

Cycling Fitness Guide

Cycling, fitness and nutrition suggestions to help you prepare for a leisurely to challenging cycle with Exodus, the market leader in cycling holidays.





Exodus Cycling Fitness Recommendations



Congratulations on booking or seriously considering an Exodus cycling holiday. Whether you are a seasoned cyclist or getting back on the saddle for the first time in a while, preparation will be the key to ensuring you make the most of your holiday. To help you we have put together a fitness plan which will give you guidance and suggestions to prepare you for your holiday. You don't have to follow this to complete one of our cycling holidays, but it will help you vary your training and give you lots of confidence when you set off on your trip. If you don't have time to complete all the sessions, or you adapt them to suit your needs, environment or time, that is absolutely fine. The basis for your training should just be getting out on your bike as much as you can so you feel comfortable and confident about riding the distances set out in the trip notes of your chosen holiday and feel excited about getting out and discovering a country by bike. If you are able to, cycling to work is a really good way of preparing as it means you don't have to find lots of extra time to fit in your training. Before embarking on any exercise routine you are advised to consult with your doctor. If you have a heart condition, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, joint or muscular issues, please seek professional medical and training advice before using this guide.

Preparation basics for all rides

Cardiovascular (CV) or Aerobic fitness exercise is needed to condition your heart and lungs and to build stamina for long days on the trails. If you already enjoy swimming, cycling, running or rowing then increasing your time or intensity in these activities will be great training. Your primary focus, however, should be getting out on your bike as much as possible. Progressively increase your time in the saddle, include more distance, intervals increasing your pace and cadence (the speed you rotate the pedal) and include some hills. It is important that you vary your riding, especially if you are taking on a harder ride, as terrain you cover on your holiday will vary.

The level you work at and the effort you make will depend on your existing cardiovascular fitness and the grade of your chosen cycling holiday. We have put together 3 fitness training plans based on your current level of fitness and our cycling grades:

LEVEL 1 PLAN is for our Leisurely and Moderate rides (grades A, A/B and B).

LEVEL 2 PLAN is for our Moderate and Moderate to Challenging rides (grades B/C and C).

LEVEL 3 PLAN is for Challenging to Tough and Tough rides (grades C/D and D).

Easier rides will require less effort and preparation while a tougher ride will require you to push harder in your preparation. We have included a self-assessment chart on the following page which will help you determine if you are putting in the required amount of effort. In each plan the weeks progress to include more volume and intensity so you can gradually build up fitness.

It is also advisable to train in similar kit to that which you will use on your holiday. On all our cycling holidays you can take your own pedals and saddle with you, so if you intend to ride in clip in shoes then do your training in them also. If you are happy cycling on flat pedals then make sure you are cycling in shoes with quite a stiff sole and which you are happy being in for several hours at a time. Spend your training hours trying out different shorts - see if you prefer cycling in padded cycling shorts or not, and if you are going to a colder climate try out different layering - a wicking t-shirt and a windproof top maybe adequate for some while others may require more. Essentially, spend time getting used to how you feel on a bike and what enhances your comfort, this will all help in making your trip more enjoyable.



Self-assess your cardio effort and how you should feel

Exertion Level

You will feel this when:

Lifestyle activity

You are moving but can easily carry on a conversation. Normal Breathing

STRETCHING or gentle walking

Moderate light activity

You are being active but feel like you can maintain for hours. Comfortable breathing and conversation

WARMING UP - effort required for all levels.

LEVEL 1 Long rides on the flat, down hill

LEVEL 2 Downhill sections

LEVEL 3 Downhill sections

Moderate Activity

Deeper breathing
Pausing in conversation.
Light sweat

LEVEL 1 Long rides on slight gradients

LEVEL 2 Long Rides

LEVEL 3 Long Rides

Fairly Hard activity

You are putting in plenty of effort. Breathing heavy. Conversation very broken. Sweat very noticeable

LEVEL 1 Spinning class or riding up hill

LEVEL 2 Spinning, interval efforts and steep gradients

LEVEL 3 Spinning, tough hills

Vigorous Effort

Short of breath, muscles are burning, speaking difficult. Can't maintain intensity. Sweating heavily.

