



# Cycling Training Guide





**Cycling is more popular than ever with almost two million people cycling at least once a week, up 200,000 since the London 2012 Olympics! It's a superb way to keep fit, improving your cardiovascular fitness plus using all the major muscles in the body. Additionally, it's also gentle to the body for anyone looking to avoid impact sports.**

Making training a priority within your lifestyle will bring you better all-round results and ultimately make your event more enjoyable. This guide will give you information over and above your physical training programme to optimise elements of your lifestyle that most impact on your training efforts:

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Look to the back of this guide for a 12-week training programme to suit you.

Whether you're a first timer aiming to complete the Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100 or looking to improve and build on your previous race, you can benefit from a structured training plan.





## Getting Started

If you haven't exercised for some time and have any health concerns it is advised that you speak to your doctor before starting a new exercise programme. You should consult your doctor if you have arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, asthma or lung, liver or kidney disease. It's also recommended that you speak to your doctor if you suffer from any of the following:

- Pain or discomfort in your chest, neck, jaw or arms during physical activity
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness
- Shortness of breath with mild exertion or at rest, or when lying down or going to bed
- Ankle swelling, especially at night
- A heart murmur or a rapid or pronounced heartbeat
- Muscle pain when walking upstairs or up a hill that goes away when you rest

If you know of **any other reason** why you should not do physical activity it is advised that you check with your doctor first.





## Busting The Cycling Jargon

Before you get started, here are some of the terms you may come across:

### Bonk

A term commonly referred to by cyclists which is used when they simply can't go any further, usually as a result of glycogen depletion and complete exhaustion, rather like 'hitting the wall' which is referred to by runners. Getting your nutrition right, before and after training, as well as fuelling within your sessions is absolutely key to avoiding this complete state of exhaustion.

### Cleats

Cleats allow you to clip into your pedals and achieve increased power and efficiency in your cycling. Cycling shoes vary in cost, with the soles varying from plastic (cheaper) to carbon-soled ones that offer the stiffest response but are more expensive.

### Cadence

This refers to the resolutions or cycles per minute of the pedal stroke. A higher (quicker) cadence requires less force per pedal stroke and places less stress on your joints and muscles, which in turn reduces the risk of overuse injuries. There is however a point at which too high a cadence starts becoming less effective. Cadence can play a big part in how you perform throughout your race, minimising exhaustion of your legs on the bike. The best cadence is individual to everyone and depends on a host of factors including duration and intensity. So use your training sessions to get a feel for what is best for you. To calculate your cadence, time yourself for one minute and count how many times your right leg hits the bottom of the pedal stroke (or count your strokes for 15 seconds and multiple by four).

### Cross-Training

Cross-training will negate the short-comings of training your body in just one way, avoiding over-use of joints, muscles or ligaments that may become over-worked and over-time can result in injury. The law of specificity means that there is no better way to train for a bike race than getting on the bike. However, any good training programme will complement these rides with relevant supportive work to improve your posture and minimise discomfort on the bike. This should include a regular stretching regime too.



### **Aero bars**

These bars are attached to a cyclist's existing handlebars allowing the cyclist to lower their body and decrease the body's air resistance. If you're a beginner, there is much to learn and optimise on your bike before investing in these, but if you've completed a number of events before and feel comfortable on your bike, aero bars can offer you an opportunity to shave time off your race. Be sure to get these fitted to your bike sufficiently early in your training programme to give you plenty of time to train and be comfortable using them before race day.

### **Drafting (also draughting)**

A technique which is used to save energy, as one cyclist follows in the slipstream of another cyclist.

### **Tapering**

A period at the end of your training programme which represents a reduction in training volume prior to your main event. This should be phased and built into your training plan and will typically consist of one week or more (depending on the duration of the event).





## Comfort On The Bike

Riding a bike should be an enjoyable and comfortable experience but many people find it unnecessarily uncomfortable and can be put off. Be aware of your bike set up and adjust it throughout your training, to optimise your comfort throughout.

### Saddle Height

Setting the correct saddle height is probably the most important aspect of bike setup for ensuring comfortable and efficient cycling.

This is something that a local bike shop can definitely help you with. If your saddle is too low, you'll feel cramped which will put excessive strain on your knees. Too high and your hips will rock from side to side and potentially put strain on your lower back and also reduce power through the pedals.

