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**The effect of cycling intensity on cycling economy during seated and standing cycling**

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32

33

#### 34 | **Abstract**

35 | Background. Previous research has shown that cycling in a standing position reduces cycling  
36 | economy compared with seated cycling. It is unknown whether the cycling intensity  
37 | moderates the reduction in cycling economy while standing.

38 | Purpose. ~~It is unknown whether the cycling intensity moderates the reduction in cycling~~  
39 | ~~economy while standing. It was hypothesized that~~ The aim was to determine whether at a  
40 | higher intensity, the negative effect of standing on cycling economy would be decreased at a  
41 | higher intensity.

42 | Methods. Ten cyclists cycled in 8 different conditions. Each condition was either at an  
43 | intensity of 50% or 70% of maximal aerobic power, at a gradient of 4% or 8% and in the  
44 | seated or standing cycling position. Cycling economy and muscle activation level of 8 leg  
45 | muscles were recorded.

46 | Results. There was an interaction between cycling intensity and position for cycling economy  
47 | ( $P = 0.03$ ), the overall activation of the leg muscles ( $P = 0.02$ ) and the activation of the lower  
48 | leg muscles ( $P = 0.05$ ). The interaction showed decreased cycling economy when standing  
49 | compared with seated cycling, but the difference was reduced at higher intensity. -The overall  
50 | activation of the leg muscles and the lower leg muscles respectively increased and decreased,  
51 | but the differences between standing and seated cycling were reduced at higher intensity.  
52 | ~~Overall leg muscle activation increased, whereas activation of the lower leg muscles~~  
53 | ~~decreased, when standing compared with seated cycling, while the difference was reduced at~~  
54 | ~~higher intensity for both overall and lower leg muscles.~~

55 | Conclusions. Cycling economy was lower during standing cycling than seated cycling, but  
56 | the difference in economy diminishes when cycling intensity increases. Activation of the  
57 | lower leg muscles ~~does did~~ not explain the lower cycling economy while standing. The  
58 | increased overall activation therefore suggests, ~~-suggesting~~ that increased activation of the  
59 | upper leg muscles explains part of the lower cycling economy while standing.

## 60 Introduction

61 During uphill cycling, cyclists regularly opt to change from a seated to a standing position  
62 when the gradient increases<sup>1</sup>. Previous studies have found that cycling economy is decreased  
63 during a standing position at low and moderate exercise intensities (<70% of maximal  
64 oxygen consumption [ $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ ])<sup>2,3</sup>. However, at higher intensities, above 70%  $\dot{V}O_{2\max}$ , the  
65 negative effect of standing on cycling economy seems to disappear<sup>4-6</sup>. Thus, it appears that  
66 cycling intensity could influence the metabolic cost of uphill standing cycling, although this  
67 has not been determined in a single study. In addition, the gradient during uphill cycling -has  
68 recently been shown to influence cycling economy<sup>127</sup>, and could also influence the  
69 comparison between seated and standing cycling.

70 The transition from seated to standing cycling changes body position on the bicycle,  
71 effectively allowing the cyclist to shift their centre of mass forward<sup>78</sup>, and which increases  
72 the degrees of freedom<sup>8,9,10</sup>. Both of these actions require a reorganisation of the muscular  
73 recruitment pattern<sup>10-129-14</sup>. For example, standing has been shown to increase the level of  
74 activity in individual (proximal) upper leg muscles as well as overall, total muscle activation,  
75 and to alteration in the timing of muscle activation<sup>101</sup>. Interestingly, comparable changes have  
76 not been seen in muscles of the lower leg<sup>101</sup>.

77 The increase in overall muscle activation with while standing could increase metabolic cost  
78 and thus reduce cycling economy compared with a seated position. In addition, gradient has  
79 recently been shown to influence cycling economy<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, the aim of this study was to  
80 determine the effect of intensity in during seated and standing cycling positions on cycling  
81 economy during treadmill cycling. Subjects cycled at two exercise intensities and two  
82 gradients in both seated and standing positions Two cycling intensities at two gradients were  
83 performed in both the seated and standing positions. It was hypothesized that cycling  
84 intensity would interact with cycling position to impact on both cycling economy and muscle  
85 activation. It was hypothesized that cycling economy would be reduced by a greater amount  
86 during standing cycling at a low exercise intensity compared with a high exercise intensity. In  
87 conjunction, it was hypothesized that muscle activation would be increased by a greater  
88 amount at a low exercise intensity compared with a high exercise intensity.

