



# HOW TO USE YOUR 60-MILE TRAINING PLAN

Prepared by USA Cycling Level 2 Coach Sage Maaranen

## HOW TO USE YOUR USA CYCLING TRAINING PLAN

### Components of a Workout

**Warmup** - The warmup is critical! It slowly increases the heart rate and blood flow to muscles, loosens joints, and gently stretches the muscles before working them, which helps prevent injury.

**Drills** - Drills are like broccoli. You may not like them, but they're good for you! Drills are great for activating and strengthening muscles before use. They help in injury prevention and will help improve form.

**Main Set** - this is the "meat and potatoes" of a workout. Learning how to decipher your workout description can be tricky.

Example:

- > 2x15min Z3 ride, 5min Z2 recovery  
This means you will ride in Zone 3 for 15 minutes, then in Zone 2 for 5 minutes. The "2x" at the beginning indicates you will do this 20-minute segment twice (15-minute work followed by 5-minute recovery).
- > Warmdown - A warmdown aids in recovery. If you want to be able to move in the morning, warm down! Finish up with light stretching.

### Missed Sessions

If you miss one or more training sessions, don't try to cram them in with other workouts on a different day - that can compromise the integrity of the scheduled workout. Add a comment in TrainingPeaks regarding the missed session. For interval work or long days that are building weekly, bump that session to replace the one scheduled the following week. Remember, there's no cramming fitness!

Try to complete all workouts, but be kind to yourself when an occasional miss happens. One missed session will not make or break your season.

### Perceived Effort, Heart Rate & Pace Zones

The level of intensity is manipulated in training to create fitness adaptations in various metabolic systems. Heart rate and power are great tools for setting and monitoring these intensity zones, but rate of perceived effort, or your sense of how "hard" an effort is, is also a great gauge. If you choose to use a power meter or heart rate monitor, there are many sources available online to test and designate training zones.

*"Aside from building fitness to race 100- to 200-mile gravel events, the biggest benefit to focused training with a coach is that my recovery time has been significantly minimized. I'm no longer crushed in the days following a big ride."*

- USA Cycling Coaching Staff





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## **HOW TO USE YOUR USA CYCLING TRAINING PLAN continued**

### **Rate of Perceived Effort:**

Rate of Perceived Effort (RPE) is frequently used on different scales. For ease, the scale in this training plan uses a scale of 1-10.

### **The Zones:**

#### > Zone 1- Recovery Zone

Rate of Perceived Effort (RPE) is <5. Should feel very easy, almost guilt-inducing! Zone 1 is great for recovery after a harder interval, or for an entire recovery session as movement at an easy pace can help develop economy.

#### > Zone 2- Aerobic Endurance

RPE is in the 5-7 range. Pace and effort feels very easy at the beginning, but if held for a long duration becomes more and more challenging. If running or cycling at this level, it should be easy to hold a conversation.

Many athletes have a hard time with the idea of training slow on purpose. But some really cool stuff happens during aerobic training. It helps increase stroke volume (the amount of blood pumped per beat), aerobic enzymes, mitochondria, and capillarization. To learn more about the benefits of aerobic training, check out online resources.

#### > Zone 3- Tempo

RPE is 7-8, conversation is difficult to hold.

#### > Zone 4-Lactate Threshold

RPE 8-9. A tough effort. Legs and lungs are burning! It would be difficult to hold this pace for more than an hour.

On workouts with Z4 intervals less than 5 minutes, rely on perceived effort and pace rather than heart rate as there is a delay before heart rate rises.

#### > Zone 5- Anaerobic

RPE 10. These efforts can help boost aerobic capacity (VO<sub>2</sub>max), economy, and anaerobic threshold. In racing, this zone can be used to make short, big pushes. Intervals are short (if you can hold the effort for more than 5-6 minutes, you are under the target effort) with rest periods equal to the work interval.

On workouts with shorter intervals, it will take heart rate a while to catch up. On these intervals, rely on perceived effort and pace rather than heart rate.





