A COMPLETE BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO
SPORTIVE TRAINING

In partnership with...
AndyCookCycling

For beginner to pro

Guides for more sports: www.highfive.co.uk
Andy Cook Cycling is run by British Cycling qualified coaches. In the last 25 years they have trained and coached thousands of cyclists from absolute beginners to top level competitors, helping them improve their performance. A knowledgeable and adaptable approach makes it easy to develop your bike fitness. This training plan will build on your current fitness over a 12 week period and develop the key ingredients to get you to the finish on the big day.

We recommend that you can already ride for up to 1 hour before starting.

The right nutrition in training will help you along the way to a successful Sportive. Using sports nutrition correctly can help strengthen your immune system, improve your endurance performance, and contribute to muscle growth. Carbohydrate is the fuel that your body uses for energy when exercising.

Although your body has a limited store of carbohydrate, it’s normally sufficient for exercising up to 90 minutes. So for shorter training sessions, you only need to take on fluids with electrolytes to remain HYDRATED. A zero calorie electrolyte drink like High5 ZERO enhances hydration and can help you control your calorie intake.
**WEEK 1**

**MONDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Ride at steady pace, without getting out of breath. Pedal at 80-85 rpm.
Work out a flatish route, to use over next few rides. Maintain a steady pedalling rhythm.

**TUESDAY - REST DAY**
Rest.

**WEDNESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Steady ride, still without getting out of breath. Pedal at 85-90 rpm.
Change to a lower gear, if necessary to maintain rpm. Treat your pedals like a treadle, not like a treadmill. Use the same route.

**THURSDAY - REST DAY**
Try a few gentle stretching exercises.

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**
Rest.

**SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
A steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath.
Add a few gentle climbs to the route so as to introduce some variety.

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Another steady paced ride, as Saturday. Pedal at 90-95rpm.
Ride with a friend, so that you can chat while riding. Try to involve someone of similar ability and ride together, not race.

**WEEK 2**

**MONDAY - REST DAY**
Stretching exercises.
Clean and check your bike.

**TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Ride at steady pace. You should be able to chat while riding. Don’t get out of breath. Turn the pedals at 90-95 rpm.
Consider how your riding compares with last week.

**WEDNESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Warm up at the steady pace of 90-95 rpm for 20mins.
Then ride briskly for 5mins at 110rpm. Ease off and ride for 10mins at 80 rpm.
As a warm down ride at 90rpm for a further 20mins.
The brisk efforts will help anaerobic fitness. Maintain the supple pedalling of the previous sessions.

**THURSDAY - REST DAY**
Try a few gentle stretching exercises.

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**
Rest.

**SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
A steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath.
Try to exert yourself a few times so as to feel levels of effort.

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS**
Another steady paced ride at 90-95rpm but in company.
Ride with a friend and chat as you go along. This will check your breathing. Remember to ride together and not race each other.

**WEEK 3**

**MONDAY - REST DAY**
Stretching exercises.

**TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Steady paced ride. Pedal at 90-95rpm - try not to get out of breath.
Check that you are recovering after each training session.

**WEDNESDAY - REST DAY**
Rest.

**THURSDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**
Steady ride for 20mins at 90-95 rpm to warm up. Then 5mins brisk ride at 110rpm. Ease off and ride for 10mins at 80 rpm.
As a warm down with 20mins ride at 90 rpm.
Ensure rest and recovery after this ride.

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**
Stretching exercises.
Give some thought to energy drinks and food; try different brands both before and on your rides in the next few weeks.

**SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS**
A steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath while maintaining 90-95rpm.
Add a few gentle climbs to the route so as to introduce some variety.

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 1.5 - 2 HRS**
A steady ride in company - try not to get out of breath. Pedal @90-95rpm.
As it is more enjoyable to ride in company, ride with a friend but also consider joining a cycling club or group.

**NUTRITION TIP:**

Your rides are now starting to get longer and you may find low energy levels towards the end of your ride. When exercising for longer, you should focus on HYDRATION and ENERGY. Your body’s limited store of carbohydrate can be depleted after 90 to 120 minutes and as a result your energy levels will drop. Your body is telling you that it needs more carbohydrate to maintain your pace.