## 89 Methods

### 90 Participants

91 Ten male cyclists (age:  $31 \pm 9$  years, height:  $182 \pm 5$  cm, mass:  $74.7 \pm 5.4$  kg,  $\dot{V}O_{2\text{peak}}$ :  $4.8 \pm$   
92  $0.4$  L·min<sup>-1</sup>, Maximal Aerobic Power:  $367 \pm 40$  W) from local cycling clubs participated in  
93 the study. All participants trained for 6 hours or more per week and were free of medical  
94 issues that could restrict lower limb movement. All participants provided written informed  
95 consent to participate in the study that was approved by the institution's ethics committee, in  
96 accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Prior to each test, participants were instructed to  
97 refrain from exercise and alcohol for 24 hours and from caffeine intake for 4 hours.

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98 *Experimental design*

99 Participants visited the laboratory on two separate occasions. On their first visit, participants  
100 were familiarized with the protocol before completing a ramp test to determine peak oxygen  
101 consumption ( $\dot{V}O_{2\text{peak}}$ ) and Maximal Aerobic Power (MAP). During familiarization  
102 participants cycled at a power output below 140 W, using their preferred cadence until they  
103 were comfortable riding on the treadmill (Saturn, 200 x 250 cm, HP Cosmos, Nussdorf-  
104 Traunstein, Germany). On their second visit, participants cycled on the treadmill completing  
105 8 conditions, which are outlined below.

106 *Methodology*

107 Visit 1

108 An incremental ramp test was performed on a cycle ergometer (Schöberer Rad Messtechnik,  
109 Weldorf, Germany). Prior to the test, a 10-min warm-up at 100 W, using a self-selected  
110 cadence was allowed. The test started at a power output of 100 W for 1 minute to allow the  
111 participants to reach his preferred cadence. After the first minute, the power output was  
112 increased to 150 W and the test continued increasing by 20 W·min<sup>-1</sup> until volitional  
113 exhaustion.  $\dot{V}O_{2\text{peak}}$  was calculated as the highest minute average of  $\dot{V}O_2$  recorded during the  
114 test (Metalyzer 3b, Cortex Biophysik, Germany). MAP was calculated as the highest  
115 averaged 1-minute power.

116 Visit 2

117 During visit 2, participants cycled on a treadmill using a standard road bicycle (Specialized  
118 Secteur, Specialized, CA, USA). The bicycle was fitted with an adjustable stem (Look ergo  
119 stem, Look, Nevers, France) and an adjustable seat post (I-beam, SDG Components, CA,  
120 USA). Tyres were inflated to 700 kPa prior to each visit. A 10-min warm-up at the  
121 participant's preferred power and cadence was performed prior to testing, with power being  
122 increased to the target intensity during the final 120 s. Treadmill speed was calculated using  
123 equations proposed by Coleman et al.<sup>13</sup> with a correction for rolling resistance<sup>14</sup>.

124 Cycling conditions consisted of 5 minutes of cycling at a power output of 50% MAP (low  
125 intensity) or 70% MAP (high intensity), at either a 4% or 8% gradient in the seated and  
126 standing position. Intensity and gradient were administered in a random, counterbalanced  
127 design. Body position (Seated, Standing) was altered in a randomized order within each  
128 combination of gradient and intensity. Based on Harnish et al.<sup>4</sup>, cadence was specified at 60-  
129 70 rev·min<sup>-1</sup>, depending on individual preferred standing uphill cycling cadence, and was  
130 constant across conditions for each participant.

131 Expired air was collected using the Douglas bag technique, during the final minute of each 5-  
132 minute period<sup>15</sup>, and is described in detail in Arksteijn et al.<sup>127</sup>. During the standing  
133 conditions, participants breathed through the mouth piece for the full duration, while for the  
134 seated conditions, participants inserted the mouth piece after two minutes. Participants rested  
135 for three minutes between conditions, during which Douglas bag contents were analysed for

136 oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide production using a high precision offline gas  
137 analyser (Servoflex MiniMP, Servomex, UK) and dry gas volume meter (Harvard Apparatus  
138 Ltd., Edenbridge, UK). Prior to use, equipment was calibrated for each visit according to  
139 manufacturers' recommendations.