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	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
WEEK 1	Rest Day	<u>Foundation Ride</u> 10mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.	<u>Easy Spin + drills</u> Spin around and have fun for 30min-1hr. Find an empty parking lot to practice clipping in and out, looking over your shoulder while riding in a straight line and grabbing your water bottle.	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<u>Foundation Ride</u> 10mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.	<u>Easy Spin + drills</u> Spin around and have fun for 30min-1hr. Find an empty parking lot to practice clipping in and out without looking at your feet, practice hand signals for riding on the road, making right and left turns, and grabbing snacks, etc., from your pocket and opening them.  <u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u>	<u>Long Ride- 15-18mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:  Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.  Ride for a total of 15-18mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.
WEEK 2	Rest Day	<u>Tempo Ride 2x10</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort Set—2x10min Z3, 5min recoveries  Warmdown- 10min easy spin	<u>Foundation Ride</u> 10mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<u>Foundation Ride</u> 10-15mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.	<u>Foundation or Tempo Ride 1x15</u> Warmup- 10min easy spin followed by skills work. Find an empty parking lot to practice making big to small spirals, slow riding to practice balance, and begin adding speed to your cornering practice.  Ride for 30min-1hr. Option to include 1x15 Z3. Be sure to include a warmdown.  <u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u>	<u>Long Ride- 20mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:  Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.  Ride for a total of 20mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.
WEEK 3	Rest Day	<u>Tempo Ride 2x15</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort Set—2x15min Z3, 5min recoveries  Warmdown- 10min easy spin	<u>Foundation Ride</u> 15mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<u>Group Ride or Threshold Ride 2x5:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort  Set- 2x5min Z4, 5min recoveries  Warmdown- 10-20min easy	<u>Foundation</u> Warmup- 10min easy spin followed by skills work. Find an empty parking lot to practice making fluid figure eights, and repeat any other skills you've found challenging..  Ride for 30min-1hr. Be sure to include a warmdown.  <u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u>	<u>Long Ride- 25mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:  Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.  Ride for a total of 25mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.



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WEEK 4	<p>Recovery Week</p> <p>Rest Day</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride with 1x10 Tempo</u> 1hr ride. At any point in the ride, include 1x10min Z3. Be sure to warmup and warmdown.</p>	<p><u>Easy Spin + drills</u> Spin around and have fun for 30min-1hr. Recruit a friend and practice riding behind one another. Focus on making your movements predictable so that the rider behind you can anticipate your actions. To make this fun, try playing Follow the Leader in an empty parking lot.</p>	<p>Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride with 1x10 Tempo</u> 1hr ride. At any point in the ride, include 1x10min Z3. Be sure to warmup and warmdown.</p>	<p><u>Easy Spin + drills</u> Spin around and have fun for 30min-1hr. Recruit a friend and practice riding behind one another. Focus on making your movements predictable so that the rider behind you can anticipate your actions. To make this fun, try playing Follow the Leader in an empty parking lot. This week, challenge your comfort zone with proximity to the rider ahead.</p> <p><u>Or Rest Day</u></p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 15-20mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>
WEEK 5	<p>Rest Day</p>	<p><u>Tempo Ride 2x20</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort Set- 2x20min Z3, 5min recoveries. If your event will include longer climbs, it's a great idea to do these tempo intervals on hills. Warmdown- 10min easy spin</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 20mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>	<p>Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)</p>	<p><u>Group Ride or Threshold Ride 2x6:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort Set- 2x6min Z4, 5min recoveries Warmdown- 10-20min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation &amp; Skills Ride</u> Warmup- 10min easy spin followed by skills work. Find an empty parking lot. Today, work on pedal stroke. There are tons of great drills out there, including: *Single-leg pedaling *Shifting focus through each part of the pedal stroke so that the power is even the whole time.  Ride for a total of 1hr. Be sure to include a warmdown.  <u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u></p>	<p><u>Long Ride- 35mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:  Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.  Ride for a total of 35mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.</p>
WEEK 6	<p>Rest Day</p>	<p><u>Tempo Ride 1x30</u> Warmup- 20 min gradually increasing pace and effort. Include 6x30-sec 1-leg drills.  Main Set- 1x30 min Z3 30min Z2. If your event will include longer climbs, it's a great idea to do these tempo intervals on hills.  Warmdown- 10 min gradually reducing pace and effort to Z1.</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 20-30mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>	<p>Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)</p>	<p><u>Group Ride or Threshold Ride 3x5:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort Set- 3x5min Z4, 5min recoveries. If your event will include climbing, these threshold intervals would make great hill repeats. Do the work intervals uphill, descend to starting point as recovery.  Warmdown- 10-20min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation &amp; Skills Ride</u> Warmup- 10min easy spin followed by skills addressing any personal weaknesses.  Ride for a total of 1-1.5hrs. Be sure to include a warmdown.  <u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u></p>	<p><u>Long Ride- 45-50mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:  Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.  Ride for a total of 45-50mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.</p>