You will need to find someone to hold the bike while you sit on it, place the balls of your feet on the pedals. With the pedal at the bottom of the pedal stroke (six o'clock), there should be a slight bend in your knee. You shouldn't feel as though you have to stretch but your leg should feel extended. The seat saddle can be adjusted by either a lever or a bolt that will require an Allen key.

### Handlebar Height

When on the saddle, if the bars are the correct height, you should be leaning forwards and, with your hands on top of the bars, there should be a bend in your elbows. A common mistake that many people, with sore backs, make is raising the handlebars to give a more upright position. This may in fact make the situation worse by increasing the load on your back, so again seek help from a bike shop. Because adjustment is limited, correct bar height should be a priority when buying a bike as it may not be possible to make big changes later on.

### Saddle Soreness

Most cyclists will experience some saddle soreness, especially at first. First and foremost, ensure that your saddle is set up correctly (at a local bike shop). Saddle soreness can sometime lessen the more you get used to your bike and the more miles you do on the bike. However, whether you're a beginner or just starting a new training schedule, you should increase your miles gradually to allow for your body to adapt to the bike. The soreness can further be alleviated by a good pair of cycling shorts, which will provide much needed padding, by coming out of your saddle every 15-20 minutes. If further relief is needed speak to a local bike shop about other saddle options which provide extra cushioning.



### Foot Cramping

This is a very common complaint on the bike and is caused by periods of tensing the feet (and toes) inside your shoes. Ensure you wiggle your toes within your shoes regularly to increase the blood flow and stretch your toes when you come off the bike. Stand against a wall with the balls of your feet on the floor and pushing your toes against the wall.

### Posture on the bike

Upper back, shoulder pain and lower back pain are all common symptoms on the bike. A combination of good training before getting on the bike, good 'form' on the bike and regular stretching afterwards can significantly reduce discomfort. Avoid bad habits such as a hunched posture, hanging your head over the handlebars and gripping the handlebars tightly. You should cross-train on non-bike days to strengthen the core and lower back area and also stretch to improve flexibility. Tight hamstrings in particular can exacerbate pain in the lower back.





## First, Set Yourself A Goal...

Like anything in life, focusing your efforts on an end goal will help you keep single minded and keep you on track. This is your event, so avoid the temptation to pitch yourself against friends or colleagues; after all, you have no idea of their current fitness levels, health condition, injuries or other motivations.

You may want to shed some extra pounds, improve your health, achieve a certain time or create a better work/life balance by incorporating more activity into your lifestyle. Without a doubt, you are more likely to achieve your goals by writing them down as a positive statement, ensuring that they are measureable, attainable and within your control. A great tool for logging your efforts and progress is a training (or food) diary. You'll find electronic diaries on line or simply jotting them down in a book at the end of the day will keep you focused on your effort.

**Think of ways that you can measure your success, through taking statistics at the beginning of your training programme and at regular intervals thereafter. For example:**

- **Achieve weight loss** - find scales that measure your body fat %
- **Improve strength** - pick 3 tests that track your lower body, upper body and core strength
- **Increase speed** - introduce fartlek and intervals into your training, and complete a weekly time trial
- **Achieve a specific race time** - Assess your current speed and set yourself a goal beyond that
- **Better health measures** - lower your blood pressure, resting heart rate, improve the quality of your sleep
- **Improve your work/life balance** - plan your training ahead of each week so that you can integrate it with your forthcoming work commitments





## Equipment

### What do I need?

There can be a temptation to buy all the equipment, thinking that the highest spec will give you a better race time. In reality it can often over-complicate your training and leave you feeling very frustrated, not to mention out of pocket! Choose wisely and you'll spend less money and train better.

As a beginner there are plenty of cost effective and completely adequate options available. Make sure you visit a specialist bike shop to benefit from their expertise. Spend your budget with safety and comfort in mind first and foremost:

### Get the Right Gear



#### 1

#### Bike

A bottom-end mountain or hybrid bike and an approved helmet are all you need to complete your first race. However if you'd like to race on a road bike, the race event organiser will often provide links on their website with details of reputable bike hire companies. Some race organisers will specify that you have to use a specific type of bike to compete (eg. Ride London 100- see their website for details). The most important elements you should ensure when getting a bike is comfort and safety. Nothing can replace time on the bike when it comes to getting fit for your race, and if your bike is the wrong size or set up incorrectly you will develop problems (such as shoulder, back and knee pain) so buy or hire your bike from a reputable cycle shop to ensure they set you up correctly.