140 Mean power output was calculated from the power output provided via a rear wheel power  
141 measurement device (PowerTap Elite+, Saris, USA) during the final minute of each  
142 condition. Cycling economy was defined as the mean power output produced relative to the  
143 volume of oxygen consumed ~~during the final minute~~.

144 Muscle activation was determined on the right leg for the Tibialis anterior (TA), Soleus  
145 (SOL), Gastrocnemius medialis (GM), Gastrocnemius lateralis (GL), Vastus medialis (VM),  
146 Vastus lateralis (VL), Rectus femoris (RF) and Gluteus maximus (Gmax). Single differential  
147 EMG sensors (Delsys Bagnoli, Delsys Inc., USA) were placed across the muscle belly  
148 following the recommendation provided by the Surface Electromyography for the Non-  
149 Invasive Assessment of Muscle function (SENIAM)<sup>16</sup>. Muscle activation was recorded for  
150 the final minute of each condition with a sampling frequency of 1000 Hz (Imago, Radlabor,  
151 Germany). A linear envelope was created using a fourth-order, low-pass filter with a cutoff  
152 frequency of 15 Hz. The envelope was aligned with the crank orientation using a square wave  
153 pulse generated each revolution to indicate the top dead centre.

154  
155 Muscle activation level was normalized to the highest value observed across all conditions  
156 for each participant<sup>17</sup>. This provided an indication of the relative amplitude across conditions  
157 and provided standardization between participants while allowing intra-subject comparisons.  
158 Burst duration was defined as the period where EMG activity exceeded 20% of the difference  
159 between peak and baseline activity above baseline activity. The mean activity was calculated  
160 for the duration of the burst using the normalized activity level. The product of the burst  
161 duration and mean activity determined the overall muscle activation and quantified the  
162 integrated EMG activity (iEMG) in arbitrary units. Overall muscle activation level was  
163 determined from the iEMG of all leg muscles, while muscle activation of the lower leg  
164 (iEMG<sub>LL</sub>) was determined from the iEMG of TA, SOL, GM and GL. Muscle activation of the  
165 upper leg muscles was not combined, as no hamstring muscles were recorded.

#### 166 *Statistical analysis*

167 The ability to adequately control the independent variables of power output and pedalling rate  
168 was evaluated using factorial ANOVAs with repeated measures for intensity, gradient and  
169 body position. ~~Subsequently, changes in e~~Cycling economy, muscle activation onset, offset  
170 and iEMG were analysed using ~~factorial~~ ANOVAs with ~~repeated measures for~~ intensity,  
171 gradient and body position ~~as within subject factors~~. Pairwise comparisons using Bonferroni  
172 corrections for multiple comparisons were used to identify significant differences between  
173 conditions. To determine interactions between intensity and position, differences between the  
174 seated and standing positions for each dependent variable (DV: economy and iEMG) at low  
175 and high intensity were calculated as the mean across gradients, according to:

$$\Delta DV_{\text{low}} = \frac{(DV_{\text{standing 4\% low}} + DV_{\text{standing 8\% low}})}{2} - \frac{(DV_{\text{seated 4\% low}} + DV_{\text{seated 8\% low}})}{2}$$

176 and

$$\Delta DV_{\text{high}} = \frac{(DV_{\text{standing 4\% high}} + DV_{\text{standing 8\% high}})}{2} - \frac{(DV_{\text{seated 4\% high}} + DV_{\text{seated 8\% high}})}{2}$$

177 Post hoc testing for interactions between intensity and position was performed using paired  
 178 samples t-tests, comparing  $\Delta DV_{\text{low}}$  and  $\Delta DV_{\text{high}}$ . Post hoc testing for interactions between  
 179 intensity, position and gradient were not performed. All statistical analyses were performed  
 180 using SPSS 17.0 statistical analysis software (SPSS, Inc, Chicago, IL, USA). Results are  
 181 expressed as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). Statistical significance was set at  $P < 0.05$ .

