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50 MILE CYCLE TRAINING GUIDE



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Introduction

Welcome to your 50 mile cycle training guide!

A 50 mile cycle ride is a hugely rewarding event to compete in. It serves both as an ideal introduction to longer distance cycling and is also a meaningful challenge in its own right. Completing a 50 mile event is a great achievement wherever you finish and this training guide takes you through to race day and includes a multitude of tips and advice to help you reach your cycling goal.

This training guides is specifically designed by fitness experts to safely progress your fitness to the appropriate levels so that you will not just be able to complete your challenge but you'll be able to complete it comfortably. It is based around specific cardiovascular (CV training) and includes a range of dedicated resistance and flexibility training exercises, which will improve your total body fitness and provide you with the all-round strength and fitness that you'll need.

Who is this training guide for?

This training guide is suitable for all fitness levels as it steadily builds your fitness over twelve weeks, but if you have not exercised for some time then the specific lead-in training guide (which is a precursor to the main schedules) will ensure that you can cope with the level of training. The training guides are carefully structured and cover everything that you need to do for your fitness preparation, so all you need to focus upon is forward planning and beginning sooner rather than later. Kick-starting your fitness is the first step in achieving your goal. Enjoy your training!



Safety First

To start with, it is vitally important to ensure that it is safe for you to begin an exercise programme. Complete the safety checklist below and if you answer YES to one or more questions, or alternatively, if you are at all concerned about starting training, then make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up before you start.



Health-status safety checklist

- 1

Are you aged over 30 and/or have not exercised for some time?
- 2

Do you suffer from any medical conditions?
- 3

Are you a smoker or have recently given up smoking?
- 4

Have you undergone any surgery in the past two years?
- 5

Are you suffering from any injuries?
- 6

Are you currently on any prescribed medication?
- 7

Are you unsure about beginning an exercise program?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

Once you have the all-clear from your doctor then you're ready to start training.

Getting Started

What gear do I need?

Choosing a bike - Getting the right bike for a fit and healthy cycle

It's vital to choose the right bike before embarking on your training programme. Road biking relies on quality kit as well as quality technique. Here's how to choose that all-important first bicycle.

Buying a bike is akin to buying a computer; the choice is enormous and can be bewildering. Road bikes are fast and generally have thin tyres, rigid frames and drop down handlebars. They have not changed as much as their mountain bike counterparts over the last 15 years, but there is still a lot to think about when purchasing a road bike.

Bicycle cost

When it comes to bike price, more is definitely less. The more you pay, the lighter the bike, and in theory, the lighter the cycle, the better it is. Cyclists are obsessed with weight, often going to the extreme of drilling holes into certain components to make them lighter! You should buy the lightest version you can afford. At the end of the day you get what you pay for. Quality is expensive, but cheap bikes may well put you off cycling all together.

Pick up a lot of bikes and compare the weights of similar models. This will give you a good indication of the true worth of that weight saved.

Bikes under £100

There are plenty of bikes in this price range available, and they represent very good value for money as long as you only use them to travel short distances and don't give them much abuse. However, if you actually want to use them for any form of training, they are best avoided.

Bikes between £200 and £500

You should expect these models to have better specifications and to be lighter than the cheap bikes, but don't expect it to have the best components or be extremely lightweight. For most people, though, this is plenty to spend on a bike and if you look around you can get a very good model for this price.

Bikes of £500 upwards

Some bikes are on sale for thousands and thousands of pounds, but this is the range you will need to think about if you are going to train seriously or race. Bikes in this price range will be lightweight, strong, and will have well specified components.



Making the cycle purchase

After you have decided on the type and cost of your bike, it is very important to be measured up correctly so the bike fits your body style. Too many people buy a bike and just get on and ride, in whatever the default position seems to be.

If you buy the bike from a professional bike retailer, then they should set it up for you when you buy it; if not, ask them to. Once the bike has been correctly set up, make sure you know how to set it up yourself in case you ever take it apart. Write down the settings and leg lengths, or better still mark on the bike itself to indicate your settings.