## 2 Helmet

Together with your bike, you will need a good quality helmet that fits correctly, is comfortable and offers good ventilation. Again, seek the help of a reputable cycle shop and buy the best that you can afford. Should you ever crash and hit your helmet always replace the helmet. You may not be able to see any evidence of damage on the outside but internally the protective materials may have been damaged and will be compromised.



## 3 Glasses

Protective eyewear is not just for sunny days but also protects your eyes against wind, insects and flying stones, and dust. For this reason, you don't have to spend a fortune on frames and lenses, the protective shield of glasses alone is vital for your eyes.



## 4 Cycling Gloves

Cycling gloves offer a good protective layer should you come off your bike plus warmth. Gel padded fingerless gloves offer good protection against chafing if you're on your bike for reasonably long distances.



## 5 Cycle Shoes

Clip in pedals are not essential but will offer increased power and efficiency (versus factory standard pedals) but by no means are essential for the beginner. However, once you have experienced the benefits of cycling shoes fitted to your pedals there is no turning back!



## 6 Bike Repair Kit

Invest in an emergency repair kit that you can carry with you on rides (under your seat or in a pouch on your back). You will need a spare inner tube, light weight pump (or gas cycliner) and a multi-tool kit for any roadside alterations.



## 7 Padded Shorts

A worthwhile investment which will make your longer rides far more enjoyable. The materials used for bike shorts also offer a 'wick away' affect for moisture and sweat.



## 8 Water Bottle(s)

Depending on the length of your bike ride, fix a minimum of one water bottle bracket to your bike. Two brackets allow you to carry different liquid fuels (e.g. water, versus energy drink) which you may use at different stages of your race.



## 9 Lights

Kit your bike out with prominent lights on the front and rear of your bike for training purposes.



## 10 High visibility clothing

Ensure you are as prominent as possible on the bike with good reflective and bright coloured clothing which will also increase your visibility on the bike.



## A Guide To Training

### Optimal Training

It is often thought that training is a purely physical procedure; the more you cycle the better you will be. To a degree this is true, but the amount of time you dedicate to optimising your wider training environment, the better your health, wellbeing and ultimately your race will be.

It's easy to brush aside these elements of 'training' which often involve making changes to your lifestyle that may feel out of your control. However, set yourself a goal of focusing on at least one of the following for the duration of your programme and experience the difference it makes!

### Sleep

Arguably the most significant part of recovery is sleep. Sleep is hugely underestimated and often neglected all together. After a good night's sleep, we wake up better equipped for the day ahead, with activities such as reaction time, organisation of information, decision making, learning, emotional stability and memory amongst just some of the many benefits. However, whilst you sleep, your body also stops all vital functions so that repair and growth can be maximised and releases hormones regulating growth (e.g. soft tissue repair) and appetite control.

Sleep deprivation builds up over time, an hour cut short by watching an extra TV programme, a disrupted night's sleep, or a few very early morning starts. Over a period of weeks, this deficit can accumulate to many hours which can be detrimental to your training i.e. reduced cardiovascular function, speed, agility and reaction time.

Start by bringing forward the time you climb into bed by 30-60 mins, read to unwind (or write up your training log!) and create a high quality sleep environment: quiet, dark, cool and comfortable and see how you feel.

- A high protein snack before bed will promote serotonin production to promote sleep e.g. a slice of turkey
- Stay away from any screen devices at least an hour before you go to bed, let your brain unwind naturally
- Remove your mobile (and any other electronic devices) from your bedroom, if you need an alarm clock, buy a stand-alone alarm
- Monitor the temperature in your room, personal preference is best but a room too hot or too cold will stop you from falling asleep. An air conditioner, fan, heater or the weight of sheets or a blanket can help you regulate temperature
- Unload your mind - keep a pencil and paper by the bed to jot things down that are keeping you awake





## Take a break

Along with good quality sleep, rest is absolutely vital to your training programme. If you're not fully recovered then you will be unable to ride harder or longer than the last time and therefore will not improve. Furthermore, fail to build in rest days and your body will simply not repair and bear the burden of your training regime, with niggles and injury a common occurrence amongst those that don't rest.