LEVEL 2 Very steep inclines, not maintainable for very long

LEVEL 3 Very steep gradients (10%+), you can push through but it hurts!

Warm-up and Cool down

Remember to do 5-10 minutes of any easy cardio exercise to raise your pulse slowly before your main exercise session. This gets the blood flowing to your muscles so your body will not be shocked with too much work too soon. At the end of your session slow down your heart rate by gradually decreasing the speed and intensity to the point where your breathing returns to normal. Then perform stretches.

Strength Exercises

These will help prepare the main muscles used whilst cycling. On a bike your core, legs and glutes (bottom muscles) will be working the hardest. Simple body weight exercises can help strengthen your legs, core, back and glutes helping you to maintain a better riding position on the bike, which will make you more comfortable for longer. The strength programme progresses in difficulty like the training plan, so if you are following LEVEL 3 of the training plan but the LEVEL 3 strength exercises are too challenging then you can take exercises from the other plan. There are options to modify them to make them easier or harder depending on your ability. Aim to keep the exercises controlled and steady. Try to complete the recommended number of repetitions followed by a 1-2 minute rest before moving onto another set of repetitions of the same or different exercise. For all the strength exercises please take care not to flex the spine or round the shoulders. Maintain good posture by keeping your eyes focused on the horizon, shoulders back and chin and chest proud. Many of the exercises specifically work on strengthening the core muscles, however, hold your core strong to help you maintain your posture during the other exercises.

Stretches

Stretches help to minimise injury and encourage flexibility which will help you complete exercises more comfortably. We have included a set of stretches that will prepare you for this plan and we recommend you carry these out after your warm-up before you exercise and after you cool down.

Rest, Recovery and Tapering

It is critical to get enough rest during your training so your muscles can recover and adapt, helping to improve your overall fitness. Rest days have been built into the plan, but if you are feeling particularly fatigued during any particular session or day then modify your programme to suit. Five to seven days before your holiday, taper your training by reducing the length and intensity of your exercise to minimum level. This reduction and rest allows your body to recover and re-energise for your actual trip. This period of rest is important to ensure you are in the best possible shape for your ride.

Lifestyle Fitness

Add to your preparation with everyday activities that will help condition your legs, core and back. Ignore the lift and take the stairs instead. Cycle to and from work if you can rather than taking public transport, or walk the last part of your journey carrying the groceries. Carry out the housework or gardening with more intensity. Remember to always bend your knees and not flex your lower back too much.

LEVEL 1 PLAN

Leisurely & Moderate Rides

USE THIS if you do not have a regular exercise routine but feel comfortable cycling for 60 minutes

Suitable for Grade A or B **LEISURELY** or **MODERATE** rides eg: Cuban Highlights Ride (trip code: MAC)



- ▶ Aim is to prepare you for 2-4 hour rides at a comfortable pace.
- ▶ The majority of your training will be done at a moderate intensity (see the self-assessment table) where you can hold a conversation and keep going for a good few hours.
- ▶ **Cycle outside as much as possible** - this is the best possible preparation for your trip and the more you can incorporate it into your lifestyle the more likely you are to do it - so consider the bike as your primary mode of transport.

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
ONE	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 40mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 90mins	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
TWO	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 45mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 2hr	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
THREE	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 40mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 2.5hr	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
FOUR	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60-80mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 60 mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 3hr	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
FIVE	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60-80mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 60mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 3.5hr	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
SIX	Strength exercises	Spinning or 60-80mins bike	Rest	Cycling indoor or out 60mins fairly hard plus strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 4hr	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run

You are now ready to enjoy your Exodus Adventure!

LEVEL 1 STRENGTH EXERCISES

Exercise

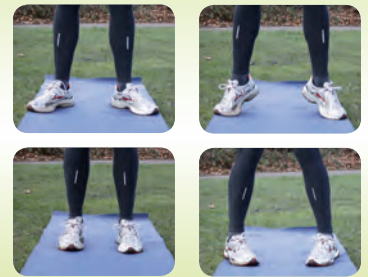
Options & Progressions

3 WAY CALF RAISES

Standing with your feet hip-width apart and toes pointing out, lift your heels up as high as they will go and then lower yourself down with control. Repeat 15 times then change your feet to pointing forward for another 15 repetitions, and then point the toes in for 15 repetitions.

