

## Cycling benefits ‘Ritalin Boy’

I consider myself fortunate. I was born long before people started labeling children/relying on pills and “accommodations” to treat children as if they had a disease. I was given a much more positive outlook. I can recall teachers telling my parents that I was an “active child.” Today parents are told their child is “afflicted” with ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder.

Thanks to my parents and other adults involved in my upbringing, I took “active child” as a compliment. When I began dating my wife and she dubbed me, “Ritalin Boy”, I told her I was, “Proud to be ADHD.”

However, there is that issue of being hyper and how to adapt to reasonable social norms. The solution is simple: ride a bicycle. Did you know 20 minutes of exercise equals one tranquilizer? When my wife/I ride our tandem for 6-7 hours, I feel like I’ve had the equivalent of 18-21 tranquilizers! In addition to the calming effect, the additional benefit of cycling is that I’m getting exercise/upgrading my health.



Cycling also has played an integral part in maintaining focus and success in my careers. One of my first occupations was chasing tornadoes. I would pedal an aging Raleigh to the work site. Then I could concentrate on “funnel clouds.”

For nearly 20 years, I worked as a high school counselor. I could talk to students about the benefits of being healthy or I could demonstrate it. Students/parents grew accustomed to seeing me pedal to sporting events that were as far as 150 miles from the school. There is nothing like showing up in a driving rain storm, in another state on a bicycle, to get a conversation started with teenagers when one already is more than a half-century old. It gave students hope that getting older was not a death sentence.

As a bicycle mechanic, the marketing benefits of being seen on the roads and trails are obvious. In my 60s, I know my odds of winning a race are slim but I complete every event I enter with equipment that works. That makes a statement.

Cycling also has aided my studies, even as an adult. At 55, I registered for an intensive, two-week course at the United Bicycle Institute. To prepare for the final exam, my routine was simple: ride for an hour, study for an hour. I repeated the routine until I was ready for the exam.