Once you get into a training programme, it can become hard to slow down, coupled with juggling work and other commitments, you may be tempted to cut out sleep or simply pack in too much into your day. Ensure you build in time post-training to rest and relax, both your body and mind need a break and give you the mental strength for a good training week ahead.



## The Principles of Training

Training can be a highly rewarding activity. One of the many unique qualities of the human body is its ability to respond and adapt to regular exercise and therefore training with a progressive load and effort will bring improvements over a period of time. For this improvement to occur, your body must be confronted with some form of 'stress' for the body to respond to, whether that is weights in the gym, a hilly bike ride or a session to challenge your core.

This 'stress' will leave the body feeling some discomfort in the form of muscle soreness if unaccustomed to the type of activity that you're performing. Exercise-induced muscle damage is also known as Delayed-Onset Muscle Soreness (aka DOMS) and symptoms appear 24-72 hours after exercise. This is perfectly normal and part of the natural adaption process so view it as a good thing!

Training 'appropriately' for your race, will mean many hours and miles on the bike and cycling on a terrain which is relevant to your race (e.g. off road, hilly, undulating, etc).

A cycling programme will initially build your leg strength and general conditioning so that it can cope with the intensity and load applied later in the programme. The period of rest afterwards is when rest and good eating allows you to rebuild yourself. This will allow for the soft tissue, ligaments and muscles to adapt with reduced risk of injury and discomfort. Thereafter more intense sessions (e.g. hill training, intervals) can be incorporated into your programme.

With these principles in place, a good training plan will allow your body to adapt slowly, train consistently, progress continuously and rest regularly, to ensure 16 weeks of good quality training.



## Where and when to train

Joining a club can help inspire you with cycling routes and can be a great way to stay motivated. There are more than 1500 cycling clubs of all levels affiliated to British Cycling ([britishcycling.org.uk](http://britishcycling.org.uk)). Clubs are a great place to meet other people looking for training partners and can provide you with a wealth of information through other people's experience.

You may find it difficult to get outside at points during your training plan. A turbo trainer allows you to use your bike indoors, and can be ideal for a threshold ride at home should time, weather or logistics not allow you to get outdoors.





## Nutrition & Hydration

### Food is not just fuel

Optimum nutrition is one of the most important aspects of your training programme and one that is often overlooked but will bring with it a plethora of benefits beyond just fuelling your body for physical effort. It is a vast area and we've provided you with some initial suggestions and ideas which we hope you will want to explore and read about further. The improvement in your general health will be tangible, reducing colds and bugs during training along with longer-term health implications.

If you're looking for a personalised nutritional programme, or have any allergies or conditions that may affect your food choices, you may want to seek further advice from a qualified nutritionist.

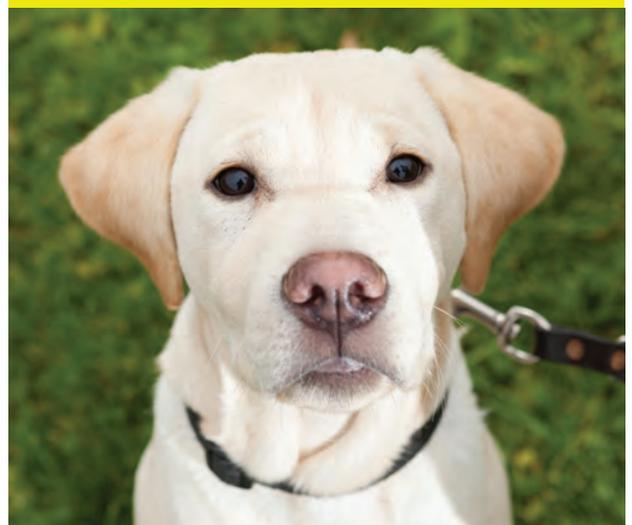
### The status quo

As athletes, you may think that a typical diet should consist of a lot of carbohydrates and very little fat in the diet. Staples such as pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals, bread and cereals will feature in many meals. A cyclist's shopping basket may include 'low fat' yoghurts, products marked as 'light', and be brimming full of plenty of fruit, all of which sit within mainstream healthy eating. The food mentality of 'calories in equals calorie out' has long justified eating as many calories burned on a long training ride.

### A calorie is not necessarily a calorie

However, thinking about the 'composition' of your calories, i.e. the amount of fats, carbs and protein in your day's calories is a fundamental way of optimising your health and wellbeing. This in turn will support weight loss goals, appetite control, energy levels and repair from injury, all of which will have a direct impact on your race performance.

