

# Your training, kit and safety guide

## What are you training for?

Essentially a long bike ride is a test of your endurance, which in broad terms is the ability of a muscle to carry out an exercise again and again without tiring. Your training plan is all about teaching your legs to become used to the action of cycling and working on their ability to work efficiently for a long period of time.

Speed is not the issue, the challenge for you is not to get from A to B in the quickest possible time – it is simply to get from A to B and enjoy the journey. By working on your endurance we will get you there!

## Why train?

Training may be something that you have previously thought only applied to professional sports people and not to you, but this is not the case. Training is a very simple process by which your body gets good at doing something you repeatedly ask it to do. By asking your body to do just a little bit more each time you train, and then giving it time to rest and recover, you can over time do things you never thought possible. A professional cyclist may have to train for 20-30 hours per week to achieve small gains in performance. However, because you may not have trained for something like this before, the gains you can make in a short space of time will amaze you, as your body becomes a super-charged training machine. It is fresh and up for the challenge and will get fit very quickly at a rate that will astound you.

## How do you train?

Training is a very simple concept; it is all about progressively asking your body to do just that little bit more than it can already comfortably do and then giving it time to adapt, recover, and come back stronger.

The trick is to do it steadily. For you, what we need to ask of your body is to ride progressively further and further until ultimately it can ride for 100 miles. This may seem a daunting prospect, but it is more than achievable. Cycling is a low impact sport and once you develop a basic level of endurance and get into a rhythm, as long as you provide your body with adequate fuel and hydration, it will happily keep going and going. Each time you ride you will improve and you will develop something called 'muscle memory' as your muscles will start to get used to the action of pedalling and work in a much more efficient and coordinated way. This is half the battle and before long you will be able to glide along at a reasonable pace without it feeling too hard at all. The best way to develop this muscle memory and then to work endurance into your legs is to steadily up your mileage and spend more and more time in the saddle. Start your rides very gradually to allow your muscles to slowly warm up and become supple to avoid risk of injury.

At the end your ride, a few simple stretches will help avoid stiffness the next day; hamstrings, quadriceps, calves and lower back should be the focus of your stretching routine. Initially you should look to ride on flat, quiet roads as you get used to the bike and its handling without the distractions of too much traffic. As you get more confident, you can start to vary the terrain.

Cycling is a very safe sport as long as you keep your head up, are aware of your fellow road users, and always wear a helmet. When you are endurance training, you should work at an intensity that feels challenging enough so that you are starting to breathe a little heavier and you feel pleasantly warm. It is important, however, that you feel you can sustain the effort for the duration of your ride. Avoid riding so hard that you are out of breath, then riding very slowly to recover and repeating. This makes for a very unpleasant experience on the bike and won't do much to develop your endurance. A good way of checking that you are at the right level of intensity is to make sure you are capable of having a conversation. If you can only utter a few words before gasping for breath then ease up!

## Diet

During the course of a bike ride, your body will require fuel; this is what you eat and drink. A good diet is essential to completing the ride comfortably and with some energy left at the end! It is not uncommon to burn 5000 calories or more during a 100-mile ride and you need to take on sufficient fuel to be able to cope with this output.

What you eat when you start to train will have an impact on your cycling and energy levels. Initially, while the training is at a low weekly mileage, it would be best to concentrate on eating in a regular pattern and trying to reduce your daily intake of saturated fats. This includes less fried foods and dairy products, as these will counter the training that you start to do.

## The training plan

The training plan itself is based around gradually upping your mileage so that you find yourself at the start line of your century ride confident that you will see out the distance. The plan works by gradually upping your weekly mileage over 3 weekly cycles. You should make every 4th week an easier one to allow your body to adapt and come back stronger. Midweek rides are shorter and can be done at a slightly quicker pace, though still at that nice endurance intensity, with a longer ride at the weekend to work on your ability to just keep going. Keep these efforts steady, remember it doesn't matter how quick you get there, just that you get there.

Don't worry if you miss the odd session, what matters is that you keep that week-in-week out consistency going, as that's what gets results. There will be times when the training feels like a chore and it all seems like too much. But persevere. Nothing in life worth achieving is ever easy so keep your eyes on the prize of cracking your first century ride! As your mileage increases, it is worth trying to ensure that at least one meal a day is high in carbohydrate; this is the product that, once stored in your system, provides the fuel you will need. Carbohydrate is found mainly in the form of potatoes, bread, pasta, and rice. Combined with this increased intake of carbohydrate there should also be a good mixture of the vitamins and minerals that are found in fruit and vegetables. Fruit in particular is an ideal food because it is high in fructose, which also provides energy that is easily absorbed. Bananas are the favourite energy provider for cyclists, especially when needing to maintain energy on the bike.

Meat and fish provide some of the essential micro-proteins, which help muscle development. If you plan to be really healthy, it is best to eat fish and white meats such as chicken; if you are going to eat red meats, you should cut off as much fat as possible and cook it in a healthy way. Vegetarians will probably have established a balanced diet already – simply add the foodstuffs that will provide you with more energy.