## 182 Results

183 An interaction between gradient, intensity and position was found for power output ( $F_{1,9} =$   
 184  $6.807$ ;  $P = 0.03$ ). Position significantly affected the mean power output ( $F_{1,9} = 7.62$ ;  $P = 0.02$ ,  
 185 Seated:  $228 \pm 20$  W, Standing:  $232 \pm 22$  W) ~~independently of changes in gradient. The~~  
 186 ~~interaction effect indicated that, but the magnitude of~~ the difference ~~in power output~~  
 187 depended on the actual combination of gradient and intensity. Paired samples t-tests indicated  
 188 that mean power output was different between seated and standing positions at 4% at high  
 189 intensity ( $t(9) = -2.324$ ,  $P = 0.05$ , Seated:  $266 \pm 25$  W, Standing:  $275 \pm 30$  W) and at 8% at  
 190 low intensity ( $t(9) = -3.022$ ,  $P = 0.01$ , Seated:  $187 \pm 17$  W, Standing:  $192 \pm 17$  W). No  
 191 differences were found in power output between seated and standing positions for 4% at low  
 192 intensity and 8% at high intensity ( $P > 0.05$ ).

### 193 *Cycling economy*

194 An interaction between intensity and position was found for economy ( $F_{1,9} = 6.326$ ;  $P = 0.03$ )  
 195 (Figure 1). Standing elicited a lower economy compared with seated ( $F(1,9) = 43.903$ ;  $p <$   
 196  $0.001$ , Seated:  $71.4 \pm 2$  W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ , Standing  $64.7 \pm 3.5$  W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ ). The difference between  
 197 seated and standing was larger at low intensity compared with high intensity ( $t(9) = 2.449$ ,  $P$   
 198  $= 0.03$ ,  $\Delta$ Economy $_{\text{low}}$ :  $9.1 \pm 5.7$  W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ ,  $\Delta$ Economy $_{\text{high}}$ :  $4.4 \pm 2.4$ W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ ). Economy  
 199 increased by a greater amount between low and high intensities in the standing compared  
 200 with the seated position ( $t(9) = 2.449$ ,  $P = 0.03$ ,  $\Delta$ Seated:  $2.9 \pm 4.4$  W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ ,  $\Delta$ Standing:  $7.6 \pm$   
 201  $3.3$ W $\cdot$ LO $_2^{-1}$ ). Oxygen consumption and respiratory exchange ratio (RER) for each condition  
 202 are provided in table 1. RER was higher at high intensity compared with low intensity ( $F_{1,9} =$   
 203  $28.853$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ) and for the standing position compared with the seated position ( $F_{1,9} =$   
 204  $11.552$ ;  $P = 0.008$ ).

### 205 *Muscle activation level*

206 Overall iEMG showed a main interaction between intensity and position ( $F_{1,6} = 10.285$ ;  $P =$   
 207  $0.02$ ) but no overall effect of position ( $F_{1,6} = 1.182$ ;  $P = 0.319$ ). The difference between  
 208 seated and standing was greater at low intensity compared with high intensity ( $t(6) = 3.207$ ,  $P$   
 209  $= 0.018$ ,  $\Delta$ iOverall $_{\text{low}}$ :  $73 \pm 103$ ,  $\Delta$ iOverall $_{\text{high}}$ :  $24 \pm 135$ ). Only the iEMG $_{\text{LL}}$  of the lower leg  
 210 muscles (iEMG of TA, SOL, GM, GL) demonstrated an interaction between intensity and



211 position ( $F_{1,6} = 5.963$ ,  $P = 0.05$ ). The difference between seated and standing positions for  
 212 the iEMG<sub>LL</sub> was smaller at low intensity compared with high intensity ( $t(6) = 2.442$ ,  $P =$   
 213  $0.05$ ,  $\Delta iEMG_{LL \text{ low}}: -47 \pm 63$ ,  $\Delta iEMG_{LL \text{ high}}: -71 \pm 79$ )

214

215 An example of the ~~muscle activity~~ muscle activation patterns for a representative participant  
 216 at low and high intensities ~~with at~~ an 8% gradient in seated and standing positions is shown in  
 217 Figure 2. An interaction effect of intensity, gradient and position was found for the iEMG of  
 218 RF ( $F_{1,9} = 9.248$ ;  $P = 0.01$ ). Intensity, gradient and position also independently affected the  
 219 iEMG of RF ( $P < 0.05$ ).