The fundamental issue with the classic, very high carbohydrate diets is the significant rise in blood sugar (and therefore the hormone insulin) that is released in the body following this spike. If blood glucose is constantly elevated through eating carbohydrate, then the ability of the body to access its fat stores to burn as fuel is reduced. With this in mind, here are 10 tips that will help provide a nutrient dense diet which will fuel and nourish your body throughout your training:





## 1 Think nutrient dense, not calorie dense

**Foods such as:** Fruit (particularly low fructose variants such as raspberries, blueberries, pears and kiwis) a wide variety of vegetables, lean meats, fish (unbreaded), nuts (e.g. almonds) and seeds. Buy the highest quality food that your budget can afford. For example, opt for organic (e.g. meat, eggs, milk, vegetables) or grass-fed meats and always strive to ensure the food that you buy is unprocessed.

**Why:** Increased intake of micro-nutrients and antioxidants support your overall health and recovery.

## 2 Eliminate processed and refined sugar from your life

**Foods such as:** Biscuits, chocolate, cakes, fruit yoghurts, jams, condiments, cereal.

**Why:** Conservative estimates suggest that we are eating between 20-34 tsp of sugar a day, exceeding the NHS recommended maximum of 16.5 tsp for men and 12 tsp for women. Processed and refined sugars are linked to weight gain, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, lower cognitive function, ageing skin, a depressed immune system, liver and kidney disease.

## 3 Moderate starchy carbs

**Foods such as:** Depending on your training requirements, honestly review the number and size of your portions of bread, potato, rice and pasta you're eating per day. When looking to include carbohydrates in your diet to fuel training, remove poor nutrients, refined sources such as bread and pasta for more nutrient dense foods like quinoa, sweet potatoes and lentils.

**Why:** Carbohydrates should continue to play its part in an athlete's diet but timing and type is key. Carbohydrates should be consumed around training to safeguard glycogen stores. At other times, carbohydrates should be reduced in favour of natural fats and protein and nutrient-dense leafy vegetables.

### Moderate starchy carbs





## 4 Pack a punch with protein

**Food such as:** Eggs, nuts, chicken, turkey, lean mince, fish (such as cod, plaice, haddock and bass) and oily fish such as tuna, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout. Don't forget game meats such as venison, pheasant and partridge and fleshy protein dense fish such as prawns, sea bass, monkfish and snapper. Whey protein shakes also provide excellent protein for post training snacks.

**Why:** Proteins are broken down by the body and converted into amino acids, which have multiple uses in cell function. This includes boosting the immune system and helping to rebuild muscle after exercise.

## 5 Don't be scared of good fats

**Foods such as:** Avocado, nuts (almonds and brazil nuts), oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, unprocessed meat such as turkey, chicken, venison and lean beef.

**Why:** By focusing your intake on good fats (in conjunction with cutting down your carbohydrate intake) you will be training your body to regain control of blood sugar levels and allow your body to use body fat as fuel. A shortfall of (good) fat in the diet will lead to a lack of essential nutrients which are critical for immune healthy, hormone regulation, bone and cell growth

## 6 Watch out for seemingly 'healthy' foods

**Foods such as:** Reduced calorie salad dressings, condiments such as ketchup, breakfast cereals, low fat yoghurts (opt for full fat, and reduce your portion size), soft fizzy drinks and fruit juices/smoothies. Eat only the whole fruit, not just the juice.

**Why:** Foods that are marketed as 'low calorie' or 'low fat' often contain more sugar to compensate for the taste experience. Even if you're not looking to lose weight, a glass of orange juice is high in sugar (fructose) which goes straight to the liver and is processed as fat.

### Don't be scared of good fats





## 7 Avoid alcohol

**Drinks such as:** Beer, wine and spirits

**Why:** Actively prevent the body from burning fat, reduce energy levels and encourage over-eating. Try to cut down in the week or experience the benefits of eliminating altogether whilst you're training. You can celebrate your personal best with a glass of bubbly!

## 8 Refuel during and after training

**What:** Carry two water bottles on your bike, water for instant and direct hydration after the session, and a second bottle containing a sports drink, to provide energy for the third leg of your ride. There are a number of different bars, gels and snacks in sports shops for consumption before and during training. Aim to eat a protein and carbohydrate snack (or meal) within 30-40 minutes of training to optimise recovery.

