

Created by **Robert Baldi**  
Training Type: **Threshold, Interval Training**  
Working HR Zones: **Zone 4 to Zone 5c**  
Total Class Length: **60 minutes**



### **Profile Description**

This profile is called *Top Gun Training*. It is a straightforward interval ride using primarily music from the soundtrack to the film *Top Gun*. It reflects the various rounds of dogfighting in which pilots are awarded points towards the award of “Top Gun,” the *best of the best*.

Consistency is key to winning the award—excellence in one area cannot make up for lack thereof elsewhere.

### **Objective and Intensity**

Each round is designed to test pilots to their limits, so as to improve their skills when they return to their squadron. These intervals will test each rider’s own limits and should be performed at near-maximum level. Heart rate is not as important as the feeling that a rider is achieving their best possible 3.5- to 4-minute effort.

If in doubt, it is better to begin an effort strongly and finish stronger, rather than hit their peak early and then crash and burn.

### **Background of Top Gun**

During the Korean War, the US Navy kill ratio was 12 to 1 but during Vietnam that ratio fell to 3 to 1. Pilots had become dependent upon missiles and lost some of their aerial combat skills. On March 3, 1969, the United States Navy established an elite school for the top 1 percent of its pilots. Its purpose was to teach the lost art of air combat maneuvering—dogfighting—and to ensure that the handful of men who graduated were the best fighter pilots in the world. They succeeded—by the end of Vietnam that ratio was back up to 12 to 1.

Today, the Navy calls it Fighter Weapons School. The flyers call it TOP GUN.

## Top Gun Interval Training



### Song 1 and 2: Introduction and Warm-up (8 minutes)

**Top Gun Anthem, Harold Faltermeyer & Steve Stevens, 4:11, 108 rpm**

**Take My Breath Away, Berlin, 4:13, 96 rpm**

Introduce the background to *Top Gun*, in case there's a rider who has beamed in from another planet and has never seen the film! Use this time to warm up your engines. Keep the explanations concise, much as they would be in a real fighter pilot environment, something along these lines:

*Welcome to Top Gun. There will be six rounds, each approximately 3.5 minutes of high-octane intensity. You will have a 2-minute break for your recovery before commencing the next round. To graduate, you will need to be at the top of your game in every round; it's not about winning a single round but consistency across the board. It's not about who has the fastest legs or the highest gear but the best power.*

*Top Gun gets the best out of you, so that when you go for your usual ride, you'll find it easier to handle. Train hard now, increase your power and strength, and reap the dividends later. If "your ego is writing checks your body can't cash," then this is the ride for you!*

Cadence can be anywhere between 60 and 100 rpm, but the power sweet spot is between 70 and 80 rpm, so use the beat of the music as a guide (each track gets increasingly quicker).

Treat the first two rounds as test flights to get used to the aircraft and find the right power levels. If doing a 45-minute version of this ride, skip these test flights and get straight into the six rounds.

### Song 3: First test flight

**Playing With The Boys, Kenny Loggins, 3:57, 71 rpm**

*Bring up the power gradually; as soon as you get comfortable with that power, open up the throttle a little further. These first two are your test runs; experiment and find the true potential power of your engine. At the very least, get off the deck and leave that comfort zone!*

### Song 4: Recovery

**Barber's Adagio For Strings, William Orbit, 1:50**

*Ease off the throttle. Another test flight is coming up to give you an opportunity to start strong and really test your power. How far will that engine take you?*

**Song 5: Second test flight**

**Rebel Yell, Billy Idol, 4:49, 83 rpm**

*Time to lift off again—let's get those wheels moving. Rev up those engines, shift into gear. If the resistance is too high and starting to make you stall, maneuver out of the saddle or shift down and increase your cadence. Don't settle for what you know you can do, push the envelope, test the limits of your engine.*

**Song 6: Recovery**

**Lax, Pink Elephant, 1:51**

*Release the pressure from your legs and bring down those revs. Focus on your breathing and don't forget to take some water on board to top up your cooling system.*

*OK, here's the deal: six rounds and you need to get the most points overall, not just in a single round. Fit in as much power in each round as you can. You've had two practice runs, so you have a good idea of how much power you can handle. If you're not sure, start strong and pick up the power as you go along.*

*"You don't have time to think up there. If you think, you're dead."*

**Song 7: First round**

**Lead Me On, Teena Marie, 3:46, 67 rpm**

*Round 1, countdown to launch, 4...3...2...1...*

*Power up those engines now! GO! Fly!*

*As long as those jets are still taking in air, until you're gasping, you can always try to go higher.*

**Song 8: Recovery**

**Caislean Oir, Clannad, 2:00**

*Round 1 out of the way; you've bagged yourself some good points.*

*Intervals, just like flying, require adequate rest after each effort—if you're not fully rested before the next round, you won't be able to perform at your peak time and time again. Failure to recover sufficiently will lead to burnout!*

*Two minutes should be plenty of time to recover but if you find your heart rate is still high when we start the next round, don't push yourself too hard—better to come second in a round and be fit to win the subsequent ones than to win at all costs, burn out, and drop out of the race for Top Gun.*

**Song 9: Second round****Hot Summer Nights, Miami Sound Machine, 3:38, 71 rpm**

*No need to build up this time—you know your competition, how strong you have to be for those 3.5 minutes, so get into that pilot seat and let's GO!*