Too easy? Carry weight or increase the number of repetitions to 20.

Too hard? Start with fewer repetitions and work up to 15.



PLANK WITH ARM/LEG LIFTS

Hold a plank position for 30 seconds, lifting either an arm or a leg off the floor every 5 seconds and alternating arms/legs. Make sure that you hold the plank straight throughout and do not let your hips sag.

Too easy? Extend the plank hold to 45 seconds or try lifting the opposite arm and leg at the same time.

Too hard? Drop to your knees for a half plank or hold the full plank but do not lift the arms/legs.



SKIPPING

Skip for up to 2 minutes using a skipping rope.

Too easy? Skip faster and/or for longer.

Too hard? Try jumping jacks (star jumps) instead of skipping.



PRESS UPS

Keep the body straight, and lower the chest to the floor with the elbows out to the side. Keep the core squeezed tight. Repeat 30 times.

Too easy? Do 50.

Too hard? Drop down onto your knees to finish the set.



SQUAT AND OVERHEAD PRESS

Feet slightly wider than hip width, sit back and lower your hips towards the floor, keeping your heels on the floor and a straight back. Push up through the whole foot as you stand up as tall as you can. Repeat 20 times.

Too easy? Hold dumb bells, a medicine ball or rucksack in your arms. As you squat hold it in front of you and then thrust overhead as you stand up tall.

Too hard? Don't go down quite as far.



SPLIT SQUATS

Stand with one foot in front of the other - keep the body long and strong (try not to crumple in the middle). Lower yourself down keeping most of your weight over your front leg, push up through the front foot to standing. Repeat 15 times for each leg.

Too easy? Carry a weight or increase the number of repetitions to 20 for each leg.

Too hard? Reduce the number of repetitions to 8 for each leg.

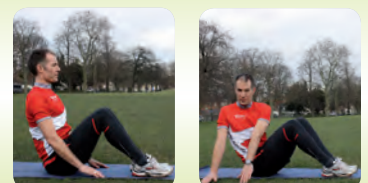


RUSSIAN TWIST

Sit on the ground, so you can feel your sit bones. Stay sitting up tall and rotate your body to one side touching both hands on the ground and then the other side. Repeat 20 times.

Too easy? Lift your feet off and balance on your sit bones keeping your posture strong and you can also add a weight around 5-10Kg.

Too hard? Do less repetitions.



LEVEL 2 PLAN

Challenging Rides

USE THIS if you are comfortable on your bike for 90mins-2hours, enjoy being active and regularly exercise (2-3times a week).

Suitable for Grade C **CHALLENGING** rides eg: Atlas Descent (trip code: MMA)



- ▶ Get used to being on your bike on back to back days and sitting in the saddle for extended amounts of time.
- ▶ Introduce some intensity into your sessions to boost your fitness and also prepare you for some of the tougher gradients on your trip.
- ▶ Your body is unlikely to be used to being on the move for extended periods of time, so try to incorporate as much movement as possible into your lifestyle - sit down for a minimum amount of time each day.

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
ONE	60min total - to include 10min moderate, 5min fairly hard. Repeat 3 times	15-30mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 90mins	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
TWO	60min total - to include 10min moderate, 5min fairly hard. Repeat 4 times	15-30mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 2hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
THREE	60min total - to include 5min moderate, 10min fairly hard. Repeat 4 times	20-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 2.5hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
FOUR	60min total - to include 5min moderate, 5min fairly hard. Repeat 6 times	20-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 3hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
FIVE	60min total - to include 10min fairly hard, 5min vigorous. Repeat 3 times	20-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 3.5hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
SIX	60min total - to include 10min fairly hard, 5min vigorous. Repeat 4 times	30-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 4hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
SEVEN	60min total - to include 5min vigorous, with 3 min moderate recoveries. Repeat 6 times	30-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 4.5hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run
EIGHT	60min total - to include 10min fairly hard, 5min vigorous. Repeat 3 times	30-40mins on bike plus strength exercises	Rest	Spinning or 60minute moderate cycling and strength exercises	Rest	Long Ride 5hrs	Optional cross training: 90minute walk, 40minute swim or 30minute run

LEVEL 2 STRENGTH EXERCISES

Exercise

Options & Progressions

OFFSET PRESS-UP

Similar to a normal press-up but changing your hand position. Variations include: point the hands to the left or the right, put one in front of the other, one out wide etc. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions, with 1-2 minutes rest in between each set.

