

ALL OUT 3-MINUTE FIELD TEST¹ ©

By Sally Edwards, MA, MBA
 Director of Training, CycleOps
 President, The Sally Edwards Company

DESCRIPTION: Rarely is there a ride assessment that gives you more than one piece of data. The All Out 3-Minute Test does just that. In less time than it takes to ride around the block, you can have exactly the power numbers you need to ride your fastest and your furthest without hitting that fatigue point that brings you to a grinding and embarrassing slow-down.

Ride Format: Begin with a comfortable warm up and then, when ready, start your chronograph and ride at the highest watt output (your highest effort), that you can hold for 3 continuous minutes. Measure your average watts the last 30 seconds of the 3-minute field test. This is the best estimate of your *maximum steady state* ride power output.

Challenge: So, what do these numbers mean? First off, you'll probably discover that your ride power degrades the last 30 seconds, which is normal. The information that you want to capture is the power output the last 30 seconds. That is the best estimate of your maximum sustainable steady state power output. Riding 15 watts below that number means that you can ride at an even pace for most of your ride time, while riding 15 watts above this watt number won't be sustainable. In the intensity continuum of moderate to heavy to severe, the 3-minute test shows you the border of heavy and severe. It is critical power, maximum sustainable power output.

ALL OUT 3-Minute Field Test

Event	Description	Duration (min)	Elapsed Time (min)
Warm-Up	Easy pedaling at 60-80 RPM+	5	5
Field Test	For 3-minutes, ride as fast and as hard as you can. Only measure the average watts during the last 30-seconds starting at 2.5 minutes into the three minute test. Record the last 30-second watts.	3	8
Steady State	Continue your ride for 30-60 minutes at an easy speed and cadence	30-60	38-68
Cool Down	Easy pedaling at 60-70 rpm	3-5	43-73
		Total Elapsed Time:	43-73 minutes

¹ Burnley, M., Doust, J.H., and Vanhatalo, A. "A 3-minute All-Out Test to Determine Peak Oxygen Uptake and the Maximal Steady State" *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, Volume 38, Number 11, November, pp 1995-2003, 2006.