

CYCLING - TRAINING GUIDELINES

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Beating Blood Cancers

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FOR NON-CYCLISTS WITH MODERATE FITNESS

People who have not ridden a bike for several years, or indeed at all, will have to start their training regime at least 4 months in advance of their trip. Mileage should be built up gradually to avoid injury and over-exercise, and to establish a good base fitness on which to build the stamina levels you will need on a cycle challenge.

Training

A cycle ride every other day should be attempted for the first 4 to 6 weeks and the mileage should be between 5 and 10 miles. There is no need to over stretch the ride by pushing a gear that is too difficult, or riding as fast as you can. This can come later.

Focus on your cadence

From the outset you should attempt to develop your cadence, which is the speed at which your legs rotate (RPM). This will improve your aerobic capacity, meaning your heart and lungs will grow stronger and be less stressed when cycling or exercising.

To develop your cadence you should select the gear that feels most comfortable when you are cycling on whatever gradient. If you can keep a steady RPM of around 60 - 70 most of the time, this would greatly aid the speed at which you become cycling fit and will increase your strength and stamina, which you can then build on.

Before you know it you will find yourself being able to push harder gears while maintaining the same RPM.

Step up the mileage

After you have become comfortable with your cadence and riding position, it will be time to start stepping up the mileage. For the next 4 weeks you should attempt to ride 15 - 20 miles 3 times a week, with a Sunday ride every other weekend of about 25 miles.

The following 3 weeks should see the introduction of an extra day's cycling into your training, this day's mileage may only be around 10 - 15 miles but it will help you get a feel for cycling day after day. It would now be a good idea to step up the Sunday rides to three a month with a mileage of 40 miles.

Three weeks before your challenge

By now you should be feeling really confident and starting to enjoy the sport of cycling. In the next 3 weeks it would be worth maintaining the same schedule but now starting to ride 20 - 25 miles three times a week with an alternate Sunday ride of 30 miles. In the penultimate 3 weeks your daily mileage should be around 30 miles on each outing

and any Sunday rides should break 50 miles. The last week before you leave for the trip you should wind down and perhaps attempt 3 short 10 - 15 mile rides.

FOR CYCLISTS WITH MODERATE FITNESS

This category might include anyone who has been cycling intermittently over the years, perhaps by cycling to work in the summer or regular Sunday rides with the family. As you will have a degree of basic fitness and confidence built up from previous cycling, 3 months or so of training should prepare you for the ride.

Improve your cadence

The first 4 weeks should be spent introducing a regular programme into your training and concentrating on your cadence (as above), which will help develop your strength for the sustained ride. A mileage of 15 miles three times a week combined with alternate Sunday rides of 30 miles should be attempted for the first month. The next 3 weeks should see you feeling stronger and confident to increase the mileage; your cadence should be fluent and comfortable, and the three rides a week should be covering about 25 miles each and the Sunday rides up to 40 miles.

Three weeks before your challenge

The penultimate 3 weeks should see the introduction of a fourth training ride every week, these four rides should be around 30 miles in length with three Sunday rides a month of 50 miles or more. You should by now be feeling comfortable with all these distances as long as you don't push yourself too hard.

The final week should be spent winding down with three 10 - 15 mile rides and the confidence that you know you can complete and enjoy the 10-day ride ahead of you.

FOR CYCLISTS WITH GOOD FITNESS

This category would include people who cycle regularly throughout the year, whether it be commuting 20 miles or more to work each day, or training seriously with weekend races and time trials. People within this category should already have a good training schedule and be amply fit to tackle a cycle challenge, though they should probably step up the training for long days riding.

Increase your mileage

People included within the commuting bracket may find it a good idea to step their weekly mileage up by cycling a longer route to work, or doing a brief morning or evening ride and by also doing regular weekend rides of around 50 miles or more.