Too easy? Do more repetitions or find more challenging combinations of hand positions.

Too hard? Keep the off-set hand position but down onto your knees.



SIDE STEP UP

Stand side-on to a bench, place the nearer foot onto the bench then step up onto it and lower down slowly with control. Try to land as quietly as possible. Keep a strong back and try not to push off the back foot. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions on each leg.

Too easy? Step up onto a higher bench or add weight e.g. dumbbells or a medicine ball or a rucksack.

Too hard? Do fewer repetitions or step up onto a lower step.



ROTATIONAL CRUNCH

Lie on your back, feet in the air with hip and knee at right angles. Sit up and rotate your elbow towards the opposite knee and return to middle and repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions each side.

Too easy? Do more repetitions!

Too hard? Don't sit up or rotate quite as far.



REVERSE LUNGE AND REACH

Start with feet together - step back with one foot into a reverse lunge and reach as far forward as you can and touch the floor with your hands, then step back to middle and change legs. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions on each leg.

Too easy? Reach further forward or reach out to the side.

Too hard? Just do the reverse lunge.

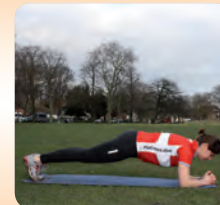


PLANK DOLPHINS

Do a plank on your forearms, holding a strong/straight core. Move your chin over your hands and then back to the start position. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 dips.

Too easy? Do more.

Too hard? Just hold a normal plank or put your knees on the floor.



BACK EXTENSIONS

Lie on your stomach, keep your feet on the floor and lift the upper body off - lift and lower smoothly and with control, no sudden movements. Keep your hands by your ears but not holding your head. Repeat 10 times.

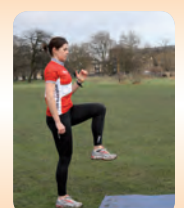
Too easy? Move your arms in front of you.

Too hard? Put your arms down by your side.



MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS / HIGH KNEE COMBO

Do 10 mountain climbers, in a hand plank position, drive one knee then the other towards the middle of the body, stand up and do 10 high knees then repeat the mountain climbers. This is a dynamic exercise, you should be moving as quickly as possible. Repeat 3 times.



LEVEL 3 PLAN

Tough Rides

USE THIS if you identify yourself as a cyclist (e.g. you're known to your friends as 'Mike the cyclist' for example). You want to be challenged, train regularly and push yourself.

Suitable for Grade D **TOUGH** rides eg: Lhasa to Kathmandu Ride (trip code: MCT)



- ▶ This 8 week programme is not a designed to take you from zero to hero - but will prepare you for your challenge as long as you have an established level of fitness.
- ▶ You should be out on your bike for two long rides at the weekend and a couple of sessions in the week.
- ▶ It is essential that you seek out steep gradients and challenge yourself on them - train hard, ride easy!

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
ONE	Rest	Cycling (15mins fairly hard + 5mins vigorous) with 5mins recovery in between. Repeat 2 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning or 60mins cycling intensity (30 minutes moderate activity)	Rest	Long Ride 2hr	Long Ride 3hr
TWO	Rest	Cycling (15mins moderate effort + 5mins fairly hard) with 5mins recovery in between. Repeat 2 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning or 60mins cycling intensity (20 minutes fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 2hr30	Long Ride 3hr30
THREE	Rest	Cycling (20mins moderate effort + 10mins fairly hard) with 5mins recovery in between. Repeat 2 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 20mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3hr	Long Ride 3hr30
FOUR	Rest	Cycling (20mins moderate + 10mins fairly hard) with 5mins recovery in between. Repeat 2 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 30mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3hr30	Long Ride 4hr
FIVE	Rest	Cycling (5mins moderate + 10mins fairly hard) with 2mins recovery in between. Repeat 3 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 40mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3hr	Long Ride 4hr
SIX	Rest	Cycling (5mins moderate + 10mins fairly hard) with 2mins recovery in between. Repeat 3 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 30mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3hr	Long Ride 4hr30
SEVEN	Rest	Cycling (5mins fairly hard / vigorous) with 2mins recovery in between. Repeat 6 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 45mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3.30hr	Long Ride 4hr
EIGHT	Rest	Cycling (5mins fairly hard / vigorous) with 2mins recovery in between. Repeat 6 times	Strength or Circuits session	Spinning / 60mins cycling (include 40mins fairly hard)	Rest	Long Ride 3hr	Long Ride 4hr