Fueling your body with a drink like High5 EnergySource or using High5 EnergyGel will help maintain your performance and provide the extra carbohydrate you need for longer sessions. You will also not feel so tired the following day.
WEEK 4

MONDAY - REST DAY
Stretching exercises
Easy week. Stretching. Try joining a yoga, pilates or similar class

TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR
Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath. Pedalling at 90-95rpm
Ride steadily without hard efforts. Relax and enjoy. Consider a new route

WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
Rest

THURSDAY - CYCLING 1 HR
Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath. Pedal at 90-95rpm
Just relax and enjoy a steady pace

FRIDAY - REST DAY
Stretching exercises

SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS
Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath. Pedal at 90-95rpm

SUNDAY - CYCLING 2 HRS
A steady paced ride with company - trying to not get out of breath. Pedaling at 90-95rpm.
Steady paced ride at your speed. Ride with friends or group but don’t try to match other peoples speed it faster than you

NUTRITION TIP:
It is time to consider your rest and recovery routine. Now that you are riding further it is important to re-fuel immediately after your ride, use a recovery drink like Protein Recovery, or a meal with both protein and carbohydrate. High quality whey protein helps grow and maintain muscle mass. Aim to have this as soon as you finish your training for maximum effect. This is where a recovery drink that mixes quickly comes in useful. If you are having a recovery drink then have a balanced meal one to two hours after your ride.

WEEK 5

MONDAY - REST DAY
Stretching exercises

TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR
Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath. Pedal at 90-95rpm
Steady pace will need to add a few miles on to training route as will be increasing speed slightly from this week

WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
Rest

THURSDAY - CYCLING 1 HR
Warm up for 20mins at steady pace of 90-95 rpm, before - 5 mins brisk at 110rpm, ease off for 10mins at 80rpm - then another 5mins brisk at 110 rpm. End ride with warm down for 20 mins at steady pace of 90 rpm.
Try and keep the brisk efforts constant. Rest and recovery drink afterwards

FRIDAY - REST DAY
Rest

SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS
Steady paced ride at 95-100 rpm, incorporating several efforts on the hills – keeping pedalling over the top. Concentrate on maintaining smooth cadence both up hill and over the top. Recovery food and drink

SUNDAY - CYCLING 2 - 2.5 HRS
Ride with friends or club. Keep pedalling rhythm smooth and constant. Make sure that you rest, drink and eat so as to re-fuel after this ride. For more efficient riding consider your pedalling action. To maintain a good cadence, treat your pedals like a treadle operated machine. With practice this will involve the ankles so as to create a smooth, complete pedalling action. Avoid the temptation to just push down on the pedals. Think of Treadle rather than Treadmill

WEEK 6

MONDAY - REST DAY
Stretching exercises
Check through your clothing shorts, base layers, shoes. If change needed start to replace now, so as to get used to it

TUESDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath. Pedalling at 90-95rpm
Review and rearrange your training route to increase distance

WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
Rest

THURSDAY - CYCLING 1 HR 15
Warm up for 20mins at steady 90-95 rpm. 5mins at brisk 110 rpm followed by 10mins riding easily at 80 rpm. Then a second brisk ride at 110rpm, followed by 10mins at 80 rpm. Now a third brisk ride at 110 rpm before warming down for 20mins at the steady 90 rpm pace.
Try to maintain the efforts and concentrate on pedaling, or cadence. Rest and re-fuel afterwards

FRIDAY - REST DAY
Stretching exercises

SATURDAY - CYCLING 2 HRS
Steady paced ride @ 95-100 rpm, incorporating several efforts on the hills – keeping pedalling over the top. Concentrate on maintaining smooth cadence both up hill and over the top. Recovery food and drink

SUNDAY - CYCLING 2.5 HRS
Ride with group of friends or club. Keep pedalling rate smooth and constant. Rest and recovery food and drink as soon as finished
### WEEK 7

**MONDAY - REST DAY**

- Stretching exercises
- Check your bike - including tires, chain, brake and gear cables.
  - Clean and adjust where necessary

**TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 HR**

- Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath.
  - Pedalling at 90-95rpm
  - Steady pace

**WEDNESDAY - REST DAY**

- Rest

**THURSDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS**

- Warm up for 20mins at steady 90-95 rpm pace. Then 5mins brisk at 110rpm effort followed by 8mins easy 80 rpm. Another 5mins at 110 rpm followed by 8mins at easy 80 rpm. Then a third 5mins at brisk 110 rpm and finally 20mins at 90 rpm to warm down
  - Recovery time reduced to improve anaerobic capacity