Road biking gear guide

Getting the right kit for a fit and healthy cycle

No matter how dedicated you are to road biking, you won't enjoy any health benefits from cycling without the right bike kit. A safe helmet and a water bottle are as vital as strong muscles. Here's the essential guide to choosing the right bike kit before you get going in the world of cycling.

Cycle helmet

Nearly 80 percent of cycle-related deaths result from head injuries, so riding without a helmet is not an option. You absolutely must wear one. As well as that startling fact, prices for a good helmet are between £25 and £35, so there really is no excuse. Here's what you should look for when choosing your helmet:

- A peak to keep the sun or mud out of your eyes
- A main strap that fastens under your jaw
- A helmet that is adjustable, so it is not too tight and feels comfortable
- A close fit on your head and doesn't rattle around
- Lightweight, with plenty of vents
- Made by a reputable manufacturer and retailer
- It has the appropriate safety approval sticker inside.

Cycling sunglasses

It's always useful to have a pair of glasses on when you're cycling, whether it's the middle of summer or the depths of winter. There always seems to be something flying around that has your eyes as its target. The best ones are those where you have interchangeable lenses. Normally you get a set of three; clear, tinted for the sun, and orange to improve light quality.

Cycling gloves

When choosing your gloves you need to consider four main areas: comfort, sizing, warmth and protection. Padded gloves are useful to increase comfort. Avoid excess padding though as too much can compress the nerves in the hands. Before buying gloves, measure around your knuckles and measure the length of your dominant hand. This will ensure you choose correctly fitting gloves.

Bike water bottle

If you're heading out for a long bike ride it's really important to take plenty of fluid with you. You can fix two water bottle holders on most bikes and it is well worth doing. You could put water in one and an energy drink in the other.

Accessories

The only essentials are a puncture repair kit, a pump, a small toolkit, a trip computer, sunscreen, lip-salve, personal toiletries and a small first aid kit. Everything else is a luxury.

Turbos - There is a wide variety of gadgets available, costing from a few pounds to a few hundred, but if you are serious about cycle training then eventually you may want to get a turbo trainer. This is the equivalent of a running machine for your bike and allows you to train safely at home whilst in front of the TV. You can also use them when the weather is really bad for cycling, such as when it is wet or icy. Turbos are great if used correctly, but can make for quite boring exercise time.

However, you can at least watch TV or listen to the radio to pass the time while you cycle. Turbos are only really for the keen cyclist.

Panniers, horns and radios - Don't bother too much with panniers, horns or radios for the bike. If you are sightseeing rather than training, you may want these, but otherwise think of the weight you are saving by not having them! If you need to carry some extra energy gels or drinks then you may want a cheap pair.

Lights

Obviously, if you are riding at night, then by law you will need some lights at the front and the rear. If you ride a lot at night, then there are some very powerful light sets around now. Some are even as bright as car headlights. To make sure you can be seen, especially from behind, buy the brightest you can afford. Look for NiCad rechargeable batteries, as powerful lights notoriously eat batteries very quickly.

Training

Where to train

To begin, a sensible approach is to start locally and then venture further afield as you progress. That way, when building up, you are never far from home. Varying your routes is a must – even the most committed cyclist tires of following the same route session after session, so use your local knowledge to keep your cycles fresh.

Try to train using a variation of terrains and routes. Use a mix of flat routes, hilly circuits and bike machines at the gym. Each terrain brings new challenges and strengthens skills and muscles. You should dedicate a large portion of your training to the type of terrain that you will be competing on though; this will prepare you well for race day. If the terrain includes off-road sections then try to train on trails and bridleways to simulate the challenge conditions. Your variations should include both uphill climbing and downhill descending because descending is a separate skill in itself and you need to be prepared for every eventuality.

When to train

Physiologically, early afternoon has been found to be the best time to train; the body is fully woken up and loose and the opportunity to be well fuelled and hydrated is also better. However, if for example midnight is the most suitable fit for your circumstances, there's nothing to stop you training whenever you wish.

Insight

If you train first thing in the morning, as well as a great start to the day, you really boost your metabolic rate (the speed at which your body burns calories). This takes effect during your session and for several hours afterwards, which is a great weight-management strategy.