**Why:** Optimise your refuelling and hydration strategy before race day. Not everyone can digest solid foods whilst on the move, so drinks and gels are a good alternative. How much, when in the race, and how you integrate these into your training is an important element of your training so that you have no surprises on race day.

## 9 Always eat breakfast

**What:** Porridge, poached eggs on toast, omelette, peanut butter on toast, eggs and smoked salmon, Shredded Wheat and Weetabix

**Why:** The most important meal of the day, wakes up your metabolism after fasting throughout the night and kick-starts your body into burning calories. Breakfast is very individual and will also depend on when you're training in terms of composition, timing and digestion.

### Always eat breakfast





## 10 Nutritional training for race day

**Training:** Keep a note of your nutritional requirements specifically around training times. If you train after breakfast, optimise your breakfast so that you know exactly how much time you need (usually 1.5-2 hours) after eating before you can exercise comfortably. Try different energy drinks, bars or gels, during your training and at which point during your ride to take them, so that you have no surprises on race day. Weather conditions will also play a huge role in what form and how many calories you consume, so again keep a note of this in your training diary.

**How:** There are numerous on-line electronic diaries which will automatically calculate your calories and macro splits or simply keep a hand-written diary yourself. Keep a log of what you eat, but also when you eat, and how you feel, in relation to your training. As you move through your training programme you will find that certain foods affect you differently such as: fuelling before exercise, ease of digestion, best recovery foods.

### Nutrition on Race Day and Post Race Day

Experimenting in training is key to honing your race day nutrition. This will involve knowing what is the ideal breakfast, how long you should eat before the race, managing your bowel movements and taking extra calories on board during the race. Practice eating when you're training, as it's not the most comfortable thing to do, so experiment with gels and liquid energy or electrolyte drinks. Ensure that you hydrate yourself well in the week leading up to the race and adjust your liquid needs depending on the temperature on race day.



After your race, the first thing you should do is hydrate yourself with water and fluid replacement. If you sweat more than average you may want to consider an electrolyte drink. After this, there is a well established 'carbohydrate window' in which your body best refuels itself. Ensure you eat some simple, easily absorbed carbohydrates within 40 minutes of finishing your race (e.g. banana). After two hours, you should eat a well-balanced meal which includes protein, fat and carbohydrate and eat plenty of protein throughout the week to help fuel your body for a complete recovery.



## Injury Prevention

Cycling places heavy demands upon your body, requiring muscular and soft tissue conditioning and strengthening of ligaments and tendons. These structures hold our body together, whilst the large muscles (quads, hamstrings, calves) make us move. When these large muscles become tired, over-worked or tight (through training) then we develop problems which can lead to injury. If you are a member of a gym speak to a gym instructor or personal trainer who can help you with a programme for upper body including your lower back and core stability to compliment your cycle training.

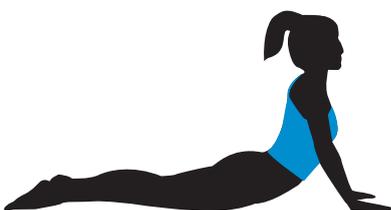
## Stretching

The benefits of stretching go much further than just how freely your legs go round. A regular stretching routine will not only benefit muscles, but also help tendons and ligaments work more efficiently.

Before you cycle, do some 'dynamic movements' to warm up the muscles and take your joints through the full range of motion and improve your soft tissue extensibility. You can create your own dynamic warm up incorporating hip swings, leg swings, squats and lunges, with gentle, smooth movements at first so as not to make any sudden aggressive movements. The time to do your static stretching is after your cycle, when you can stretch (without straining) calves, quads, hamstrings and glutes (as a minimum) holding each stretch for approx. 20-30 seconds.

The whole stretching process should not last more than 10-15 minutes and you will notice quite a bit of difference in how flexible you are after performing these consistently for 2-3 weeks.

## 4 Key Stretches



**Lumbar extensions**



**Calf stretch**



**Standing Quad Stretch**



**Hamstring**



## Managing an injury

Should you be unfortunate enough to become injured then stop training immediately and please consult a medical professional for advice.

Alleviate any inflammation by icing the area straight away and resting. Eat foods with anti-inflammatory properties such as garlic, green tea, dark berries and dark chocolate! Ensuring you eat a healthy well-balanced diet, with protein to encourage muscle and tissue repair and plenty of nutrient dense foods such as fruit and vegetables will also aid your general recovery - vitamins and minerals help support collagen formation, enhance immune cell function and promote wound healing.