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**

**SATURDAY - CYCLING 2 - 2.5 HRS**

- Steady paced ride - try not to get out of breath.
  - Pedalling at 90-95rpm
  - Concentrate on cadence and smooth riding position

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 3 HRS**

- Group ride at steady at steady pace, still avoiding breathlessness.
  - Pedal at 90-95 rpm
  - Enjoy a stop on this ride, just 15-20 mins. Still rest and re-fuel as soon as you get home

**NUTRITION TIP:**

With only 5 weeks to go it’s time to think about the nutrition strategy for your sportive. Find out what products/brand will be on course but remember that it is easy to carry your nutrition in your jersey pockets and saddle bag so you don’t have to rely on the nutrition available on course. The feed stations will have water available so you can mix more drinks later in the ride. Try out your nutrition strategy on your longer ride to be sure that it works for you and you can go into the sportive with confidence.

*Check out the High5 Sportive Guide on page 7 for some advice on your best nutrition strategy.*

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### WEEK 8

**MONDAY - REST DAY**

- Stretching exercises
  - Easy week. Think about drinking and eating on bike. This week practice doing it, so you can do it safely when with others. Consider introducing a few mobility exercises as a daily routine

**TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS**

- Steady ride. Just enjoy the bike ride
  - Relaxed ride – use a different route for a change. Take a friend

**WEDNESDAY - REST DAY**

- Rest

**THURSDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS**

- Steady ride, as Tuesday
  - Relax and enjoy. Practice using bottle while riding and taking food bars from your back pockets

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**

**SATURDAY - REST DAY**

- Rest

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 3.5 HRS**

- Steady paced group ride – try not to get out of breath.
  - Pedal at 90-95rpm
  - Ride with friends or club. Include a tea stop but also eat and drink on the bike. Remember your recovery routine when you get home

**NUTRITION TIP:**

**MONDAY - REST DAY**

- Steady ride. Just enjoy the bike ride
  - Pedalling at 90-95rpm
  - Steady pace

**TUESDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS**

- Steady pace, increasing your cadence when climbing hills, stay sitting in saddle as long as possible
  - Make sure to maintain speed right over the top of hill

**WEDNESDAY - REST DAY**

**THURSDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS**

**FRIDAY - REST DAY**

**SATURDAY - CYCLING 2 HRS**

**SUNDAY - CYCLING 4 HRS**

- Steady paced ride pedalling at 90-95pm
  - Vary the route for a change

*Ask the coach: @andycookcycling*
### WEEK 10

#### MONDAY - REST DAY
- Stretching and mobility exercises
- 2 weeks to go now so more time in the saddle to build up to hardest ride next week

#### TUESDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
- Steady paced ride at 90-95rpm
- Using regular route. You should notice you are going up the hills faster and easier

#### WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
- Rest

#### THURSDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
- 20mins warm up at steady pace of 90 - 95rpm – then 5mins brisk at 110 rpm followed by 8mins easy at 80rpm, then 5 mins brisk at 110rpm, then 8 mins easy @ 80 rpm, 5 mins brisk @ 110rpm, 8 mins easy @ 80rpm, 5 mins brisk at 110rpm and finally warm down for 20 mins steady at 90 rpm
- Increase speed in interval session. Make sure to warm down well and do recovery routine

#### FRIDAY - REST DAY
- Rest

#### SATURDAY - CYCLING 3 HRS
- Steady paced ride, keeping your cadence high. Concentrate on climbing the hills smoothly...
- Remember to eat and drink on ride.
- Good recovery routine, once home

#### SUNDAY - CYCLING 4 HRS
- Ride with group or club. Include one tea stop of 15 mins
- Eat and drink on ride. Remember your recovery routine once home

#### NUTRITION TIP:
- Practise your race day nutrition strategy on long runs. You’ll find it easier to follow on race day

### WEEK 11

#### MONDAY - REST DAY
- Stretching and mobility exercises
- Take it easy as your legs will be tired and a bit sore after the weekend. Your stretching exercises will be appreciated

#### TUESDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
- Steady paced ride - increase effort and speed by pedalling faster not by using a bigger gear
- Stretch and recover

#### WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
- Rest

#### THURSDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
- 20mins warm up at a steady pace of 90 - 95rpm - 5mins brisk @ 110 rpm followed by 8mins easy @ 80rpm, then 5mins brisk @ 110rpm, then 8mins easy @ 80 rpm, 5mins brisk @ 110rpm and finally warm down for 20mins steady at 90 rpm
- Your last interval session before the event so really try hard. Make it hurt! Make sure you recover properly when finished

#### FRIDAY - REST DAY
- Stretching and mobility exercises

#### SATURDAY - CYCLING 3 HRS
- Steady paced ride, keeping your cadence high.
- Go with a group if possible. Very important to practice good recovery routine at this stage of your preparation

#### SUNDAY - CYCLING 4.5 HRS
- Ride with group. Have a short tea stop. Keep cadence high and keep going over the hills
- The last big ride before event so enjoy it! Feel good about getting to this point in good shape

#### NUTRITION TIP:
- Carbo load in the days before the race.
- Find more info here

### WEEK 12

#### MONDAY - REST DAY
- Stretching and mobility exercises
- This week riding will be gentler. Ensure your bike is ready NOW and you have all your kit, food and drink prepared so as to save last minute panics

#### TUESDAY - CYCLING 1 - 1.5 HRS
- Ride at steady pace. Keep cadence high

#### WEDNESDAY - REST DAY
- Final check of bike and kit. Buy anything still needed. Don’t wait till Saturday

#### THURSDAY - CYCLING 1.5 HRS
- Steady pace, with a few bursts and/or a few sprints up the hills to break up ride
- Go with a friend. Don’t forget good recovery routine

#### FRIDAY - REST DAY
- Stretching and mobility exercises

#### SATURDAY - CYCLING 1 HR
- Have a relaxed spin of the pedals. Enjoy a bike ride at an easy pace
- You have now done all you can as preparation. You are right, the bike is right, all your kit and food is ready, so just relax, have a good meal and look forward to tomorrow

#### SUNDAY - CYCLING
- THE BIG DAY
- Enjoy the event. Make sure you pace yourself

#### NUTRITION TIP:
- Carbo load in the days before the race. Find more info here
**SPORTIVE NUTRITION GUIDE**

These guidelines are based on the latest science and real-world feedback from thousands of athletes. Research shows that by just following these guidelines, athletes were able to maintain their pace 26% longer during an endurance ride. This was compared to their existing brand of sports nutrition consumed as they would normally¹... Yes these guidelines work!

**THE FUEL FOR SPORT**

Carbohydrate is the high-energy fuel that lets you ride fast and far, and it’s what makes your time on the bike enjoyable. Unfortunately your body only has a limited store of carbohydrate, which can be depleted after around 2 hours of riding.

Think back to how easy it is in the first couple of hours of a tough ride, as compared to the last hour when you have depleted your carbohydrate reserves. Fuelling your body with additional carbohydrate, by consuming sports drinks and gels as you ride, will extend your endurance and provide the extra energy you need to enjoy your longer events - particularly in the latter stages.

It might seem logical that the more carbohydrate you consume the better, but you should take care. You are able to consume a large amount of carbohydrate, but that does not mean your digestive system can process it as quickly. Research shows that if you consume more than 60g per hour of the carbohydrates found in traditional sports drink and gels, any extra will simply sit in your digestive tract and not be absorbed. Unless carbohydrate is absorbed into your bloodstream, it is of no benefit to your sports performance. Consuming too much carbohydrate can also lead to stomach cramps.

To exceed the 60g per hour limit, you have to switch to a new type of sports drink. The recommended intake for 2:1 fructose drinks is 90g per hour. This ability to deliver additional carbohydrate can make a substantial difference to your performance in an endurance event.

**HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE?**

If you follow this guide, you will get 90g of carbohydrate each hour to fuel your working muscles. That's a total of 450g more carbohydrate during a 5-hour Sportive.

**Remember:** If you cannot consume the full amount of drinks and gel shown, then consuming 70g of carbohydrate per hour is better than 50g and that's better than 30g.

¹ For more details see [http://highfive.co.uk/research-and-development/go-further.html](http://highfive.co.uk/research-and-development/go-further.html)

² For the purpose of this illustration, a “traditional” energy or sports drink is one containing a source of carbohydrate that breaks down to glucose and contains little or no fructose.