Principles of training

It is common to think that when a training improvement is made (for example cycling further or cycling a faster time over a particular distance), that the improvement has been made at that specific time. In fact that is not the case; the improvement has been made some time previously, following an earlier training session. During the training session, it is the measurable results that are registered in the form of quicker times or further distances. This is because of the way the body responds to training. When exercising, the body is challenged. Following a training session, when the body is at rest, it adapts and gets stronger, and improvements can be measured during a subsequent session. Hence the most important component of any training programme is rest, so that the body is able to adapt to training.

Structuring your training sessions

Following correct exercise protocols is key to getting the most out of your training, so that you start out on the road to fitness with safe and correctly balanced training sessions. To get the most out of your training, you should adhere to the following sequence each time you train:

Warm Up

The warm up raises the heart rate, gets blood flowing to the working muscles and prepares the body for exercise. It should be for a minimum of five minutes and replicate the movements or activities of the main session.

For example: when beginning a cycle, five minutes very easy cycling will prime the body for the main training session.

Mobility

Some basic actions to put the limbs through the range of movement that the main session requires will ensure that the joints are loosened up, lubricated and will function more efficiently.

Main Session

This will form the bulk of the training session. For example: a 10 mile ride.

Cool Down

The cool down should be at a lower intensity than the main session and should bring the body temperature and heart rate closer to pre-exercise levels. Waste by-products of exercise will be flushed from the muscles and tissues, accelerating recovery before the next training session.

For example: the cool-down should be a minimum of five to 10 minutes light CV.

Flexibility

Stretching exercises should be carried out after the main session and cool-down as the body is in a greater state of relaxation than at the beginning of the session. Five to 10 minutes spent stretching the muscles worked will maintain suppleness.



How to Stretch

To get the most out of your post exercise stretching session, simply follow the step-by-step guide below:

Relax

It is very important to be relaxed. Physical and mental tension will inhibit your range of movement and prevent your muscles from stretching as effectively. Hence, you will not achieve maximum flexibility benefits.

Ease into the stretch

Gradually move your body or the limb being stretched into the stretch position. Once you feel slight tension in the muscle, (known as the point of bind), which is the limit of the muscle's flexibility, hold the position. Avoid bouncing or any other movements, which could overstretch the muscle and result in injury.

Relax your breathing

Always keep your breathing easy and relaxed because that will reduce all-round muscular tension, which in turn will allow you to stretch further. Holding your breath will tense up your entire body, making stretching much harder.

Hold for 30 seconds

To get maximum stretching benefits, you need to hold the stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds. Stretching each muscle for just a few seconds brings no flexibility benefits.

Pain means no gain

Stretching should invoke a mild feeling of 'tightness' or tension within the stretched muscle. Pain when stretching indicates injury or a muscle that has been overstretched. Therefore, never stretch beyond a 'comfortable tightness'.

Rest and repeat

A single stretch for each muscle is very beneficial, but if time permits carry out two stretches for each muscle, separated by a short break of 30 seconds. The second stretch will help extend your range of movement further.

Frequency

Ideally stretch the major muscles after every ride, but if that proves too time-consuming stretching twice a week is a suitable target.



Nutrition and hydration

During your challenge, you will burn many calories and even more on the challenging uphill sections. Combine those statistics with the fact that you will be exercising for long periods throughout the day and you can see that your fuelling strategy is essential. Hence for your training, you need to ensure that you eat plenty of complex carbohydrate meals, pasta being ideal before each of your long sessions so that you don't run out of energy and similarly, replace those calories again with complex carbohydrates when you finish.

Fortunately there are now plenty of energy products available that are ideal for keeping your energy levels 'topped up' and which you can easily carry en route. These products include energy drinks, bars and gels. It is worthwhile experimenting with them in training to find which products suit you best and then packing some bars and gels in your luggage to use during your challenge so that you have an 'energy safety net'.