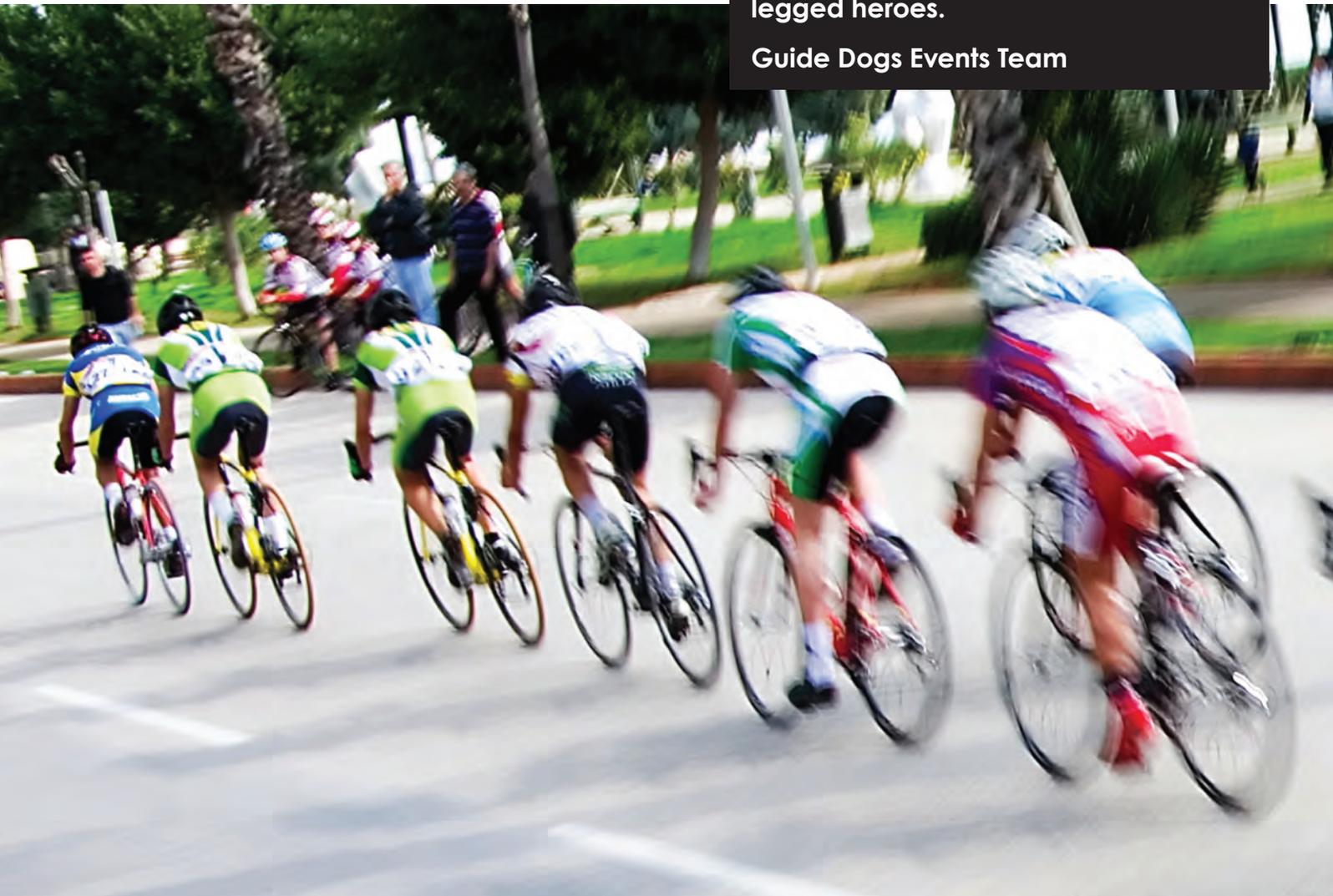
## Good Luck!

We hope that you enjoy your challenge and with the help of the guide and training programme will see and feel a difference to your health, fitness and well being. Hopefully you will have achieved some personal goals and may be thinking about your next race already! Guide Dogs have lots of different events throughout the year, whether you're looking to improve your cycling time or would like to try a new challenge such as swimming, triathlon or our unique Coniston Challenge, go to

[www.guidedogs.org.uk/events](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/events)

Thank you for supporting our four legged heroes.