LEVEL 3 STRENGTH EXERCISES

Exercise

Options & Progressions

SINGLE LEG SQUATS

Standing on one leg, lower yourself onto a bench and then push back up again through the heel. Try not to collapse onto the bench; touch down lightly and then push up. Keep your heel pushed into the ground and your core muscles engaged. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions each leg.

Too easy? Do the squats free standing without a bench, or use a lower bench.

Too hard? Lower yourself down on one leg and stand up on two.



V-SITS

Lie down straight, legs extended and arms above your head. Lift your arms and legs towards each other at the same time as straight as you can then lower back down. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

Too easy? Hold the V position for 1-2 seconds before lowering the arms and legs.

Too hard? Lift your arms to your legs and hold them at the top.



LATERAL BURPEE (SQUAT-THRUST)

From a standing position, drop into a squat with your hands on the ground. Jump your feet back to a plank position then back to the squat position and jump up to standing. As you jump up, jump sideways to your left over a mat. Do another burpee, this time jumping sideways to your right at the end. Do as many burpees as you can alternating sides for 45 seconds and repeat for 3 sets.

Too easy? Add a press-up into the burpee from the plank position.

Too hard? Remove the lateral jump and start with just straight burpees.



PRESS UP TO SIDE PLANK

Complete a full press up and as you push up to the top, push into a side plank and hold then come back into a push up, and push up to the other side, the harder you push up the harder your core has to work. Repeat 3 - 5 times each side.

Too easy? Push up harder and faster.

Too hard? Just stick with the press ups.



SQUAT HOLD AND JUMP

Hold a squat with parallel thighs with strong posture for 5 seconds and jump up, landing with bent knees at the bottom of the squat, repeat 3 times for 1 min.

Too easy? Hold the squat for 10 seconds then jump.

Too hard? Do 15 seconds of squat jumps, 15 seconds hold, and repeat.



PLANK SUPER MAN

In a plank position on your forearms, lift opposite hand and leg off whilst maintaining a strong straight core - keep your hips down, steady yourself then change. Repeat 3 times.

Too easy? Hold for 10 seconds in each position.

Too hard? Lift one limb off at a time.





Stretches for all levels

- ▶ Stretching post-exercise while muscles are still warm can help increase flexibility and decrease the risk of injury.
- ▶ It also feels good, so don't be shy about stretching after a day on the trails.

- ▶ A pole is optional for balance.
- ▶ Hold stretch for 30 seconds, switch sides.
- ▶ Hold for up to 60 seconds for tighter areas.



KNEELING QUAD - HIP FLEX OR STRETCH

On one knee, drop forward towards the front knee. The idea is to stretch the quad and hip flexor: relax the hips as much as possible to allow this to happen. It may also help to reach the arm of the leg you're stretching up and over your head. Hold for 15-20 seconds and switch sides. Repeat 2-3 times.



LYING QUAD STRETCH

Lying on your front, grab hold of one ankle and squeeze the hip into the ground, lifting the knee off if you want to add more stretch. If you can't reach your foot use a towel looped around to hold on to it. Hold for 15-20 seconds and switch sides. Repeat 2-3 times.



LYING SPINAL ROTATION

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Stretch both arms outwards along the floor and slowly drop your knees to one side, taking the head in the opposite direction. Breathe into the stretch to release all tension from the back and neck, and only take your knees as far as you can before the shoulders start pulling off the ground. Rotate slowly to the opposite side and repeat for 8-10 rotations.



DOWNWARD DOG

An all-in-one stretch for the whole back line of the body. Push through the shoulders so your bottom is pushed back, creating an inverted "V" shape and the stretch can be felt through the back and hamstrings. Keep your hips high and your heels pushed down. Hold for 5-10 seconds and repeat 2-3 times.