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**BREAKFAST BEFORE:**

Your breakfast should be light and high in carbohydrate; good examples would be cereals, toast and porridge. 60 to 90 minutes before the start you should Caffeine Load. This is achieved by drinking the following amounts of EnergySource X’treme based on bodyweight. For higher bodyweights (80kg and above), you will also need to take gel containing caffeine.

Your body weight:
- **40kg:** 425ml
- **50kg:** 550ml
- **60kg:** 650ml
- **70kg:** 750ml
- **80kg:** 750ml + 1 Gel Plus
- **90kg:** 750ml + 2 Gel Plus

This will provide you with an effective dose of caffeine (approx. 3mg per kg bodyweight). Avoid tea and coffee on the day of your event.

**DURING YOUR RIDE**

How much you are able to drink during your event will depend on weather conditions. In warm / hot conditions, the 2:1 fructose formulation in High5 EnergySource means that you should be able to drink up to 1000ml per hour. This will provide fluids, electrolytes and 90g of carbohydrate for energy. If the weather is cool and you drink less, your carbohydrate intake will be less and you will need to boost it with gel. If you drink the following amounts of EnergySource each hour, you should take the number of gels shown below:

- **800ml:** no gel
- **750ml:** 1 x gel sachet per hour
- **400ml:** 2 x gel sachets per hour

It’s important to focus on drinking as much as possible to remain hydrated. For gel intake you can use either High5 EnergyGel or IsoGel depending on personal preference.

Your body removes caffeine from your bloodstream over time. To keep your caffeine levels “topped up” your first gel every hour should be EnergyGel Plus or IsoGel Plus. Both contain 30mg of caffeine. Any remaining gels each hour should then be standard gel with no caffeine.

**AFTER YOUR RIDE:**

Drink 400ml to 800ml of Protein Recovery when you finish. Eat a balanced meal one to two hours later.

**CAFFEINE NOTE:**

If you have any medical condition including high blood pressure, if you are pregnant, breast feeding or under 18 years of age, do not use caffeine. If you are sensitive to caffeine and suffer any side effects when using caffeine such as muscle tremors, cramp, anxiety or a higher than expected heart rate discontinue use immediately. If you do not wish to use caffeine for any reason, then simply switch the caffeine products detailed with the non-caffeine equivalent from High5.
**ENERGYGEL**

A smooth gel with a dash of real fruit juice for a light taste

- Proven in the World's toughest competitions
- 23g of carbohydrate
- EnergyGel (without Caffeine); EnergyGel Plus (with 30mg caffeine)

**ENERGYSOURCE (2:1 FRUCTOSE)**

Advanced sports drink mix

- Caffeine free
- 2:1 fructose carbohydrate with key electrolytes
- Great light taste

**ISOGEL**

23g carbohydrate gel that's more like a drink than a gel. Can be taken without water

- Smooth, light & not too sweet
- A dash of real juice flavours for a light refreshing taste
- Proven in the World's toughest competitions
- IsoGel (without caffeine); IsoGel Plus (with 30mg caffeine)

**ZERO Neutral**

The UK's leading zero cal electrolyte sports drink tab

- Transform any drink into an electrolyte sports drink
- Boost the electrolyte levels of an existing sports drink
- Zero sugar
- Vitamin C electrolytes, including sodium and magnesium
- Suitable for a wide range of sporting activities
- Neutral flavour. No artificial colours or preservatives

**PROTEIN RECOVERY**

The ultimate post exercise drink mix with whey isolate

- The Pro's choice after exercise
- Contains the highest quality whey protein isolate
- Contains carbohydrate
- Mixes easily into water or milk

**X'TREME (2:1 FRUCTOSE)**

Advanced sports drink mix with HIGH caffeine

- High caffeine content (300mg/L)
- Intended for caffeine loading or a big caffeine hit *
- 2:1 fructose carbohydrate with key electrolytes
- Great light taste

* X'TREME IS NOT INTENDED FOR CONTINUOUS USE DURING EXERCISE.
The High5 Race Pack contains a perfect mix of High5 award-winning nutrition to enable you to follow our Advanced Nutrition Guidelines for a 4 hour Sportive, MTB or Triathlon event. It comes with a FREE bike bottle and 4 FREE gels.

This pack is intended to demonstrate what can be achieved using the latest generation of sports nutrition and a scientific strategy for your sport, and without the need to spend a lot of money!

Available from all good bike shops and online.