There are many energy bars available on the market, which contain a concentrated source of energy providing you with carbohydrate, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Easy to carry in your back pockets, these will help you maintain your cycling, should you start to wane whilst out on a ride. They do work, just find one that suits your tastes. Fluids are also important. Increasing your intake of fluids is essential, as you will lose substantial amounts as you exercise hard. This is simply combated by drinking a lot more. You can also increase your energy levels through intake of an isotonic drink or concentrated fruit juices. Some people find these work very well and the psychological effect by itself is often enough to make them worthwhile. If you intend to use these on the challenge, it is a good idea to get your body used to them in training. Basically, if you are careful with your diet, trying to eat more healthily and ensuring you eat plenty of carbohydrate before and after long rides, you will be fine.

## Training plan suitable for beginners

This plan is designed for people that are new to cycling or who haven't cycled for some time and is based on a 100-mile event which can be easily adapted to suit 100km ride. For a 100km ride change the miles to kilometres i.e. 10-miles = 10km (6.24 miles). If you don't have time to follow the whole plan you should aim to fit in some of the longer weekend rides which will give you a good indication of what to expect on the day.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Rest	5 miles	5 miles	Rest	5 miles	Rest	15 miles
2	Rest	5 miles	10 miles	Rest	5 miles	Rest	20 miles
3	Rest	5 miles	10 miles	Rest	10 miles	Rest	25 miles
4	Rest	5 miles	Rest	5 miles	Rest	20 miles	Rest
5	Rest	10 miles	10 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	30 miles
6	Rest	10 miles	10 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	35 miles
7	Rest	10 miles	10 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	45 miles
8	Rest	10 miles	Rest	10 miles	Rest	30 miles	Rest
9	Rest	15 miles	15 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	45 miles
10	Rest	15 miles	15 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	50 miles
11	Rest	15 miles	15 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	65 miles
12	Rest	Rest	Rest	10 miles	Rest	45 miles	Rest
13	Rest	15 miles	15 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	75 miles

14	Rest	10 miles	15 miles	Rest	15 miles	Rest	50 miles
15	Rest	10 miles	10 miles	Rest	10 miles	Rest	20 miles
16	Rest	10 miles	10 miles	Rest	5 miles	Rest	100 miles

During your training rides don't avoid hills! You should tackle a variety of terrain during training which will prepare you for the ride that you have entered. By tackling different terrain you will be able to find out more about what you are capable of and also how best to use the gears on your bike. If you are limited for time consider riding a hill near to you several times, it can be very effective.

## Your kit list

Listed below are the things that we feel are important for you to bring along on the day of the ride. Always take time to think about the conditions in which you will be riding and prepare for them accordingly. In hot, sunny weather, you should be using sun block and cream and even lip salve.

In cold conditions, consider investing in a quality thermal cycling top, to keep you warm and comfortable. A lightweight waterproof for wet weather is essential, without one you will soon become very cold and very miserable! Arm and leg warmers are a good investment as these can be taken off very easily during the ride, ideal when there is a chill in the air.

## Other things to bring with you

Whilst there will be refreshments out on the course and lunch is provided, you may wish to bring some items of your own such as energy gels and bars, and energy drink sachets. Please make sure you arrive with your water bottles filled up. A mobile phone is recommended just in case you get into difficulty.

### For you:

- cycle helmet – compulsory
- padded cycling shorts
- cycle jersey with pockets
- cycle mitts
- cycling shoes/trainers
- sunglasses
- leggings
- arm warmers – optional
- waterproof jacket
- chamois cream for shorter days or similar (Vaseline).

### For your bike:

- water bottles
- spare inner tubes x 2
- puncture repair kit
- reliable pump
- tyre levers x 3
- pocket tools
- cycle computer
- lights – recommended.

## Your safety

During our events there are no road closures and you will encounter other road users throughout the route, so please ride safely at all times. Remember that this event is a charity bike ride, it is not a race and there are no prizes for coming first.

- Obey the Highway Code at all times.
- **RED** means **STOP!**
- Be courteous and polite to other road users.
- Never ride more than two abreast.
- Single track roads – single file.
- Keep a safe distance between you and the rider in front.
- When turning right, check behind you and make your intentions clear.
- Make yourself visible to other road users.
- Ride out from the kerb to avoid drains and potholes.
- Wear high viz clothing in poor weather.

## Bike safety

The bike you ride will ideally be one that you are familiar with and you will have prepared for the event on. Our recommendation would be for you to ride a road bike, but it can be ridden on a hybrid, mountain bike or similar, the choice is yours. The event is on road and road tyres are most suited to ensure that you have a comfortable ride.

- Ensure that your bike is roadworthy.
- If in doubt, have it serviced a few weeks before the event.
- Tyres must be in good condition and inflated correctly.
- Brake and gear cables should be free from rust and not frayed.
- Seat and headset clamps should be tightened to avoid movement.
- The chain should be in good condition and not worn.
- Ensure your gears work properly.