Nutrition and hydration are enormous subjects, however, to kick-start your healthy nutrition guide, try and follow the five golden rules below:

Five golden nutrition and hydration rules:

1. Always eat breakfast

Your body needs good quality fuel for training and by waking up your metabolism after sleep; you actually burn more calories through the day.

2. Leave a gap

Allow 1½ to 2½ hours between your last meal and your training session to allow for digestion. Exercising on a full stomach will not only feel uncomfortable but will also inhibit your performance.

3. Hydrate

Drinking water regularly throughout the day is important, but because you are exercising, your fluid requirements will be greater due to sweat losses.

However, you will need to focus more on hydration and drinking straight after your workout.

4. Refuel

Your energy requirements will increase as your training increases and the optimum time to begin your refuelling is immediately after your workout. Always try and eat something (a banana is great) as soon as possible after your cool-down.

5. Don't neglect protein

Include good quality protein in your diet to support rebuilding because your body will need more to match the increased demands that you are placing on your body.

Tips and advice

Check your bike

You should check your bike over every week for wear and tear, loose fittings, adjustments that have been made during the week and also to ensure that all the moving parts are free and lubricated. Keeping your bike in shape should be as important as keeping your own body in shape. Here are some things to pay special attention to:

- Your chain should be clean and lubricated with no rust
- Your brake cables need to be in good condition and should move smoothly through the cable-sheaths. The brake-shoes should neither be worn nor rubbing on the wheel rim
- Your tyres should be inflated to the correct level and the tread not worn or bald.
- You should be on tiptoes when sitting in the saddle; this ensures your saddle is in the correct position.

Check your other equipment

Similarly, don't forget your other specialist equipment such as clothing, your helmet and if you use them, your cleated cycling shoes - which all need to be in tip-top condition so that you cycle in comfort.

Partner up

Completing long training sessions can sometimes be a lonely business, particularly towards the end of your training guide when you are fitter and out for several hours at a time. So rather than going it alone, see if you can link up with another cycle challenger, join a cycling club or get support from a friend or family member to give you both company on the long routes and a training partner. You will find that the added incentive of having someone to train with will encourage you to 'get out there' when it might just be tempting to give a session a miss and have a lie-in.

Struggling for time? Go long

If work and other commitments mean that you're finding it difficult to complete every part of the training guide then try to ensure that you at least complete all the long workouts. Your primary goal is to be able to keep going for several hours per day and also on successive days, so whilst the resistance training and other sessions will significantly contribute to your overall fitness, if you have to miss the odd session, make sure that it's not a long workout because they are the foundation of all your training.

Strip down

Stripping down is important. You need to keep everything down to the bare minimum and don't forget the useful expedition tricks such as stripping out unnecessary packaging, which will help you to keep your load light.

Be a fair weather cyclist

If the conditions outside aren't conducive to racking up a few hours training, either due to temperature, rain or darkness, you can still progress your cycling specific fitness in other ways. Options include taking a spinning class at your local gym – which is a fun but challenging hour of stationary cycling, using a turbo trainer (a resistance wheel which fixes to your usual bike and allows you to train indoors) or even the gym's stationary bikes if there are no alternatives.

Serious CV

It is important during your training that you improve your CV system to a level that your body will be able to cope with tougher sections. So whilst steady paced training is an important cornerstone of your training plan, some of your sessions need to challenge your aerobic system and make you breathe more heavily. Hence you will find that faster paced workouts are included as part of your training and these sessions will improve your aerobic capacity and make your challenge easier and more enjoyable.

Training Guide

Cycle fit 'lead-in' training guide

Session key: Bike (B) Flexibility (F) Rest (R)

If you have not exercised for some time then this specific lead-in training guide (which is a precursor to the main schedules) will ensure that you can cope with the level of training.