Guide Dogs Events Team





## Training Programmes

### Week 1 - Getting Started

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors
Wed	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Speak to your gym instructor who will be able to provide you with a programme. Stretch afterwards.
Thurs	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour with friends or in a Club
Fri	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 25% of the event distance on a moderately undulating course. Get familiar with your bike and assess your seat position and posture.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)

### Week 2 - Conditioning and Building

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors
Wed	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Row for 10 minutes to warm up, followed by 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Stretch fully afterwards.
Thurs	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour with friends or in a Club
Fri	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 25% of the event distance on a moderately undulating course. Get familiar with your bike and assess your seat position and posture.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)



**Week 3 - Conditioning and Building**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Training Notes</b>
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 4 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 2 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time.
Wed	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Row for 10 minutes to warm up, followed by 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Stretch fully afterwards.
Thurs	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour with friends or in a Club
Fri	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 30% of the event distance on a moderately undulating course. Get familiar with your bike and assess your seat position and posture.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)





### Week 4 - Building

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 6 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 2 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Speak to your gym instructor who will be able to provide you with a programme.
Thurs	Bike	Cycle hard for 1 hour with friends or in a Club
Fri	Strength & Conditioning (gym)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 40% of the event distance on a moderately undulating course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)

### Week 5 - Easy week

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 4 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 2 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Speak to your gym instructor who will be able to provide you with a programme.
Thurs	Bike	Cycle easy 1 hour with friends (or in a Club)
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 30% of the event distance on an undulating course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 30 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)



**Week 6 - Increase volume and intensity**

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 6 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 2 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Speak to your gym instructor who will be able to provide you with a programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 3 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 50% of the event distance on a hilly course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)


**Week 7**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Training Notes</b>
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 6 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 1 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 3 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 50% of the event distance on a hilly course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 60 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)


**Week 8**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Training Notes</b>
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 1 hour, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 6 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 1 minute recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 4 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 60% of the event distance on a hilly course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 60 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)



**Week 9**

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 90 mins, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 20 minutes, perform 8 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 30 seconds recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 5 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 65% of the event distance on a hilly course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 60 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)



**Week 10**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Training Notes</b>
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 90 mins on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 25 minutes, perform 10 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 30 seconds recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 5 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 65-70% of the event distance on a hilly course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 60 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)


**Week 11 - Taper**

	<b>Training</b>	<b>Training Notes</b>
Mon	REST	Check your kit for the week ahead including tyre pressure, puncture repair kit, helmet, glasses, gloves and water bottle
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 45 mins, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Warm up for 10 minutes, perform 4 x 1 minute 'sprint' intervals followed by 30 seconds recovery, ride @ 90 rpm for remaining time. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike (Hills)	Find a route where you can warm up on the bike on flat terrain for approx 20 mins, followed by a hard hill (approx 1-2 minute climb), turn round and cycle down the hill to recover, and then ascend the hill again, repeat 3 times, warm down by cycling for a further 20 minutes on the flat.
Fri	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Repeat Wednesday's resistance and core session
Sat	Bike (Endurance)	Cycle 30-40% of the event distance on an undulating course.
Sun	Bike	Complete endurance ride if missed otherwise ride for 45 minutes with a high cadence (85-90 rpm)



**Week 12 - Race week**

Training		Training Notes
Mon	REST	Rest thoroughly and start planning for the weekend ahead. Get your event kit organised, travel arrangements confirmed and fuel for the ride together with a thorough check of your bike.
Tues	Bike	Cycle for 30 mins, ideally in the morning either in the gym, on a turbo trainer or outdoors. Alternatively join a spin class at your local gym or leisure centre.
Wed	Cross Training (gym or at home)	Perform 6-8 resistance exercises (machine or body weight) to strengthen upper body (and lower back) and core. Increase the resistance and difficulty of your exercises or speak to your gym instructor to refresh your programme.
Thurs	Bike	45 mins light spin to keep your legs moving but no heavy work
Fri	REST	REST
Sat	REST / Spin	Some cyclists like to go for a light ride/high cadence the day before - depending on how you're feeling - limit to 20 minutes
<b>Sun</b>	<b>RACE DAY</b>	<b>Enjoy!</b>



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