220 An interaction effect of intensity and position was found on the iEMG for VM ( $F_{1,8} = 16.945$ ;  
 221  $P = 0.003$ ). VL demonstrated a similar interaction as VM, but was not significant ( $F_{1,9} =$   
 222  $4.695$ ;  $P = 0.06$ ). The difference in iEMG between seated and standing was larger at low  
 223 intensity compared with high intensity for VM ( $t(8) = 4.116$ ,  $P = 0.003$ ,  $\Delta iVM_{\text{low}}: 37.6 \pm 9.9$ ,  
 224  $\Delta iVM_{\text{high}}: 29.6 \pm 12.5$ ), with VL demonstrating a similar trend ( $t(9) = 2.167$ ,  $P = 0.06$ ,  
 225  $\Delta iVL_{\text{low}}: 41.8 \pm 18.5$ ,  $\Delta iVL_{\text{high}}: 36.7 \pm 19.1$ ).

226 A main effect of cycling position was found on the iEMG for GL ( $F_{1,8} = 9.254$ ;  $P = 0.02$ ) and  
 227 SOL ( $F_{1,7} = 25.288$ ;  $P = 0.002$ ). An increased iEMG was found for standing for SOL (Seated:  
 228  $50.2 \pm 11.2$ , Standing:  $72.8 \pm 10.2$ ), whereas a decreased iEMG was found for GL in the  
 229 standing position (Seated:  $102.5 \pm 22.6$ , Standing:  $65.1 \pm 19$ ). TA, Gmax and GM were not  
 230 affected by intensity, position or gradient ( $P > 0.05$ )

231

232

### 233 Discussion

234 The present study aimed to determine the effect of cycling intensity and cycling position on  
 235 cycling economy and muscle activation. The main findings of the present study are that the  
 236 standing position reduced cycling economy more during low intensity cycling than during  
 237 high intensity cycling compared with the seated position. These same changes were evident  
 238 in the overall muscle activation, which showed a similar effect of response to changes in  
 239 cycling intensity and cycling position as to the cycling economy data. Muscle activation  
 240 levels of upper leg muscles VM and VL were higher in the standing position compared with  
 241 the seated position, with the difference being larger at low intensity compared with high  
 242 intensity. However, the lower leg muscles showed reduced activity levels in the standing  
 243 position compared with the seated position, with the difference between positions increasing  
 244 at high intensity

245 The present study is the first to compare seated and standing cycling at various intensities and  
 246 gradients while maintaining a constant cadence. Previous studies have either only considered  
 247 a single intensity<sup>2,5,6</sup>, a single gradient whilst incorporating various intensities<sup>3</sup>, or allowed

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248 use of preferred cadence<sup>4</sup>. Allowing participants to select their preferred cadence  
249 unfortunately has been shown to induce a lower cadence when cycling in the standing  
250 position compared with the seated position<sup>4</sup>. Although the present study has thus a lower  
251 ecological validity, a reduction in cadence at the same exercise intensity subsequently  
252 improves cycling economy due to the positive relationship between the cadence and cycling  
253 economy<sup>18</sup>. The present study is the first single study to show that cycling intensity impacts  
254 on the effect of cycling position when factors such as cadence are controlled. Although  
255 standing still impairs economy at an intensity of 70% MAP, the difference is much smaller  
256 compared with 50% MAP.

257 The present study largely supports the findings of Duc et al.<sup>101</sup> and Li and Caldwell<sup>109</sup> by  
258 demonstrating increased activity of the knee extensor muscles when cycling in the standing  
259 position. The role of RF, a bi-articular muscle inducing knee extension and hip flexion  
260 appears to be very complex in cycling as the activity level depends on intensity, gradient and  
261 position. This complexity is in line with previous suggestions that RF functions to stabilize  
262 joints, transfer energy and generate force<sup>19-21</sup>. More importantly, the present study suggests  
263 that the magnitude of the increase in muscle activation for VM and VL in the standing  
264 position (compared with the seated position) depends on the exercise intensity. At 50% MAP,  
265 muscle activation level in the standing position was increased by 60% to that during the  
266 seated position, which decreased to 40% when cycling at 70% MAP. Duc et al.<sup>119</sup> reported a  
267 difference of 20% in the same muscles during cycling at 80% MAP. Assuming a continuing  
268 trend at intensities >80% MAP, this could potentially result in lower knee extension activity  
269 in the standing position compared with the seated position at intensities above 100% MAP,  
270 delaying fatigue in these muscles. This would be in line with the results of Hansen and  
271 Waldeland<sup>1</sup> where, at intensities above 94% MAP, the standing position resulted in the best  
272 performance in a time to exhaustion task.

