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Nice to get to a climb so you can relax and take it easy

It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to most, but for some of us, it's a big relief when we get to a climb, especially towards the middle to later part of a ride. I think it's largely because, on a climb, you are in control. You can ride it hard & fast if you want, or you can take it easy, standing on the pedals with no more effort than you'd have slowly climbing stairs. On a flatter section of road, you don't have that option. Your goals are more about getting from one place to another, and if your ride more slowly, you've literally got more weight on the saddle and might feel more worn out than you would if you'd ridden quickly.

Climbing's not like that. If it's steep enough, you can make your speed pretty much as slow as you want, with a direct relationship between speed and effort. Of course, for me, more often than not it's a matter of how fast I can climb, not how slowly.

Crummy pavement on Stage Road, about to be replaced by even-crummier chip seal

Today's ride? Our first sub-100-miler in a few weeks. In fact, at only 58 miles, it was less than half the distance of my ride two weeks ago, when Kevin and I did 122 miles. Was it half the effort? Almost. We had a pretty slow start as Kevin was getting some of the flank pains that have previously sent him to Kaiser Emergency for all manner of tests that never did anything but make him glow in the dark, so now we know to pretty much ignore them. Of course, Kevin would rather deal with them at home, with the help of some pain meds that I'd rather he didn't have to take. But mean old dad wouldn't even let him cut the ride short. The plan was to do the Pescadero/Tunitas loop, so that's what we did.

About 22 minutes up Old LaHonda (for Kevin, that's really slow) and then a ridiculously-easy 15 minutes up Haskins (normally 10) as Kevin was just kind of going through the motions, trying to convince me that we really should have turned back. Nope. We kept on plugging away.

Mandatory stop at Pescadero Bakery, then checked out the road work they've done on Stage Road (it's pretty choppy, and about to get worse as they lay down chip seal next week). It wasn't until Tunitas that he really started feeling better, or maybe just gave up on trying to make me feel bad. We were doing really well until he got a seizure on the lower, flat part (just past Los Lobitos cut-off), and I was thinking that wasn't such a bad thing, because it wrecked our time so we could take it easy now. Uh, no. Kevin started feeling really good about then, and while we were only doing a moderate-fast pace up the steep section, he took off when we got to the part where it levels off. He came away with a new PR for that section, and I didn't do too badly myself, but about 45 seconds back.

The interesting thing about the ride is that "drilling" that top part made my legs complain more (after the ride) than the longer rides we've done the past few Sundays. Go figure.