

Week number	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Rest + core	60 minutes cycle to include 4 x 8 minutes @ steady effort with 2 mins easy spin recovery. Regular 80-90 cadence	Core & strength work + optional 30-45 minute cross training easy effort	45 minutes easy, before breakfast is ideal if possible.	REST	50-60 minutes with 3 x 10 minutes continuous hills just above steady effort with 2-3 minute easy recovery.	1 hour 40 mins easy
2	Rest + core	60 minutes with final 40 mins to include 2 x 15 mins at steady effort with 5 mins easy spin recovery.	Core & strength work + optional 30-45 minute cross training easy effort	45 minutes easy, before breakfast is ideal if possible.	REST	60 minute ride, 20 minutes easy, 20 at bit harder, 20 a bit harder	1 hour 50 mins easy over a rolling route, up hills giving a slightly harder effort
3	Rest + core	60 minutes with final 40 mins to include 2 x 15 mins at steady with 5 mins easy spin recovery.	Core & strength work + optional 30-45 minute cross training easy effort	45 minutes easy, before breakfast is ideal if possible.	REST	60 minutes with the middle 25 minutes just above steady effort	2 hours easy with the final 45 steady effort working a big gear including rolling hills if possible
4	Rest + core	45 minutes with 3 x 8 mins steady effort with 2 minutes easy recovery.	Core & strength work	45 minutes with 5 x 4 minutes at comfortably hard effort with 90s spin recovery.	REST	40 minutes easy	Ideal weekend for 30km cycle or group ride. If not 1 hours 30-45 minutes easy with the final 45 steady

Big Blue Bike Ride 40-mile plan



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5	Rest + core	60–70-minute cycle within this: 6 mins, 5 mins, 4 mins, 3 mins, 2 mins, 1 min efforts- as the time gets less, increase the effort. Take 90 seconds easy recovery between each effort.	Core & strength work + optional 30–45-minute cross training easy effort	45-60 minutes with the final 20-30 working a 'big gear'.	REST	60 minutes, easy effort on a flat route	2 hours 15 minutes to include 3 x 10 mins comfortably hard effort in the final 45 minutes with 5 mins easy between each effort.
6	Rest + core	75 minutes ideally pre-breakfast with final 20- 30 in a big gear zone easy-steady effort	Core & strength work + optional 30-45 minute cross training easy effort	60-70 minute cycle with 8x3 minutes of efforts. Set 1,3,5,7 at a steady effort and sets 2,4,6,8 at a slightly harder effort. Take 75 seconds easy recovery between each effort	REST	60-70 minutes easy effort on a flat route	2 hours 30 minutes with the final 30 comfortably hard effort
7	Rest + core	70 minutes easy ideally pre breakfast.	Core & strength work + optional 30-45 minute cross training easy effort	60 minutes with 8 x 3 minutes comfortably hard effort from 75s easy recovery..	REST	45 minutes with final 25 mins comfortably hard effort.	1 hour 30 minutes easy zone 1
8	Rest + core	40 minutes with 3 x 6 mins steady to comfortably hard effort from 2 mins easy spin recovery	REST	45 minutes easy	REST	30-40 minute easy check bike.	EVENT DAY! GOOD LUCK!

Big Blue Bike Ride 40-mile plan



THE LONG RIDE

6/10 effort focusing on building your time on the bike and developing your aerobic capacity. Start off riding at 65% of Maximum heart rate (MHR) (conversational pace). Gradually this will build to 75% of MHR as you start to practice periods of ride effort riding. These rides improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to burn fat as its primary fuel source. They also prepare you physically and mentally for the task ahead. If your goal is a long sportive or ride of 65+ miles don't expect to necessarily get this far in your training, but the goal should be to achieve between 65-80% of the distance before ride day.

THRESHOLD RIDES / COMFORTABLY HARD EFFORT

The golden zone of training for endurance sports anaerobic threshold training should form a key element to your weekly training mix. Ridden at a 'controlled discomfort', of about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold rides or intervals improve your lactate threshold, your riding efficiency and aerobic capacity (your body's ability to utilise oxygen). All this helps to improve your endurance performance.

HILLS

Including hills in your training obviously help prepare you for hills in your race or sportive, teaching you how to control your cadence and measure your effort. Aside from this they also provide fantastic aerobic and strength gains. Different types of hill session develop your fitness in different ways. Including lots of climbs at 'threshold' effort in rides of 90+ minutes can be an excellent way of developing your anaerobic threshold and experiencing climbing at race effort. Shorter, harder, faster climbing between 45 seconds and 5 minutes can be used to develop power, strength and Vo2 max and can be included in shorter, dedicated sessions.

INTERVALS / HARD EFFORTS

Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve running timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used. Typical examples might be 10 x 2 minutes @ 9/10 effort with 60 secs recovery, 5 x 4 minutes of sustained hard riding in a big gear with 90 secs recovery, or short bursts of between 20 and 40 secs at maximum intensity.

RECOVERY, EASY OR STEADY RIDES

These sessions are your opportunity to practise your bike handling as well as getting in an additional aerobic session. Recovery rides are your easiest efforts of the week (alongside warming up and cool down). The goal is to work at 5-6/10 and finish with your body feeling better than when you started. Generally easy rides or efforts around interval sessions should be 6-7/10 in terms of effort, focusing on technique, consistency and remaining able to fully communicate. Carrying out some of this riding before breakfast helps to teach your body to metabolise stored fats as an energy source - very important for long races and sportives.

REST

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the cycling. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've got on the bike, find yourself thinking up excuses not to ride or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Around the actual rides themselves here are a few other considerations to throw into the training mix;

CADENCE

Cadence refers to the speed at how quickly you turn the pedals. It is important as it relates to the relative biomechanics efficiency of your cycling action. Many cycle computers and GPS devices allow you to monitor this. There is no golden rule for optimal cadence, its about finding a rhythm that works for you, adapting to your fitness, your terrain and your experience. A reasonable place to start though would be to aim for 90 revolutions per minute. Please note, this is optional depending on if you have a cycling computer.

POWER

Power, measured in watts, is a crucial factor in cycling performance. Simply put power is the force you apply through your pedals x by your cadence. It's not necessary for most cyclists to buy themselves an expensive power meter to monitor this but it is worth being aware of. In a long ride, just as in a marathon, if you go off too hard, applying too much force and muscular conduction you are liable to see your muscles fatigue too quickly and burn too much stored glycogen. Practice riding in a big gear in training occasionally, at a lower cadence to feel that burn!

GEARING

Your gears are your friends. Use them to control your cadence and power by being aware of your terrain, fatigue level, environmental conditions etc to control your effort. Try to maintain a consistent level of effort and keep a good cadence, but accept you will be working harder uphill. Be in the right gear and take on the hill patiently sitting for as long as possible and getting out of the saddle for short periods to keep cadence high.