273 Contrary to the findings of Duc et al.<sup>101</sup> and Li and Caldwell<sup>910</sup>, the present study  
274 demonstrated a decrease in activity of muscles that cross the ankle joint (TA, GL and SOL)  
275 when standing compared with seated cycling. A few explanations can be provided for the  
276 divergent results. The study by Li and Caldwell<sup>910</sup> was performed by tilting the bicycle, rather  
277 than by actually replicating uphill cycling, which could influence a cyclist's pedalling  
278 technique differently<sup>22</sup>. In addition, exercise intensities were different between the current  
279 study, and that of Duc et al.<sup>101</sup> (70% MAP versus 80% MAP respectively). It is proposed that  
280 muscle activation of TA, GL and SOL is affected by cycling position because, when  
281 standing, body mass is no longer supported by the saddle, leading to increased ankle  
282 dorsiflexion due to a forward shift of the body's centre of mass<sup>142</sup>. As exercise intensity  
283 increases (i.e. 70–80% MAP), increased resistive force is encountered at the pedal, whereas  
284 the gravitational force (i.e. body weight) exerted on the pedal remains constant as a  
285 consequence of the unsupported body mass. Ultimately, the lower resistive force at low  
286 intensity would likely increase the dorsiflexion moment of the ankle and increase the activity  
287 of the plantar flexor, SOL (as found in the present study), to counteract this moment. The  
288 accompanying absence of activity for TA indicates that the function of TA in the seated

289 position might be to prevent plantar flexion and reduce ankle extension velocity. The lower  
290 activity of GL (and to a lesser extent GM) during the standing position indicates that the  
291 function of this bi-articular muscle is not necessarily to stabilize the ankle, but to transfer  
292 power generated across the knee joint to the ankle<sup>23</sup>.

293 The interaction between intensity and position for VM and VL was reflected in the whole  
294 body measure of economy. The knee extensor muscles are considered to be the primary  
295 power producing muscles in cycling<sup>24</sup>. The present study thus suggests that the primary  
296 power producing muscles (i.e. VM and VL) play a dominant role in the overall metabolic  
297 cost during cycling. However, contrary to the knee extensor muscles, the overall lower leg  
298 muscle activation (TA, SOL, GM and GL combined) showed decreased activity during the  
299 standing position compared with seated cycling at low intensity. Furthermore, at high  
300 intensity, this decreased lower leg muscle activation was even greater. This indicates a  
301 greater effort for the lower leg muscles at high intensity in the seated position compared with  
302 low intensity in the same position, but that a standing position reduced this, in particular at a  
303 high intensity.

#### 304 *Practical Applications*

305 The activity of the lower leg muscles appears to impact minimally on the overall metabolic  
306 cost, as the standing position decreased activity levels for these muscles, which cannot  
307 explain the observed decrease in economy. This suggests that the upper leg muscles are most  
308 likely dominant in relation to the metabolic cost, as these muscles increased their muscle  
309 activation while standing, in line with the increased metabolic cost and subsequent decreased  
310 cycling economy.

311 The present study shows that the standing position could alleviate the strain on the lower leg  
312 muscles, even at moderate intensities. It should be noted that the cadence selected in the  
313 present study was relatively low for the seated condition, where a cadence above 80 rev·min<sup>-1</sup>  
314 is generally preferred<sup>4</sup>. Although this could potentially influence the generalizability of the  
315 present study, previous research indicates that cadence has limited effect on muscle activation  
316 levels<sup>25</sup>. More importantly, a down side is that the standing position leads to an increase in  
317 knee extensor activity compared with seated cycling. ~~Thus-Therefore~~ prolonged standing is  
318 likely to impair performance at 70% of MAP, as also suggested by the decreased cycling  
319 economy. Thus a seated position during prolonged uphill cycling would be recommended for  
320 cyclists.

321 The difference in power output between seated and standing cycling observed in the present  
322 study and the RER exceeding 1.00 for the standing positions at high intensity provide  
323 potential limitations. Firstly, the present data on seated cycling are similar to those reported  
324 by Hansen et al<sup>26</sup>, who used similar intensities and reported gross efficiency, indicating RER  
325 was below 1. The rationale for determined cycling economy in the present study is that  
326 cycling economy does not rely on the RER to remain below 1.00, as opposed to cycling  
327 efficiency<sup>27</sup>. Secondly, the overall difference of 4 Watts is thus unlikely to explain the results,  
328 in particular because the positive correlation is minimal at intensities above 200 W<sup>18</sup>.

