Endurance Training Tips

from J. Michael Phillips

Training for long endurance rides is a big subject and there are volumes of info on the internet. It requires first building your base. We will assume that most of the people who will take an endurance challenge have already put in time on the bike to build their base. There is basically 8 weeks before we do the double metric, so this is where I will start which assumes people have their base miles in and have gone long a few times this season.

* Training consists of different types of efforts during a person's weekly training schedule.
* **Easy** - for recovery and cadence training. 1-3 hours easy pace (15-16 mph) try to hold a 90+ cadence.
* **Tempo** - Tempo could be considered the intensity of a typical brisk group ride, a pace line or a ride you might do on your own when you’re under time constraints and have to finish quickly, but you don’t want to go so hard that you blow up. Tempo level rides are considered Zone 3 in the 7-zone scale. Tempo ride would be 30 minute warmup, 30-120 minutes at tempo and 30 minute cool down. Tempo rides are important and build speed and power for the long haul.
* **Interval training** -Interval training is simply alternating short, intense bursts (1 -5 minutes) of intense activity with intervals (1-5 minutes) of less intense activity. start with a 20-to-30-minute warm up then do 5 to 10 sets of intervals, 3 minutes zone 3 or 4 intense effort and then 3 minutes of easy spin high cadence and repeat. finish with 30-minute cool down. You can do climbing intervals where you are in a hard gear, low cadence, and high power done either on the trainer or a short hill you can climb in 3-5 minutes. Optionally, you can do speed interval on the flat where you have high cadence and high power.
* **Endurance rides** - long ride of 3 hours or more at a moderate pace.
* **Recovery and rest days** are as important as training days. So do not neglect to rest and have days where you either do not ride or you ride at a very easy pace and only for short periods.
* I typically do 2 endurance rides of over 3 hours each week, climbing interval, a VO2 max interval, a tempo ride and an easy recovery ride and a recovery day.
* Nutrition and hydration are also important. 3-4 days before a long effort make sure you are hydrated. A couple of ways to know this are to weigh yourself each morning before the long effort and try to gain of 3 to 4 lbs of weight by drinking water and your urine should be typically clear and not dark yellow.
* Eat a high-quality, high protein meal 4 hours before the ride starts (400-600 calories). During the ride you should shoot for around 250-calories per hour and start this calorie intake within 15 minutes after the start and keep up with it during the ride. I use liquid nutrition for this typically, but you can do it with solid food or gels. Carbohydrates are important and the reason you want to start eating soon after the ride starts is that you store of carbs deplete quickly and need to be replenished consistently during the ride (an oversimplification).  Simple sugars from candy or soda are not good and can lead to a bad outcome. I use Hammer Nutrition products but there are many on the market. I always have a bottle on my bike that has 600-800 calories in it and a bottle with Heed (a sports mix). During the ride you should drink at least 1 bottle an hour and maybe a bit more if it is hot outside. This takes planning and everyone needs to have money with them for stops at stores to replenish or have Sag support along the route.
* Group strategy for getting a long ride done. First find a group that will ride at a speed you are comfortable with. This is not a race! It is an endurance ride, and it does not matter if you get it done in 5 hours or 10. Ride in a pace line (if you are comfortable with this). Pace line lead should change every 5 minutes (maybe less if the intensity is high). When riding in a pace line resist the urge to overdo it when you are leading. Ride within your abilities, others in the group might enjoy a slower pace to rest a bit and it is a long effort. Riding in a pace line will allow you to use about 30 percent less effort than riding at the same speed by yourself.

I hope this helps. It is an overly simplistic explanation but gives some subject matter for people to do more research.  Additionally, below are a couple of videos that will help you to train for longer rides. These are just a couple to start with and you are able to search for other training videos to expand your training routine.

The goal for any endurance event is to start your training early and to focus on your hydration and nutrition during the event.

**Training Videos**

[90 Minute Indoor Trainer Workout - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M45BSE6Qz3E)

[Indoor Cycling Workout | 60 Minute Endurance Intervals: Fitness Training - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QB69Pwl6GI8)

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