 2011. Wilderness conservationists, adventurers and long-distance cyclists, Harris and Yule teamed up with Reach the World, an organization that links classrooms and world travelers, helping teachers to incorporate environmental and conservation learnings of their cycling adventures into classroom programs. Harris was recently named by *explore Magazine* as one of Canada's top 10 adventurers and is currently working on a book about the cycling adventure. www.cyclingsilk.com

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Team Spoke n'Hot

Based in Regina, Sask., Team Spoke n'Hot organizes group rides for women. Sponsored by Dutch Cycle and coached by experienced cyclists, Spoke n'Hot is based on the idea that riding is a social activity, a great way to get fit and make friends. The team provides an opportunity for cyclists of all abilities to learn about bikes and have fun riding together in a non-competitive, safe environment. Small group rides, generally consisting of no more than 10 riders, are fully supported by a safety vehicle and ride leaders who ensure riders start together and finish together. <http://sportstogo.ca/spokenhot>

Spynga Mama & Babe Cycle Sculpt

With two locations in Toronto, Ont., Spynga is a combination spinning-and-yoga studio that is tackling a challenge faced by new moms wanting to jump-start their post-baby fitness regime without leaving their little ones at home. Mama & Babe Cycle Sculpt is a 50-minute class that offers 25 minutes of spinning, followed by circuit training. Babies relax and enjoy high-energy music in their strollers while mom is cycling, and are then included in yoga poses and circuit exercises. Every Thursday, the studio welcomes Brent Atkins, whose guitar and furry friends entertain with a series of musical games and songs. www.spynga.com

www.pedalmag.com

MORE WOMEN'S INITIATIVES IN 2012

CAAWS (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport)

CAAWS provides education and leadership and supports the development of opportunities for women to lead in sport. www.caaws.ca

Trek Dirt Series

Trek Dirt Series began in 2000 as a B.C. provincial development initiative in an effort to bring more women into the sport. It hosts women-only mountain-bike camps and technical-skills instruction in Western Canada. www.dirtseries.com

Wenches with Wrenches

Wenches with Wrenches offers basic bicycle-repair workshops run by women for women in downtown Toronto, bringing female cyclists together in a safe, non-competitive learning environment. <http://wrenches.tumblr.com>

Jett Grrl Bike Studio

Created and run by Tracy A. Myerson, Jett Grrl builds one-of-a-kind, high-quality bicycles that reflect individual needs, personality and style. www.jettgrrl.com

If you know of a women's program or initiative in your area, please contact us at info@pedalmag.com to learn more and perhaps we'll include it in our next feature on Women in Cycling.