

One Armstrong = 13.5 mph

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Out of curiosity, I wanted to know how fast Tour de France riders go up l’Alpe D’Huez, the legendary mountain climb. Using information from [the Wikipedia page](#), I calculated that Lance Armstrong’s 2004 ascent had an average speed of approximately 13.5 mph (22 kph). Consequently, I invented the Armstrong, a unit of bicycle velocity, with one Armstrong equal to 13.5 mph. (If I were being fair, I would have used 1 Pantani = 14mph, since Marco Pantani holds the record for the fastest ascent of l’Alpe d’Huez. But I’m not being fair.) The day after I made this fantastic calculation, I glanced down at my speedometer and realized that my speed on flat ground was significantly less than one Armstrong. That’s right, Lance Armstrong went up l’Alpe D’Huez faster than I rode to work on flat ground.

Fortunately, subsequent investigation revealed that my bicycle’s speedometer sensor had wiggled out of position and was reporting only about two thirds of my actual speed. My unofficial goal is to be able to go 13.5 mph up the comparatively tiny hills that I have to cross on my way to and from work. It’s not l’Alpe d’Huez, but then again, I’m not Lance Armstrong.

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