*Don't cheat yourself; you need that power to win the prize. Put your foot down and open up that throttle. Give your top performance in every round, in every minute.*

**Song 10: Recovery****Feel The Sunrise, Banyan Tree, 2:10**

*Touch down, take the power off, taxi along the runway, and cool off. Consistency is the key—selling yourself short in each effort and winning only the final round is not going to win you that prize. If you're not recovering, think tactically—do the best you can in one round without overdoing it; take the edge off that round and be fresher for the remaining rounds. Don't forget that water, top up your cooling system.*

**Song 11: Third round****Through The Fire, Larry Greene, 3:44, 75 rpm**

*Bring on that power, turn on those afterburners, the race is on. Keep that fire burning high. Can you dump more fuel onto that fire? Use up all that fuel, you can top up later. Can you fly a bit higher, open up that throttle a bit further, and earn yourself a few extra points?*

**Song 12: Recovery****The Cross of Changes, Enigma, 2:18**

*Bring it back down to earth, focus on your breathing, refuel, top up your water. Your next effort is about 30 seconds longer but, if you can, turn out the same power; if not, maybe delay going to full throttle until a bit later.*

**Song 13: Fourth round****Stranger Eyes, The Cars, 4:22, 76 rpm**

*"I feel the need...the need for SPEED!"*

*Let's get going, now it's serious business. Halfway through, the contest is close between you and your nearest rival. Got to keep your mental focus, you know you have the power, stay strong, ride it high. Your rivals are suffering too; keep that throttle fully open.*

Music trivia—the "Stranger Eyes" track was used in the cinema trailers for the film *Top Gun* in 1986, so it counts! Also, that quote by Maverick (Tom Cruise) is listed as one of the top 100 movie quotes of all time!

**Song 14: Recovery****Spirit's Lament, Michael Flatley, 2:02**

*Bring her down. Maybe you're finding this harder each time to hold that power but so is everybody else. Some will hold back their effort but the Mavericks of the world will push through it and come out fighting.*

**Song 15: Fifth round****Danger Zone, Kenny Loggins, 3:35, 79 rpm**

*We're back to 3.5 minutes for this round. Bring up that power and let's take her high into that zone. Shove it into overdrive. How high can you push this? Dare to reach a little bit higher, into the red, into the danger zone! Push those boundaries further away.*

**Song 16: Recovery****Damascus, Conjure One, 2:03**

*You pushed it into the red, now get those engines to cool down and get oxygen back into your system; don't forget that coolant. Two minutes should now be only just enough to recover fully. Coming up is your final round, 4 minutes this time, so hold nothing back, dare to go too high, be a Maverick!*

**Song 17: Final round****Mighty Wings, Cheap Trick, 3:51, 79 rpm**

*"It's the bottom of the ninth, the score is tied. It's time for the big one."*

*Let's take her up one final time, full throttle. How high can those mighty wings take you? You want Top Gun, you have to work for it! Fly higher...to the top! Ignite those afterburners. Gasping, engines in the red, to the limit!*

**Song 18 and 19: Cool-down****Drive, The Cars, 3:56****Memories, Harold Faltermeyer, 2:55**

*Touch down, systems off, taxi along, focus on your breathing.*

*Even if you had an "off" round, you were on top of your game for most of the time. In those six rounds, you spent nearly 20 minutes at your top power. Your body will remember that; it doesn't like being uncomfortable, so it will learn to provide more power to that engine. Your usual efforts will therefore feel easier, like you're cruising, so you can go faster for longer. Or, in a dogfight, you'll be able to unleash more power!*

If you prefer, you may substitute "You've Lost That Loving Feeling" by the Righteous Brothers for your cool-down, although it does have a very strong ending.

## Top Gun Interval Training Playlist

Song Title	Time	Artist	Album	Source
Top Gun Anthem	4:11	Harold Faltermeyer & Steve Stevens	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Take My Breath Away	4:13	Berlin	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Playing With the Boys	3:57	Kenny Loggins	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Barber's Adagio for Strings	1:50	William Orbit	Chill House	eMusic
Rebel Yell	4:49	Billy Idol	Billy Idol Greatest Hits	iTunes
Lax	1:51	Pink Elephant	In Search of Sunrise Volume 5	iTunes
Lead Me On	3:46	Teena Marie	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Caislean Oir	2:00	Clannad	Celtic Collection	iTunes
Hot Summer Nights	3:38	Miami Sound Machine	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Feel the Sunrise	2:10	Banyan Tree	In Search of Sunrise Volume 7	iTunes
Through the Fire	3:44	Larry Greene	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
The Cross of Changes	2:18	Enigma	The Cross of Changes 2	iTunes
Stranger Eyes	4:22	The Cars	Heartbeat City	iTunes
Spirit's Lament	2:02	Michael Flatley	Feet of Flames	iTunes
Danger Zone	3:35	Kenny Loggins	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Damascus	2:03	Conjure One	Conjure One	iTunes
Mighty Wings	3:51	Cheap Trick	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes
Drive	3:56	The Cars	Complete Greatest Hits	iTunes
Memories	2:55	Harold Faltermeyer	Top Gun Soundtrack (Deluxe Edition)	iTunes