



Former Cape Epic winner and teammate of Erik, Kristian Hynek showing off his cooking skills.

CREATING FASTER EASILY

Regular contributor and pro, **Erik Kleinhans** explains why skills training and the correct body weight are important.

there are two very important parts of mountain biking that I believe makes everyone a lot faster without the suffer component of smashing some intervals: Bike skills and body weight.

Skills on the trails are probably one of the most underdeveloped parts of so many of the mountain bikers in South Africa. A very general statement when there are so many youngsters going through the school programs who are so smooth and brave on

the trails, they mostly get the chance from a young age to learn, while there is still no such thing as fear in the system.

The parents on the other hand mostly started late in their life during the MTB boom we are now experiencing, and when I'm riding in the back of a fun/training race or social group ride, I'm always surprised that people do not make a bigger effort to enjoy the thrill of the trails more. I would urge every last MTB rider in SA to do a weekly skill clinic, even the top professional riders still make

the time to improve their skills.

The most fun I have on a bike is when the trails point downward, I love the speed and adrenaline and I wish that for every last rider, it is free time on your mates or on your favourite Strava segment. Go for it, book your lesson, there are more than enough opportunities these days!

Weight comes second with going faster with not that much effort. Making your equipment lighter is no effort at all, you just need a healthy credit card balance, but the differences

are not as big as when it comes to body weight.

I am maybe not the best professional rider to talk about body weight as it has always been my constant struggle to say no to that extra cookie, rusk or cheesecake. Or maybe I am the right one to teach, because for me the struggle is always real!

I can feel the difference of even a 1 kilogram drop in body weight, it is for sure worth it to go up a climb faster. Not only is body weight great for dropping mates, it is also an added benefit to a healthy body, heart, veins and emotions.

Learning good skills is for sure an easier task than cutting down on calories. There is no magic strategy, it is basic math that you should eat less, or the same, calories as your body use. It is for sure one of the most difficult tasks in our era if you look at the obesity numbers and all the lovely restaurants and snacks available.

My tips are to exercise daily, ride your bike, it burns

calories, it makes muscles and put you in a position to enjoy a snack. Cut down on those little extra things you put in your mouth without even thinking, every chip or cookie got loads of calories. It is so easy to do and it almost happens by itself, just look away. Try and have less alcohol, enjoy your beer, but try to limit the second one. Okay, okay, maybe the third one!

I often recommend to friends to try something like a calorie-counting application to fully understand what you should consume in a day, knowledge is king and most of you will be very surprised about how quickly your daily allowance gets reached.

For me it is a lot more about lifestyle, instead of 'dieting'. Make those positive choices that becomes an all-natural thing in your daily lives, rather than focusing on stressing your motivation for short periods of time. Just make it fit!

Now, let us see if I can practice what I preach for the upcoming season! **fs**

Erik Kleinhans has joined the specialist marathon racing team of **Topeak Ergon**, but that doesn't mean you'll be hearing any less from the **Lion King**. Follow him on Twitter: **@erikkleinhans**, or visit **www.topeak-ergon-racing.com**.

