

**D**o I really need to explain why? I would guess it is the first thing you get told and explained why if you ever decide to start riding a bike. Or let me rather say I hope it is the first thing a bike shop would teach you before you roll your brand new sparkling bike out their door!

Just in case you want my opinion anyway, I would say there's two important reasons to get your bike properly set up. Number one is to go fast! For that you need the best position on the bike to make your cranks scream from the watts being delivered, and also to be as well positioned as possible when you put your nose down a trail or fast decent. The second reason is to prevent injury with something as simple as a skew cleat position that could cause havoc.

Unusually, I find myself in BMT Bike Shop a few weeks after one of my biggest cycling goals of the year to have a check-up on my bike position. Even for the more serious racers, it is something good to do maybe once a season, just to see if everything is still nicely balanced and in place. So for me with quite a few goals left in the year, I came to visit Luan Smit and Guy Smith to check me out on their fancy SRM bike – ideal for a bike setup as you can see the body position under stress.

The SRM bike makes changes and fitments very easy, and the crank with twenty strain points gives you the most accurate power and torque readings for analysis to make positive adjustments.

With Luan a Biokineticist and Guy with the general knowledge of the optimum angles you need to be on a bike, these two work well together!

There is plenty of information available by doing a simple web search about the basics of body position on a bike to get the maximum power, so I am not going to bore you or try to be as knowledgeable on the subject as the real professionals, but I will rather share my experiences and let the guys or girls that really know their stuff explain to you when you go for your own setup.

No changes were made to my seat height as it fell comfortably into the optimum angles in knee and hip bend. No changes were made to my handlebar height, even though I ride with quite a big drop from my seat to handlebars. I have flexible hamstrings making it not too uncomfortable and it puts me in a more aerodynamic position as well as more weight on my front wheel for more grip in the corners. No changes on my setback even though as a mountain-biker I sit quite a bit



## GET SADDLED UP RIGHT!

Fresh after completing the 2017 Cape Epic, regular columnist and MTB-pro **ERIK KLEINHANS** shares his thoughts regarding the importance of bike fitment.

forward and over the bottom-bracket to get the most power on steep climbs and more of a time-trial position.

It was when Luan had a look at my body's biomechanics that things got a little interesting. My right hip is slightly higher and forward and on video it can clearly be spotted how it affects my pedalling action with my right hip rolling forward and thus the leg falling in and losing some power. Adjusting the cleat to straighten the right leg upped the torque when I was riding at 300-watts on my next spin on the SRM bike.

You can change the bio-mechanics with the activation of certain muscles and by doing certain exercises on and off the bike. For me it was advised to strengthen and activate my gluteus-medius with some basic off the bike workouts since cycling do not really strengthen that muscle, but it is important for stabilising and to counter my

in-falling knee to generate more power.

Everyone's dynamics differ and you cannot always go by the book, even if you think you've been long in the game. You are never too old to learn something new, so go visit the Smith's at BMT or your local bike-shop, setup-guru to make sure you get the most power out of every stroke! **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](https://twitter.com/erikkleinhans), or visit [www.topeak-ergon-racing.com](http://www.topeak-ergon-racing.com)



## LIFE AFTER RACING

Life after sport is always a touchy subject when it comes to professional athletes, however it is something that every athlete needs to think about at some point ...

PHOTO BY SARAH BARRETT

**T**he older you get the more you start to realise that racing is not the be-all and end-all of life. The reality is that at some point every athlete will need to take a step back from competition. This does not mean that anything has changed in terms of desire and work ethic, it is just the reality of the situation. As for me personally I feel that I still have many great years ahead of me, however I am always on the lookout for opportunities

after racing, whether it be in or out of the industry. I love the mountain bike scene and it would be awesome to stay involved on some level after my career.

Recently a very good opportunity has presented itself in the name of ACE SPORTS DISTRIBUTION. This is a very young brand that is growing at a rapid pace. The company was founded by Adrian de Hutton and Anthony Raynard who have been heavily involved in the

motocross scene for many years. Anthony is also still competing at the top level and in 2012 he secured a national championship title. It was passion for the industry that inspired the two to start Ace Sports late in 2014. It is a distribution as well as an online store which up until recently has focused on the off-road motorcycle market. However, the company has now grown to the point where they are keen to expand and make a push into the

cycling market.

This is where I come in. Adrian and I started chatting about my life after racing and the fact that Ace is going to make a push into the cycling side of things. The timing is just spot-on and I think that me joining the Ace team will only be a positive in all aspects. Obviously for me my racing is still my number one priority at this point but I think getting involved at this stage will be a benefit in the long run. My connection to the cycling industry and brands will be a great way to get things going. To kick things off we are focusing on one of my current sponsors, REVERSE COMPONENTS. I have been running the products for the past four years and really believe 100% in the products which is crucial when trying to sell anything.

We already have our first shipment in stock, so stay tuned to see when it hits the shelves! Now my role in the company still needs to be discussed and it will be a bit of

a juggling act between racing and work. It will definitely need to be mainly online as I will be away for five months a year racing!

Coming back to life after racing, this is definitely something that can have a big effect on any athlete in whichever sport they are in and it can create added pressure to perform and prolong their career. However, for me, I think this will be an exciting new chapter.

Oh and don't think that I am retiring any time soon, things have just been a bit quiet on the racing side recently. BUT, not to worry because in two weeks I fly to Europe and the real action begins. I am more motivated than I have ever been to go racing and have my best season ever. I have a great group of people and brands around me and I am ready to make things happen. First race is World Cup round 1 in Lourdes, France on the 27th-30th of April, Stay tuned!

Until next time. **fs**

**Stefan Garlicki** is the reigning South African Downhill MTB Champion. He's sponsored by Investec, will be racing in Europe this year and sharing his experiences with Full Sus readers. Follow him on Twitter: [@StefanGarlicki](https://twitter.com/StefanGarlicki).

