

## **TRAINING TIPS**

**By Brett Aitken – Olympic Gold Medallist**

*Note these Training Tips are designed for long distance on road riding, but can be adapted to suit your training needs for the Dirty Weekend.*

The challenges of riding over 100km are destined to test some riders to their physical and mental limitations if you aren't ready for it. It will therefore help if you go into the ride expecting tough conditions but prepared and confident to overcome these challenges that will consist of a combination of distance, hilly terrain, wind and heat.

By following some of these guidelines and tips we hope your ride will be both successful, enjoyable and a very memorable one.

Unlike the Professional cyclist, many of us don't have 8 hours a day to train for a long distance cycling event. This makes it more important to get in a training programme that consists of a structure of both higher intensity and long endurance sessions.

For most people a normal working week is from Monday to Friday and the available hours for training are normally restricted. It is therefore a good idea to do the higher intensity sessions on two of these days that are spaced apart from the others to promote recovery. For example Tuesday and Thursday might be good days to do hard training sessions while Monday, Wednesday and Friday may be a short light recovery ride of 30 minutes to one hour.

### **What type of hard training should I do?**

The best type of hard training to get fast improvements should consist of some short interval training efforts that can be done out on the road or on an indoor trainer. These may include up to 4 or 5 intervals that last about 5 minutes. On a Perceived Exertion Level (PER) of 1 to 10 with 1 being very easy and 10 being extremely hard the PER level should be around 8 or 9. Have a short 5 to 10 minute recovery between each interval and then go again. With a 15 to 20 minute warm-up the whole session should only take 60 to 90 minutes but it will be the equivalent of going out and doing a 3 to 4 hour steady road ride.

### **What about endurance rides?**

If you've got a bit more time on the weekends then this is a good time to do some steady long rides. Aim to do a gradual progression and build up in training in the weeks leading up to it. Each week add about 10km in distance to your previous week's long ride. By about two weeks out from the big ride you should be able to complete about two 80km rides in a row or a single 100km ride on the weekend. Try and include some tough climbs in your training rides as well.

### **Simulate Ride Day**

If this is your first big ride it may be worth going through a ride simulation day where you do everything you expect to do on the day. This includes things such as preparing food, equipment, clothing, drinks and actually doing the ride. Conditions will always be different on the day but experience and preparation can make your ride all the more successful if you have learned from previous mistakes.

### **Nutrition**

During training your nutritional habits play a huge part in how energized you feel on a daily basis. High intensity efforts deplete your carbohydrate stores and break down muscle while the long endurance rides will help you burn off some unwanted fat. Knowing this you should plan ahead your meals with the next day's training in mind. If you have a harder day coming up, then in the previous 24 hours try keeping your carbohydrate sources of food at a higher level (60-70% of daily calories).

If you have a recovery day coming up and have just completed a hard day where you might need some muscle repair then raise your protein intake to about 50% of that day's total calorie intake. Carbohydrate sources include pasta, cereals, bread, rice etc. and protein sources include meat, fish, eggs, milk etc.

### **Carbohydrate loading before the event**

In the week leading up to the event it is important that you keep your training light and easy. A light easy roll is better than no training at all. The movement will promote blood flow to the muscles for recovery while keeping them supple and feeling better and better each day. If you combine this with an increase in carbohydrate meals to 75% of daily calories for the last 4 days before the event then you will be fully energized going into the day of the ride.

The effect of carbo loading has a dual benefit as well by pre-hydrating your body with precious water and therefore reducing possible dehydration on the day. It does this because the body stores 2.7 grams of water for every 1 gram of carbohydrate (glycogen) stored. Don't be alarmed if your weight goes up during this carbo loading period, as it is purely water retention.

### **Eating and Drinking on the day**

Don't do anything drastically different to what you would normally do when it comes to your pre event meal but try and finish a couple of hours before the start. The last thing you want is an upset stomach because you tried something different to what you'd normally do. If you've loaded up well your body should be stored with plenty of energy for the ride but you will need to keep topping it up throughout the ride with foods that are high in glucose and sugars. Fruit bars, cakes, muesli bars, bananas, jam sandwiches and even a bit of chocolate are all good sources of energy during a ride.

Hydration will be crucial and the best way to tackle this is by drinking glucose polymer sports drinks throughout the ride. They also act as another source of energy. If it's a really hot day start drinking 150 to 250ml every 15 minutes starting a couple of hours out from the start of the event and continue this on throughout the ride.

### **Pace Yourself and Stick to the Plan**

In the excitement of the occasion it is very easy to go out much faster than you planned. Adrenaline and the competitor in you can sometimes take over wanting to keep up with the pack in front. Without a doubt you will probably surprise yourself in your capabilities but initially you should stick to your plan.

Fatigue and dehydration can come on very quickly when everything seemed completely fine only moments before so go steady early on then come home strong at the end if you feel good. That way you will finish on a real high and enjoy the ride a whole lot more. Have fun and good luck!

**FOR MORE TRAINING TIPS CHECK OUT [www.cycle2max.com](http://www.cycle2max.com)**

## **IS YOUR BIKE AS FIT AS YOU ARE?**

You have been training for a few weeks or months, and you are capable of riding many kilometres day after day. But what about your bike? Can it keep up with you? Not sure? Now may be a good time to give your bike a thorough check and make adjustments, or get your friendly bike shop to do it. If your bike is as well prepared as you, there will be less likelihood of mechanical problems occurring during your ride.

Here is a list of items that you need to check on your bike:

### **Bearings**

- Wheel bearings, front and rear
- Headset
- Bottom bracket
- Pedals

### **Drivetrain**

- Chain (has it stretched - i.e. worn - beyond its limit?)
- Chainrings
- Cogs
- If any one of the drivetrain components is suspect the other components need to be also carefully assessed. Worn drivetrain components can lead to poor gear shifting, or the chain slipping.
- Cranks and chainring bolts should be tight

### **Gears**

- Derailleurs
- Cables
- Replace any frayed cables, or any cracked or broken cable outers
- Shifters
- Gripshift style (twist) shifters need to be cleaned and lubricated from time to time

### **Brakes**

- Pads
- Not too worn, properly aligned (disc brake pads wear too)
- Pads (rim type or disc) not dragging
- Cables - as for gears above
- Hydraulic discs - should not be spongy

### **Wheels**

- Check for buckles, large or small
- Buckled wheels will also affect braking performance
- Check for broken or loose spokes

### **Tyres**

- Check you have sufficient tread
- Check the condition, ensuring there aren't perished sections
- Check for splits or cracks that will invite further punctures
- Remove debris, thorns or sharp elements that might lead to further punctures
- Protect your tubes with Slime liners or Slime sealant (there will be FREE Slime for all from the Dirty Weekend Village)

**Suspension**

Suspension performing correctly, without leaks, rattles, or backwards and forwards play

**Accessories**

Accessories should be tight, not broken, and without any missing fittings

**Spares and tools that you should not only bring with you but also carry with you on your bike (!) include:**

- Spare tubes of the correct size for your wheels and tyres
- Puncture repair kit and tyre levers
- Bicycle pump
- Basic tools (Phillips head and flat screwdrivers, Allen keys, spanners, etc) and / or a multi-tool Discuss with your bike store about your need for any special tools or spare parts specific to your bike
- As this is a longer duration endurance event and in a reasonably remote location, ensure you have adequate spares and tools to be self sufficient as specific replacement parts may not be available on site.