Phase 1	Week 1/6	Getting started (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B + F	10 minutes very easy, just 'getting back in the saddle'	Start easily, introducing your body to training and stretch your legs afterwards
Tues	R		Now that your bike's had an outing, check it for saddle and handlebar position
Wed	R		Try and stretch again today but give the training a miss
Thurs	B	10 minutes easy ride	Repeat Monday's session, still taking the pace easily
Fri	R		
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	10-15 minutes easy ride	1st longer session, start slowly and stretch your leg muscles at the end

Phase 1	Week 2/6	Building up (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Recovery after Sunday's longer session
Tues	B+F	10 minutes steady pace	Slightly brisker than last week
Wed	R		
Thurs	B	15 minutes easy pace	Start slowly. Try a loop circuit which takes you about 7 or 8 minutes to complete and go around twice
Fri	R		
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	15-20 minutes easy pace	Practice your pacing techniques that you've used during previous sessions

Phase 1	Week 3/6	Recovery	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Full recovery after yesterday's longer session
Tues	R		Double recovery
Wed	B+F	15 - 20 minutes easy, relaxed ride	This should now be comfortable
Thurs	R		Just 2 sessions during this recovery week
Fri	R		
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	20 - 30 minutes easy pace	Today's session should now be within your grasp, particularly with 3 rest days beforehand

Phase 2	Week 4/6	Build-up (2)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	B+F	20 minutes easy	
Wed	R		
Thurs	B	20 minutes steady	
Fri	R		Double rest day because Sunday's ride will be your longest to date
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	35 minutes easy paced ride	Try the 'loop' strategy again

Phase 2	Week 5/6	Peak week	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Make sure you rest up today because this is the maximum training week
Tues	B+F	20 minutes easy	See if you can try an off-road route on a bridleway or towpath for a change
Wed	R		
Thurs	B	Repeat last Sunday's session of 35 minutes non-stop	Try and vary your routes so that you don't become stale
Fri	R		
Sat	R		

Sun	B+F	45 minutes easy pace	Longest ride of the schedule, don't worry about your pace, just aim to complete the session
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Phase 2	Week 6/6	Taper before main training guide	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		
Tues	B+F	20 minutes steady pace	
Wed	R		
Thurs	B	20 minutes steady paced ride	This should now be comfortable
Fri	R		
Sat	B+F	45 minutes easy/steady	Repeat last Sunday's session, which should now feel easier
Sun	R		Rest today before you begin the main training guide tomorrow. You're ready to begin!



50 mile cycle training guide

Session key: Bike (B) Gym (G) Flexibility (F) Rest (R)

To be successful in your training you must build up your fitness levels gradually. Your body will take time to adapt to the new demands and activity. Therefore the training guide factors in easier sessions as well as rest days. When training, listen to your body. If you are tired and feel like a couple of days off then it will be better for you in the long-term to take a rest.

This training guide includes specific gym training and also some extended cycling sessions to condition the body for long days in the saddle, compared with shorter cycling challenges. The training guide lasts for 12 weeks. Getting ready to compete in a 50 mile cycle race when you have not previously trained is a great achievement. Remember to enjoy the experience and to keep your training balanced with other commitments, like family and friends.

Insight

This guide focuses on building your cycling-specific fitness over twelve weeks so that at the end of the guide, you are ready for your event. If you are already doing some training then jump into the programme at a position that matches your current training load.

Phase 1	Week 1/12	Starting out	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B+F	30 minutes easy ride	Start easily, introducing your body to training
Tues	R		Even though your enthusiasm will be high, resist the temptation to train today
Wed	G	60 minute total body workout concentrating upon legs, back, shoulders, arms and core. Begin with light weights that you can handle with ease. Focus on correct technique	Uphill cycling in particular requires good upper body strength so your gym training should focus on this area. Begin with a single set of each exercise
Thurs	R		Recovery after introducing your body to gym training
Fri	B	45 minutes easy ride	Don't push the pace; week 1 is all about getting into training mode
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	60 minutes easy	1st longer session, start slowly and stretch your leg muscles at the end

Phase 1	Week 2/12	Building up (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Recovery after Sunday's longer session

Tues	B+F	45 minutes steady pace	Easy / steady sessions can be combined with a daily commute to and from work to save time
Wed	G		Repeat your session from week 1 but this time with 2 sets of each exercise
Thurs	R		
Fri	B	45 minutes steady pace	Both midweek sessions are comfortable because your Sunday session is longer
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	1½ hours easy paced ride	Try to incorporate some off-road training if possible