329 Nevertheless, for cyclists it does indicate that standing uphill cycling during competitive  
330 events could be made more effective by minimizing the increase in power output compared  
331 with seated cycling as found in the present study. Potentially, an increased lateral sway in the  
332 standing condition has caused cyclists to require more effort to stabilize the bicycle in the  
333 standing position, increasing the activation of leg and arm muscles<sup>101</sup>. Future research  
334 should aim to determine the cause of the increased power output, without increasing cycling  
335 velocity, in a standing position compared with seated cycling

#### 336 **Conclusion**

337 In conclusion, cycling in the standing position elicits a lower cycling economy for moderate  
338 intensities. The difference in cycling economy between the standing and seated position  
339 however is reduced with increasing intensity. Standing cycling increased the overall muscle  
340 activation level, which is the result of increased upper leg muscle activation, while muscle  
341 activation was reduced for lower leg muscles. The decreased cycling economy when cycling  
342 in the standing position appears largely to be the result of the increased activity of the knee  
343 extensor muscles.

#### 344 **Acknowledgements**

345 The results of the current study do not constitute endorsement of the product by the authors or  
346 the journal.

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418

#### 419 **Figure captions**

420 FIGURE 1. Cycling economy (Mean ± SD) at low and high intensity in the seated and standing  
421 position at 4% and 8% gradients. # indicates an interaction effect between intensity and  
422 position. \* indicates a difference between the seated and the standing position.

423 FIGURE 2. Example of the muscle activation patterns during cycling in a standing position  
424 (solid lines) and a seated position (dotted lines) at low intensity (black) and high intensity  
425 (grey) for one participant. Top dead centre is represented by 0° and the down stroke is  
426 between 0°–180°. Tibialis anterior (TA), soleus (SOL), gastrocnemius medialis (GM),  
427 gastrocnemius lateralis (GL), vastus medialis (VM), vastus lateralis (VL), rectus femoris  
428 (RF), and gluteus maximus (Gmax).

429

430 Table 1. Mean  $\pm$  standard deviation of oxygen consumption, oxygen consumption relative to  
 431 the peak oxygen consumption attained during an incremental test, and respiratory exchange  
 432 ratio during submaximal cycling conditions.

433

Intensity	50% MAP				70% MAP			
Position	Seated		Standing		Seated		Standing	
Gradient	4%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%
Oxygen Consumption ( $\text{LO}_2 \cdot \text{min}^{-1}$ )	2.7 $\pm$ 0.2	2.7 $\pm$ 0.3	3.2 $\pm$ 0.3	3.2 $\pm$ 0.2	3.6 $\pm$ 0.2	3.7 $\pm$ 0.3	4.0 $\pm$ 0.3	3.9 $\pm$ 0.3
Relative Oxygen consumption ( $\text{LO}_2 \cdot \text{min}^{-1} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$ )	56.5 $\pm$ 4.4	56.4 $\pm$ 4.8	66.7 $\pm$ 8.3	67.4 $\pm$ 8	76.1 $\pm$ 6.9	77.1 $\pm$ 5.8	82.8 $\pm$ 7.2	82.5 $\pm$ 7.1
Respiratory Exchange Ratio	0.89 $\pm$ 0.06	0.87 $\pm$ 0.05	0.93 $\pm$ 0.05	0.93 $\pm$ 0.03	0.93 $\pm$ 0.03	0.94 $\pm$ 0.04	1.0 $\pm$ 0.05	1.01 $\pm$ 0.06

