

Training (and Equipment and Nutrition) for Distance

- Mark Lowe

Long Distance Seminar, REI, 8 April 2014

- 1) **Goal: Keep it fun!** If it's not fun, don't do it! This should be challenging, but this should never feel like a chore!
- 2) **Year-round approach to training:**
 - a. You don't have to ride year round, but if possible try to complete 1-2 short rides per week during the winter months (Nov - Feb) to keep your leg strength in tact!
 - b. HR training vs. Power training: pros vs. cons
 - c. Keep your workouts aerobic! I recommend 70% Max HR training for *most* of your workouts:
 - i. $[0.70 \times (\text{Max HR} - \text{Min HR})] + \text{Min HR} = 70\% \text{ zone}$
 - ii. Example: $[0.70 \times (193 - 40)] + 40 = 147 \text{ bpm}$
 - iii. Some short high-intensity interval training in the down-season is okay!
 - d. Strength training: Ideally 2 strength workouts per week, to prevent muscular imbalances. Can also consider "muscular endurance workouts" on the bike for riders with limited time.
 - e. Core work (low back, abs, hips/pelvis)...**critical** for on-the-bike comfort!
- 3) **Your bike:**
 - a. Get a good bike fit!! Very important for getting your contact points (butt, feet, and hands), the so-called "show-stoppers," dialed in! Also critical for low back and neck comfort!
 - b. Comfort vs. aerodynamics. Comfort trumps aerodynamics, but aerodynamics DO matter!
 - c. Choice of material: Metal (aluminum, steel, titanium) vs. carbon
 - d. Wheels: Aerodynamics, weight, and durability.
 - e. Other variables:
 - i. Hydration: water bottles (how many) vs. Camelback?
 - ii. Lights for night riding (to see or to be seen)
 - iii. Fenders for rain/wet roads
 - iv. Computers
- 4) **Training:** the nitty-gritty. Bottom line, there are *many* different approaches and they probably all of their merits! Find a method that you enjoy!
 - a. High volume training. Only increase your time OR distance OR vertical feet climbed by 10-15% per week to prevent injury or burn-out, February to May.
 - b. Interval training: short episodes (60 seconds to 20 minutes) of high-intensity training, >85%-95% Max HR. High potential for burnout and should be reserved for < 1 month prior to high priority event, 1-2 times per week.
 - c. Examples:
 - i. Alternating 60 seconds on/off x 15-30 minutes.
 - ii. 5 min - 20 min intervals x 2-5 with 5-10 minutes recovery between sets

- d. RMCC ride calendar: very helpful for “progressive training.” The RMCC brevet calendar also fulfills this purpose for longer (>200 mile) events.
- e. Plan ahead, ideally several weeks to months ahead. Categorize your events based on importance (“A events” vs. “B events”). *Key point:* Use your B events as preparation for your A events!
- f. Event simulation: brevets vs. other timed events. The main idea here is to simulate (or even over-simulate) the sort of event that you are going to be riding.
 - i. Distance: need to feel comfortable with a ride that is at least 75%-80% as long as you’re “A-priority” ride
 - ii. Know your course! Cue sheet holders, consider uploading a GPS file into your computer.
 - iii. Hilly rides
 - iv. Night riding
 - v. Wet/rain riding: jacket, gloves, shoes/covers
 - vi. Altitude! Most riders need 2-4 weeks to acclimate to high altitude
 - vii. Heat/cold. Practice riding in similar conditions to help your body acclimate.
- g. Nutrition and Hydration—critical element!**
 - i. Solids vs. liquid calories (Hammer products, Cytomax,etc.): goal: 250-500 kcal per hour!
 - ii. Electrolytes and cramping
 - iii. H2O: how much vs. how little
- h. Recovery: just as important as training!
 - i. Concept of progressive overload and cyclic training.
 - ii. Mental recovery: down-time off of the bike.

5) A typical training schedule for me:

- a. Week-to-week
 - i. Monday: core work/recovery
 - ii. Tuesday: Muscular endurance (i.e., big gear) training (e.g., Lookout Mountain repeats x 2, 35-45 miles. Gym: leg workout.
 - iii. Wed: 20-25 mile spin
 - iv. Thursday: 30-45 miles “tempo” riding (70-80% Max HR)
 - v. Friday: core work/recovery
 - vi. Saturday: Event
 - vii. Sunday: post-event ride, typically 40-50% duration of Saturday ride. If Saturday’s ride is flat, will try to ride hills, visa versa.
- b. Month-to-month
 - i. For 4-6 weeks before my first “category A” event, I recommend 1 ride per week (Saturday), that is at least 75-80% the distance or time of your “A event.”
 - ii. Recovery: Place a recovery week the week before your big event to make sure you are fully recovered!