

training plan...



Who should be using this training plan?

This training plan has been designed to help less experienced cyclists to prepare for your Take Action Challenge. If you haven't ridden a bike for some time, or maybe you already ride socially but need some focus then this is the plan for you – it is aimed at those folk that are aiming to ride and not race the route! It is assumed that you are generally active, in good health and of at least average fitness but as with all new fitness regimes it is recommended that you talk to your GP before embarking on this training plan. We hope that this plan will help you complete the challenge and enjoy your day!

General Training Tips

Before we describe the training plan there are a few things to mention:

- Always increase your cycling mileage and intensity gradually to prevent injury! If you join the training plan with less than 16 weeks until the event, **do** start with Week 1 and 2 and build up slowly! If you miss a ride – please don't worry. No one will do every ride – despite all your planning and preparation sometimes, things just happen!
- This is an endurance ride – you need to be developing your aerobic endurance first and foremost. Therefore, it is better if you train at steady, comfortable pace that you can maintain rather than racing flat out for an hour and not being able to carry on or complete the next ride. When training, choose a gear that you can comfortably turn at around 80-90 rpm (revolutions per minute). This is called your cadence. You can check your cadence by holding your hand above your knee and seeing how many times your knee hits your hand in 10 seconds and then multiplying by 6 or check your cadence on an exercise bike at the gym.
- Ride smartly and safely! Plan your rides around quiet roads but even on a country lane you have to be alert at all times. Get confident away from busy junctions before you get too adventurous and ride defensively at all times. Try to cycle with a friend and it is wise to carry a mobile phone and some money for emergencies. Wear appropriate clothing and always wear a helmet!
- Get into the habit of stretching well after your rides – this will enhance your recovery and help you to remain injury free. Your local gym will be able to provide professional advice on the sort of stretches you should do and how to do them properly.
- Always carry a snack in your back pocket - maybe a banana, a fruit cereal bar, or a sports specific energy bar. Have at least one drinks bottle and keep hydrated throughout your training rides. Carry two spare inner tubes, tyre levers and a pump. That's it! You are ready to go.

Your Training Plan

The training plan is divided into 4 blocks of 4 weeks. Every 4th week has a smaller mileage than the previous weeks. This is to allow your body (and mind!) to recover a bit from all the hard work you are doing – it will also mean that you can plan to spend more time with the family on these weekends! You should feel stronger the week after a recovery week and ready to take on the challenge of the next 4 weeks.

Your training plan consists of 3 rides in the week plus one or two long rides at the weekend. The 3 working week rides should be 45 minutes – 1 hr initially, building to 1 – 1 hr 30 minutes towards the end of the plan (depending on your fitness and ability). One or two of these sessions could be a spin class or time spent on an exercise bike at a gym. Some of the longer rides are marked with an H – this means that you should pick a route that has some hills.

The first four weeks... Is all about adaptation – your body adapting to being on a bike and your mind working out the best way of fitting in your training sessions. This is also the time to be finding some routes.

Take some time in the first couple of weeks to work out two 25-mile routes, one which is quite flat and another that has some hills – these key routes can form the basis of your training routes and will become good friends and powerful allies.

The second four weeks... By week 5 you are used to your bike, you have your gear and your routine, and your friends all know what you are trying to do. Now is the time to increase the distance of your mid week rides. If you have been riding one way to work why not try riding to and from work, or why not take a longer route home, as the days get longer. Use your long rides to practice your nutrition strategy. On the day of the ride there will be a feed station every 20 miles or so – try and replicate this on your training rides – will you need something in between feed stations? Find out what works for you! Practice drinking comfortably while on the move (practice on a quiet road) – it is important that you keep hydrated while you are riding.

The third four weeks... In the third block of training you should introduce an additional ride probably on the Saturday. These extra rides are relatively short probably taking 1 hr – 1 hr 30 minutes. Use these rides to address your weaknesses. If you find you have no power going up hills then why not find a hill and climb it 3 – 5 times before returning home – or you could even try one of the hills on the Castle Ride! (If you ride hills on a Saturday then ensure your Sunday ride is relatively flat). If you would like to go faster then use these rides to work on speed. Warm up well then spend 15 minutes cycling as fast as you safely can. Finish the ride at your steady pace. Each week you could increase the time you spend cycling fast. But don't forget that you are a responsible road user – safety first at all times.

The final four weeks... Nearly there now! In the last four weeks, the Saturday ride increases. Having a longer Saturday ride followed by a long Sunday ride will develop further your muscular endurance. And in the last week prior to your ride just ride as you feel – ride at least 3 short rides but keep them easy. You are ready! Have a great ride!

How can I do it? – I don't have the time!

For you to complete this training plan, it has to fit comfortably into your lifestyle. This need not be as difficult as it may seem. One of the most successful ways to incorporate regular cycling into your life is to cycle to and from work or if this is too great a distance what about driving halfway and cycling the rest. If you can't get out on your bike do make full use of spin classes or use an exercise bike at the gym. Use your bike to run errands – make it your preferred form of transport! Once you have your clothing and bike gear in place getting on your bike will take no more time than starting your car.

But before you start!

A comfortable and efficient riding position is very important if you are to complete both the training and the challenge. So, the first port of call is your local bike shop – ask a professional to look at your bike set up and make any necessary adjustments. While you are there you should get your bike serviced and grab a couple of inner tubes and tyre levers.

Week	Weekly Rides (miles)			Saturday Ride (miles)	Sunday Ride (miles)
1	10	10	10		20
2	10	10	10		25
3	10	10	10		30
4	10	10	10		25
5	15	15	15		35
6	15	15	15		40 H
7	15	15	15		45
8	10	10	10		25
9	15	15	15	15	50
10	15	15	15	15	55 H
11	15	15	15	15	60
12	10	10	10		25
13	15	15	15	20	65
14	15	15	15	20	70 H
15	15	15	15	20	75
16	10	10	10		Ride Day