Phase 2	Week 3/12	Building up (2)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Full recovery after yesterday's longer session
Tues	B+F	1 hour steady pace	Remember to stretch out for 5-10 minutes afterwards and don't forget your chest
Wed	G	Repeat the week 2 session but try to increase some of the weights that you've used in the first two weeks	Upper body strength is key so avoid skipping gym sessions
Thurs	B+F	45 minutes fartlek ride. Fartlek is Swedish for speed play, interspersing some faster bursts with recoveries	Introduction to faster paced training
Fri	B	1 hour steady pace	
Sat	R		Start thinking about suitable energy snacks that you can carry with you
Sun	B+F	Target 2 hours continuous cycling, taking short recovery/refuelling breaks if you need to	

Phase 2	Week 4/12	Mini-peak	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B+F	30 minutes easy. This is your first 'back-to- back' workout	Use this session as an easy recovery workout after yesterday's longer ride
Tues	R		

Wed	G	Total body session	On the final few reps of the 2nd set of each exercise you should be working quite hard
Thurs	R		
Fri	B+F	60 minutes fartlek ride.	Stepping up from last week's fartlek session
Sat	R		No activity today, both to recover from yesterday's harder workout and also to prepare for tomorrow
Sun	B+F	2½ hours steady paced ride	By now you will need to be thinking about your nutrition and hydration en route, so prepare a carbohydrate drink before you set off

Phase 2	Week 5/12	Recovery week	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		This week backs off on volume to allow your body to rebuild and recover
Tues	G		Change your exercises to rechallenge your body but still target the same muscle groups
Wed	B+F	Warm-up, 25 minutes fast, cool down	Reduced training week this week so put your focus into today's speed session
Thurs	R		Recovery after yesterday's faster ride
Fri	B	60 minutes steady pace	You should find this session comfortable
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	Repeat last Sunday's session of 2½ hours	Take a drink with you and some energy foods in your pockets so that you're always topped up. Gels and chewy bars are easy to eat on the bike

Phase 3	Week 6/12	2nd Build-up (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		The forthcoming weekend session is more challenging so enjoy today's rest day as a rest day!
Tues	B+F	Warm-up followed by 3 sets of 5 minutes brisk, 5 minutes easy and then cool down	Try and keep your cadence (rate at which you turn the cranks) as well as your speed, consistent on the faster sections
Wed	G		Look to push up from the weights that you used in your last session
Thurs	R		

Fri	B	1 to 1½ hours steady paced ride	This should now be comfortable
Sat	R		
Sun	B+F	3 hours longer ride. Start slowly and take a couple of recovery breaks as you feel you need	Make sure you're stocked up with snacks and a drink that you can easily access en route

Phase 3	Week 7/12	2nd Build-up (2)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Total rest today after your longest ride to date. Try and put your feet up
Tues	B+F	1 hour steady pace	Cut the session down to 30 minutes if you still feel tired from last Sunday
Wed	G	Total body workout	It's very important to keep your gym sessions going because they will really support your CV training
Thurs	R		
Fri	B	1½ hours steady paced ride	
Sat	G	Optional session if you feel OK	Afterwards, fuel up with a good complex carbohydrate meal ready for tomorrow
Sun	B+F	4 hours easy ride	This is a big one so keep the speed down, drink regularly and stretch afterwards

Phase 4	Week 8/12	1st back-to-back weekend	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Total rest day today because this week steps up a level
Tues	B+F	60 minutes 'go as you please' fartlek session	Stretch all your leg muscles afterwards
Wed	G		Sole gym session this week so focus on quality and improvement
Thurs	B	60 minutes steady	You should now be coping with this duration without any difficulty
Fri	R		Really easy day today, just check over your bike and kit for the weekend and ensure that you eat well in the evening
Sat	B+F	4½ hours steady. Back-to-back weekend	Stretching after your ride is really important today to help you recover for tomorrow

