

So what's the deal with cyclists and shaved legs?



That's going to hurt!

Quite often I've been asked about why cyclists shave their legs. What is funny to me is that the first thing that people will say is:

"Does it really make you that much faster?"

So here's my quick explanation of what it's all about. There are 3 main reasons that a cyclist will shave their legs.

- **Road Rash** - There are 2 kinds of cyclists in the world. Those who have crashed, and those who are about to. This is the single most important reason to me. Trust me on this one, it comes from experience.
Chuck Yeager once said "Any landing you walk away from is a good landing". The same goes for bicycle crashes. Skidding across the pavement at 40+ kph is a lesson in skin removal. The advantage to those who have shaved legs is that there is much less chance of infection due to the lack of hair and the healing process is much faster. Cyclists are a tough breed. Post crash treatment usually involves a trip to the hospital for a full once over. The visit starts with an unforgiving nurse who hands you an iodine filled brillo pad saying "either you do this, or I'm coming back in 10 minutes and doing it for you"
- **Massage** - Not everyone has the luxury of enjoying an invigorating deep tissue massage after a race or recreational ride. For those who have experienced it, a sports massage is a very aggressive massage which requires a lot of deep rubbing from the skin surface practically through to the bone.
Add to this some nice thick hair and you can have a less than desirable experience. It's not that it will kill you, but having been on the massage table with and without leg hair, the latter definitely feels more soothing than the former.
- **It's just sexy** - Well, not for everyone I suppose. I'm no Curt Harnett or Lance Armstrong, but

an athletic frame can be accentuated nicely with a smooth appearance. This is another sticking point which can be a polar view for some people. For others, the conversation often sounds like this: "You shave your legs? That must feel weird...can I see what it feels like?". Who can say no to that? ☐

Along with this there are some superstitions that come into play. Most cyclists will never shave before a race. Nobody has ever given me a good enough reason for this one, other than the fact that they may be nervous and fear carving a chunk out of their leg.

So that is what I have to say on the subject. There are plenty of other reasons that you may hear but the answer is "no, it doesn't make you faster"

Feel free to comment with your own reasons.