

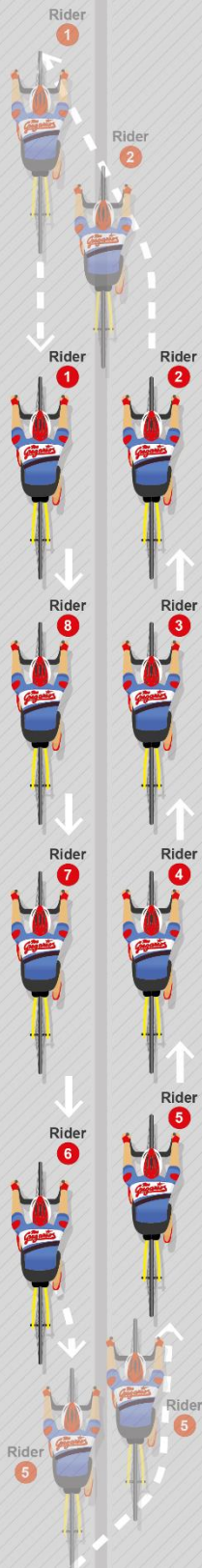
The chain goes clockwise or anti-clockwise depending on the wind direction

**LINE 2**

Recovery Line

LINE 1

Pace Setting Line



Chain Gang method & techniques

Objective:

High speed riding for minimum effort. This is one of the best ways to cover a big distance by sharing the workload and effort.

Method:

Two lines of riders going at slightly different speeds. The Pace setting line (line 1 in the diagram) and the slower Recovery line (line 2). The chain can go clockwise or anticlockwise depending on wind direction (Recovery line giving shelter to the Pace line). Usually, Ronde CC has the outside line as the faster Pace line as this works better in traffic.

Technique:

If you are the front rider of the Pace line, cycle beyond the front rider in the Recovery line and after hearing the call "CLEAR" pull across into the Recovery line. Move in a gradual manner when crossing from Pace line into Recovery line - if you move across at a sharp angle you might go into the front wheel of the preceding rider. You should not need to look behind when changing line as that may cause you to deviate.

Change speed when you reach the Recovery line - slow down (by about 1 mph). Don't brake - just take the pressure off the pedals slightly and continue to pedal. By slightly decreasing speed, the next rider coming through in the Pace line should not need to increase speed to come past you. But if you ease off too much the rider behind will have to take avoiding action and maybe brake sharply.

Once the next rider coming through in the Pace line is ahead of you and safe to come across, give the call "CLEAR".

Now ride at the pace of the Recovery line and progress towards the back. Once you're the final Rider at the back of the Recovery line prepare to come across into the Pace line. After hearing the shout "LAST" start edging across sideways, so that you can move smoothly onto the wheel. Then accelerate to gain the speed to join the Pace line. When across call "LAST" to the final rider in the Recovery line.

Once within the Pace line you should not need to increase your pace or accelerate, just ride through maintaining the pace of the line. If a gap opens ahead aim to close it slowly, don't surge through as this will generate a gap behind you. Increasing the pace at the front is strictly a no-no, all it achieves is to disrupt the group. When you become the front rider of the Pace line repeat as above.

If you're unable to go through to take a turn in the Pace line, drop a little off from the end of the Recovery line and call "SITTING OFF". Warn the other riders if you intend to re-join the chain after sitting off.

Chain gang Do's and Don'ts:

Keep it smooth - smoother is faster. Try and maintain 80-100 rpm that way you'll always be on top of the gear and not struggling. Try not to use your brakes – try moving into the wind slightly to slow yourself down. Maintain the pace of the line you're in, the only time to increase speed is when joining the back of the Pace line and the only time to reduce speed is when joining the front of the Recovery line.

Communicate to stay safe! The lead riders should give clear warning of any obstacles, traffic, need to stop or change direction. Any warnings should be shouted down the line. Ride smoothly and avoid any sudden moves, be steady and predictable. After a junction the lead riders should make sure everyone gets through before resuming the pace. It's not a race, it's about teamwork.

Ride on effort not speed. Generally, a Chain Gang or a Pace Line will ride at a constant effort - *rather than a constant speed*. If you're the rider going through at the front, don't try and maintain speed up a hill.... just maintain the effort.

Keep it tight in both lines. Whichever line you're in, try to avoid a gap opening in front of you - be on a wheel at all times. But, if a gap opens ahead aim to close it slowly, don't surge through as this will generate a gap behind you.

Don't accelerate through at the front. The only acceleration is at the back of the Recovery line when moving across back into the Pace line. Don't surge at the front.

Don't fall asleep at the back. If you miss the last rider and have to jump lanes and accelerate to close the gap - then everyone behind you will also be making a needless effort.

Don't overlap wheels. If the wheels touch you will likely hit the tarmac. But don't just stare at the rear wheel in front, as you won't be able to see oncoming situations. Look past the rider in front of you and look up the road as much as possible, don't focus on the tyre in front of you.

Don't do anything suddenly. Ride in a steady and predictable manner. Any warnings about road surface should be shouted down the line – take a gentle line around potholes, rather than a quick switch.

If this sounds complicated - it isn't.

But it's necessary to follow these rules to be safe and efficient.

Most importantly, a chain gang can be great fun, good for fitness, bike handling and teamwork.

Here it is in action:

[The British Cycling Chaingang Video](#)