CALF STRETCH

Slowly lean forward over your front leg, but keep your back knee straight and your heel flat on the floor. You should feel this stretch in the big muscle of your calf (gastrocnemius). If you then bend your back knee slightly (keeping the foot flat on the floor) the stretch should be felt lower down your calf (soleus). Hold for 15-20 seconds.



SHOULDER BLADE

On your back with legs bent, pull your shoulder blades together to create tension in the upper back area. (As you do this your chest should move upward.) Hold this controlled tension for 4 to 5 seconds and release.



SIDE BEND

With arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of the other arm. Keeping the knees slightly bent, gently pull your elbow behind your head as you bend from your hips to the side. Hold for 15-20 seconds.



LYING LEG RAISES

To stretch out the hamstring - either use a towel or your hands to hold the leg in position - under stretch but not so tight that it's shaking. Your upper body should remain on the floor with your head and chest relaxed. Hold the position for 15-20 seconds.



Good nutrition for cycle training

For endurance sports it is consistently advised that you should consume a diet relatively high in carbohydrates and hydrate sufficiently. The body turns carbohydrates into glycogen stored in the muscles and liver which is then used as energy when exercising. Your normal diet maybe sufficient to support low intensity exercise, however, as you progress to longer periods of training or include intervals or hills you will need to supplement your diet with additional complex carbohydrate to keep you going. There are different types of carbohydrates; sugary carbohydrates give an instant very short term burst of energy - this is useful for a quick burst before an intense bit of work. However, to prepare your body for endurance exercise, like the majority of the rides during your holiday, you need carbohydrates that offer a slow release of energy over a long period. Protein, good fats and a well-rounded, nutrient rich diet are also essential to keep hunger at bay and sustain you on the rides. Your specific nutritional needs will vary depending on gender, metabolism, health, as well as the pace, gradient and length of a ride. Below are some very general guidelines based on an average healthy individual.



Before exercise what to eat and when

Meals should ideally be eaten 2-4 hours before exercise. Pre-workout meal ideas with good carbohydrate and protein include: sandwiches with chicken, fish, cheese, egg, or peanut butter; jacket potato with beans, cheese, tuna, chicken; chunky soup with bread or brown rice; pasta with tomato based sauce and vegetables; chicken with rice; chicken and vegetable casserole with potatoes; salmon with veg. For breakfast eggs and toast or porridge with milk are good choices.

Snacks should be eaten 30 minutes before exercise. Good pre-exercise snacks include: fresh fruit; dried apricots, dates or raisins; smoothies; energy or nutrition bars; oatcakes with fruit.



During and after exercise

For moderate to high intensity exercise lasting more than an hour, consuming carbohydrates during exercise can help delay fatigue and prevent glycogen being depleted. Temporary hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) can occur after 2-3 hours of moderate exercise without carbohydrates. This could make you feel light headed and your muscles feel heavy. To help prevent this, top up your blood sugar with food or drink that is easy to digest and absorb such as: diluted fruit juice; bananas; raisins; energy bars, gels or beans; cereal bars; sports drinks.

After exercise try to eat and rehydrate as soon as possible and definitely have something within 15 to 20 minutes of finishing. Exercise burns glycogen and also breaks down muscle protein. Aim to increase your intake of protein while replenishing your glucose with more fast releasing carbohydrates. Suggestions include: fresh fruit with milk or yoghurt; sports bar; tuna or cheese sandwich; oat or rice cakes with jam and peanut butter; handful of nuts and dried fruits.

Hydration and fluid

Drinking two litres of water a day will prevent dehydration and keep your energy levels up. When you exercise, you should increase your fluid intake by an additional 0.5 to 1 litre for every hour of exercise. Alcohol does not contribute towards your fluid consumption and more than a modest amount of caffeine can also have a negative effect on hydration.

Warning: disclaimer

Programmes and plans described in this document may not be appropriate for everyone. All individuals, especially those with health concerns or are recovering from any injury should consult their physician before undertaking any of the activities suggested in this document. The author has taken great care in developing these plans. However, they are neither responsible nor liable for any harm or injury resulting from this programme or the exercises described herein.

Credits

Fitness plan written by Baz Moffat of Point2Fitness:
www.point2fitness.co.uk