



TRAINING

Beginning Training Schedule

(f o r i n e x p e r i e n c e d r i d e r s)

Happy cycling and keep those pedals spinning!

Week	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
1	off	½ hr	off	½ hr	off	1 hr	off	2 hrs
2	off	½ hr	off	½ hr	off	½ hr	1 ½ hr	3 hrs
3	off	½ hr	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	2 hr	4½ hrs
4	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	3 hr	6 hrs
5	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	4 hr	7 hrs
6	off	1 hr	off	1 hr	off	1 ½ hr	4½ hr	8 hrs

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Plan: Your schedule should be personalized for you. And remember – it should be fun. Feel free to modify your training plan based on your own physical condition, daily schedule and preferences. If your time doesn't allow you to exercise on the weekends, then plan your long rides during the week. If you're starting a new fitness plan, be sure to check with your physician first.

Speed: You'll notice that our training plan is based upon time. We don't mention speed. Just as everyone bikes at her own pace during our tours, everyone should ride at her own pace during her training. Your "time in the saddle" is more important than the number of miles you cover or how fast you go.

Pace: Strive to keep an even pedaling pace (cadence) as you bike. Spin your feet evenly and smoothly through the pedal stroke. Use your gears effectively,

shifting up or down as the terrain changes to keep a constant cadence. It is easier on your knees to pedal quickly and smoothly at an easier gear rather than slowly and firmly on a hard gear.

Stretching: The best routine is to stretch after you have cycled 10 – 15 minutes, and then again at the end of your workout. Be sure to include stretches for your legs, shoulders and neck muscles.

Hills: The more hills you ride, the stronger you'll get. They not only strengthen your muscles, but they help you practice shifting and give you confidence. Don't be afraid of hills. If you learn to downshift to an easier gear at the bottom of the hill, you'll learn to spin easily at a constant pace and use less energy. Learn to enjoy the slower pace that hills allow. Listen to the sounds around you that you can only hear when

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you don't have the wind in your ears. The rhythm of your breathing can be very soothing.

Intervals: In addition to including some hills in your plan, it's a good idea to include some interval training too. Intervals are short periods of high exertion followed by periods of recovery. After warming up with easy riding for 15 minutes, try suddenly cycling as hard as you can to the next tree or up a hill. Once at the top, slow down to your normal speed until you've recovered. Do this a few times and then continue on with your ride at an easy pace to cool down. Intervals are an excellent way to increase your strength and speed.

Spinning: Gym classes that incorporate spinning bikes are an excellent substitute for bicycling outdoors. Join your local fitness club and take a spinning class instead of forcing yourself to bike in the pouring rain or through a blizzard. Remember – keep training fun.

Cross-training: Feel free to use one of your work-out sessions each week to cross-train. Use the time to hike, run, ski, play tennis or take an aerobics class. If you mix up your training, you'll be less likely to get injured, bored or tired of it.

Weight-training: In addition to increasing your aerobic capacity, it's a good idea to strengthen your muscles at the same time. Consider lifting weights twice a week in addition to your biking schedule. If you're new to weight training, start with very light weights to avoid injury. Be sure that a trained professional shows you proper technique and equipment use.

Advanced Training: If you have signed up to do one of our more advanced tours, including our cross-country tours, you should double or triple your weeks of training. Steadily increase your weekly mileage to build endurance. Work up to two or three 6-hour cycling days in a row. The more fit you are before the tour, the better you'll likely enjoy it. If you're not as in shape as you wish you were, you can always ride part of the day during the tour in the van. By the end of the week, you'll be in great shape for your next trip!

Resources: *A Woman's Guide to Cycling* by Susan Weaver is a good book about bicycling and training. It's an older book, but still relevant. Also, we are always available to help. Please do not hesitate to call or email us for advice or instruction.