Sun	B+F	3½ hours steady/easy	Try and choose different routes to avoid staleness and eat small energy snacks regularly
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Phase 4	Week 9/12	Recovery and end of week push	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Two consecutive rest days, so avoid activity and recover
Tues	R		Try and have a sports massage for your legs, to ease any stiffness
Wed	B+F	60 minutes on a hilly circuit, working hard on each hill	You should be fully recovered and able to extend yourself a little
Thurs	G	Quality total body workout	If your gym has a wobble board, practise on it for a few minutes because it will really help your balance and control
Fri	B	1 hour steady pace	
Sat	G	Optional session if you feel OK	Big complex carbohydrate meal tonight – pasta is ideal
Sun	B+F	5 hours, easy paced ride	With most of this week light, you'll now be ready for your longest session to date

Phase 4	Week 10/12	Expedition week	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	G+F	Optional session	Core training focus and extra wobble board training
Tues	B+F	1½ hours steady pace	Keep it steady because the focus is on the weekend expedition
Wed	G	Total body workout	Essential session if you missed Monday's workout
Thurs	R		Double rest day in preparation for the big weekend expedition
Fri	R		Load up your fuel tank throughout the day with good quality carbohydrate
Sat	B+F	5-6 hours long ride with whatever recovery breaks you feel that you need	This weekend is effectively your dress rehearsal so try and get away to a new location

Sun	B+F	5 hours long ride with whatever recovery breaks you feel that you need	Take the 1st hour very easily so that you ease your body into the ride
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Phase 4	Week 11/12	Start of taper	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		A rest day to kick off the week and begin your taper
Tues	G	Still keep your gym training going at the start of your taper	A second sports massage today will reinvigorate your legs
Wed	B+F	30-40 minutes alternate fast and slow pace but not flat out	Remember that this is the start of your taper so don't blitz it!
Thurs	G		Look to maintain your existing level rather than push up on heavier weights
Fri	B	1 hour steady paced ride	
Sat	R		Have a good rest today and tomorrow's session will feel easy
Sun	B+F	5 hours single weekend session	This is your last long ride so 'roadtest' any last minute items of kit

Phase 4	Week 12/12	Main taper	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R		Use the extra rest days this week to finalise all your travelling arrangements
Tues	B+F	30 minutes very easy	Avoid the temptation to 'race', remember that you are tapering and your training is just to keep your body 'ticking over'
Wed	R		No gym training this week, so relax and mentally prepare
Thurs	B	1 hour, easy paced ride	
Fri	R		
Sat	R		By now you should be really refreshed, relaxed and ready to go!
Sun	Fly!	Well done on completing your training guide, good luck for today	Enjoy it!

Motivation

Staying motivated can be one of the toughest aspects of training. Bad weather, work, family and friends can all make it difficult to stay focused and keep keen. To stay enthusiastic make sure you do the following:

- Keep a balance. Training should not "get in the way" of life. Make sure you maintain previous commitments to work, family and friends
- Vary your routes
- Treat yourself when you achieve a goal; either a tasty meal or a new piece of kit
- Remember why you chose to train and what you have achieved since beginning
- Read an inspiring story or autobiography
- Talk to other cyclists
- Write a blog

Some inspirational quotes:

"You are never a loser unless you quit trying!" - Mike Ditka

"Top results are reached only through pain. But eventually you like this pain. You'll find the more difficulties you have on the way, the more you will enjoy your success." - Juha Vaatainen

"If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail." - Steve Prefontaine

Good luck!

You have come to the end of the schedule, and your fitness has improved dramatically from little or no cardiovascular (CV) activity, to being able to complete an 50 mile cycle event. In the week leading up to your event you have more rest days. Use this time to check over your clothing and gear so that everything is in tip-top condition for your big challenge. In your taper weeks get prepared for the rest day, packing energy products and other accessories.

On the race day itself, remember to have fun and chat to people who are also taking part; you might pick up some last minute tips.



So, what next?

You will have made significant health and fitness gains, and equally importantly, you have progressed safely. By maintaining your training, you will be making a major contribution to your long-term health and fitness, and this schedule can also serve as a foundation and springboard to increase your fitness levels further. Now you've completed your race, you may be tempted to step up and try to improve your finishing time.

Disclaimer

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