

THE LONG RIDE

6/10 effort focusing on building your time on the bike and developing your aerobic capacity. Start off riding at 65% of MHR (conversational pace). Gradually this will build to 75% of MHR as you start to practice periods of race effort riding. These rides improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to burn fat as its primary fuel source. They also prepare you physically and mentally for the task ahead. If your goal is a long sportive or ride of 80+ miles don't expect to necessarily get this far in your training, but the goal should be to achieve between 65-80% of the distance before race day.

THRESHOLD RIDES

The golden zone of training for endurance sports anaerobic threshold training should form a key element to your weekly training mix. Ridden at a 'controlled discomfort', of about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold rides or intervals improve your lactate threshold, your riding efficiency and aerobic capacity (your body's ability to utilise oxygen). All this helps to improve your endurance performance.

HILLS

Including hills in your training obviously help prepare you for hills in your race or sportive, teaching you how to control your cadence and measure your effort. Aside from this they also provide fantastic aerobic and strength gains. Different types of hill session develop your fitness in different ways. Including lots of climbs at 'threshold' effort in rides of 90+ minutes can be an excellent way of developing your anaerobic threshold and experiencing climbing at race effort. Shorter, harder, faster climbing between 45 seconds and 5 minutes can be used to develop power, strength and Vo2 max and can be included in shorter, dedicated sessions.

INTERVALS

Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve running timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used. Typical examples might be 10 x 2 minutes @ 9/10 effort with 60 secs recovery, 5 x 4 minutes of sustained hard riding in a big gear with 90 secs recovery, or short bursts of between 20 and 40 secs at maximum intensity.

RECOVERY, EASY OR STEADY RIDES

These sessions are your opportunity to practise your bike handling as well as getting in an additional aerobic session. Recovery rides are your easiest efforts of the week (alongside warming up and cool down). The goal is to work at 5-6/10 and finish with your body feeling better than when you started. Generally easy rides or efforts around interval sessions should be 6-7/10 in terms of effort, focusing on technique, consistency and remaining able to fully communicate. Carrying out some of this riding before breakfast helps to teach your body to metabolise stored fats as an energy source - very important for long races and sportives.

SPIN CLASSES

Spin classes can be a useful addition to your training. Keep in mind that most (other than some very road cycling specific classes) will be aiming to work you hard between threshold and interval effort - therefore a spin class will have an effect on your fatigue levels. Consider replacing a hard ride if needed.

REST

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the cycling. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've got on the bike, find yourself thinking up excuses not to ride or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Around the actual rides themselves here are a few other considerations to throw into the training mix;

CADENCE

Cadence refers to the speed at which you turn the pedals. It is important as it relates to the relative biomechanics efficiency of your cycling action. Many cycle computers and GPS devices allow you to monitor this. There is no golden rule for optimal cadence, it's about finding a rhythm that works for you, adapting to your fitness, your terrain and your experience. A reasonable place to start though would be to aim for 90 revolutions per minute.

POWER

Power, measured in watts, is a crucial factor in cycling performance. Simply put power is the force you apply through your pedals x by your cadence. It's not necessary for most cyclists to buy themselves an expensive power meter to monitor this but it is worth being aware of. In a long ride, just as in a marathon, if you go off too hard, applying too much force and muscular conduction you are liable to see your muscles fatigue too quickly and burn too much stored glycogen. Practice riding in a big gear in training occasionally, at a lower cadence to feel that burn!

GEARING

Your gears are your friends. Use them to control your cadence and power by being aware of your terrain, fatigue level, environmental conditions etc to control your effort. Try to maintain a relatively consistent cadence using your gears rather than fluctuation through big surges of effort.

BEGINNER 100 MILE PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wk 1	Rest	30 minutes inc. 3 x 5 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	45 minutes easy ideally pre-breakfast	Rest	30-45 minute steady ride practising regular cadence (80-90 RPM)	90 mins - 2hrs all easy conversational
Wk 2	Rest	30 minutes inc. 3 x 5 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	45 minutes easy ideally pre-breakfast	Rest	30-45 minute steady ride practising regular cadence (80-90 RPM)	2hrs – 2hrs 15 mins all easy pace
Wk 3	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	40 minutes inc. 4 x 5 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	60 minutes hilly ride ideally pre-breakfast	Rest	45 minute steady ride practising regular cadence (80-90 RPM)	2hrs – 2hrs 15 mins all easy pace
Wk 4	Rest	40 minutes inc. 4 x 5 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	45 minutes all easy pre-breakfast ride	Rest	30-45 minutes practising safe controlled descending	90 mins - 2hrs all easy conversational

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Wk 5	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	45 minutes inc. 4 x 6 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	Pre-breakfast ride 75-80 minutes all easy	Rest	45-60 minute steady ride practising regular cadence (80-90 RPM)	2hrs 45 mins- 3hrs all easy conversational
Wk 6	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	45mins inc 5 x 6 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	Hilly pre-breakfast ride 80 mins working threshold effort on climbs	Rest	45-60 minute steady ride practising regular cadence (80-90 RPM)	3hrs 30 mins easy
Wk 7	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	45-60 mins inc 3 x 10 mins at threshold (3-5 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	Hilly pre-breakfast ride 90 mins working threshold effort on climbs	Rest	60-75 minutes steady practising climbing with high cadence	3hrs 45 mins - 4hrs all easy
Wk 8	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	45mins inc 5 x 6 mins at threshold (3 min easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	60 minutes all easy pre-breakfast ride	Rest	45-60 minutes practising safe controlled descending	2hrs 30 mins easy

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Wk 9	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	60 mins inc 3 x 12 at threshold (3-5 easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	Hilly pre-breakfast ride 90 mins working threshold effort on climbs	Rest	60-75 minutes steady practising safe controlled descending	4hrs - 4hrs 15 mins final 30 mins @ threshold effort
Wk 10	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	60 mins inc 3 x 15 mins (5 minute easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	30/30/30 riding easy/steady/threshold with no rest pre breakfast	Rest	60-90 minutes steady practising stretches of 10-15 minutes in a high gear	4hrs 30 mins - 5 hrs w final 45s mins at threshold - practise race day nutrition
Wk 11	Rest or 30 min easy cross train	60 mins inc. 3 x 15 mins (3 minute easy spin recovery)	Rest + Core	20/20/20 progression ride pre-breakfast	Rest	60 minutes steady practising stretches of 10-15 minutes in a high gear	90 mins all easy practise race day nutrition
Wk 12	Rest	30-45 minutes inc. 3 x 6 mins at threshold (3-4 min recovery)	Rest	10/10/10 progression ride	Rest	30 minute light spin and stretch	100 mile ride/race - good luck!