434

435 MAP: Maximal Aerobic Power

436

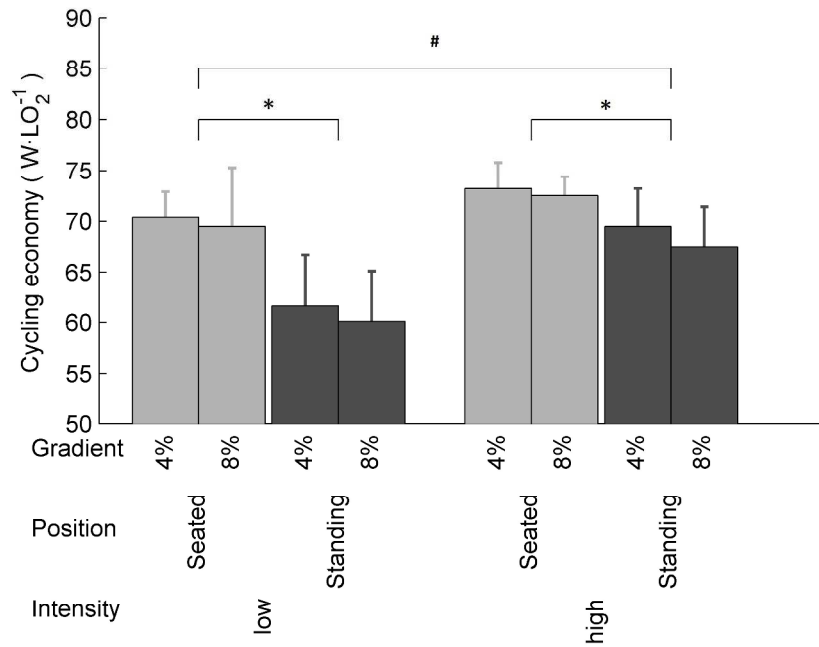


FIGURE 1. Cycling economy (Mean  $\pm$  SD) at low and high intensity in the seated and standing position at 4% and 8% gradients. # indicates an interaction effect between intensity and position. \* indicates a difference between the seated and the standing position.  
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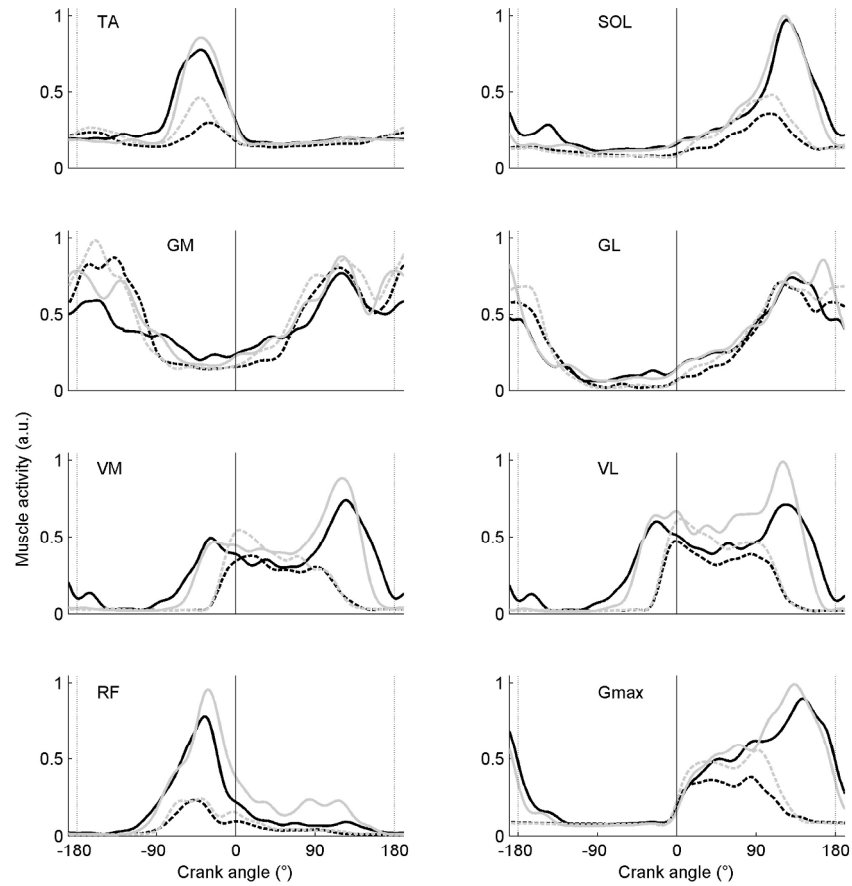


FIGURE 2. Example of the muscle activation patterns during cycling in a standing position (solid lines) and a seated position (dotted lines) at low intensity (black) and high intensity (grey) for one participant. Top dead centre is represented by  $0^{\circ}$  and the down stroke is between  $0^{\circ}$ – $180^{\circ}$ . Tibialis anterior (TA), soleus (SOL), gastrocnemius medialis (GM), gastrocnemius lateralis (GL), vastus medialis (VM), vastus lateralis (VL), rectus femoris (RF), and gluteus maximus (Gmax).  
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