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WEEK 7	Rest Day	<p><u>Tempo Ride 3x20</u> WarmUp- 20 min gradually increasing pace and effort. Include 6x30-sec 1-leg drills.</p> <p>Main Set- 3x20 min Z3; 5-min Z1 recoveries. Option to alternate high and low cadence on each set. If your event will include longer climbs, it's a great idea to do these tempo intervals on hills.</p> <p>Warmdown- 10 min gradually reducing pace and effort to Z1.</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 20-30mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<p><u>Group Ride or Threshold Ride 2x8:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort</p> <p>Set- 2x8min Z4, 5min recoveries.</p> <p>If your event will include climbing, these threshold intervals would make great hill repeats. Do the work intervals uphill, descend to starting point as recovery.</p> <p>Warmdown- 10-20min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation &amp; Skills Ride</u> Warmup- 10min easy spin followed by skills addressing any personal weaknesses.</p> <p>Ride for a total of 1-1.5hrs. Be sure to include a warmdown.</p> <p><u>Or Strength Work</u> <u>Or Rest Day</u></p>	<p><u>Long Ride- 55-60mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:</p> <p>Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.</p> <p>Ride for a total of 55-60mi, or for the anticipated time duration of your event. (You will ride faster in your event if you ride in a pack.) Shoot for average effort to be in Z2.</p>
WEEK 8	Recovery Week Rest Day	<p><u>Foundation Ride with 1x15 Tempo</u> 1hr ride. At any point in the ride, include 1x15min Z3. Be sure to warmup and warmdown.</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 20mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<p><u>Foundation Ride with 1x15 Tempo</u> 1hr ride. At any point in the ride, include 1x15min Z3. Be sure to warmup and warmdown.</p>	Bonus Rest Day or Easy Cross-training	<p><u>Foundation Ride</u> 35-40mi ride at an easy Z2 effort. Try to keep cadence high, roughly 90rpm.</p>
WEEK 9	Peak Week! Rest Day	<p><u>Threshold Ride 3x5:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort</p> <p>Set- 3x5min Z4, 5min recoveries</p> <p>Warmdown- 10-20min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride w/ 1x15 Tempo</u> 25mi ride. Keep effort at Z2, except include 1x15min Z3.</p>	Rest Day or <u>Or Easy Training</u> (e.g. Yoga, hiking, swimming)	<p><u>Threshold Ride 2x5:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort</p> <p>Set- 2x5min Z4, 5min recoveries</p> <p>Warmdown- 10-20min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride w/ 1x15 Tempo</u> 25mi ride. Keep effort at Z2, except include 1x15min Z3.</p> <p><u>Or Rest Day</u></p>	<p><u>Long Ride- 45mi</u> Ideally on terrain similar to your race course:</p> <p>Warmup- 10min easy spinning, gradually increasing effort to Z2. Include 4x30sec 1-legged pedaling drill.</p> <p>Ride for a total of 45mi, shooting for average effort to be in Z2.</p>
WEEK 10	Race Week! Rest Day	<p><u>Threshold Ride 1x5:</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort</p> <p>Set- 1x5min Z4, 5min recovery 20min Z2</p> <p>Warmdown- 10min easy</p>	<p><u>Foundation Ride w/ 1x10 Tempo</u> 15-20mi ride. Keep effort at Z2, except include 1x10min Z3.</p>	Rest Day	<p><u>Tune-Up Ride</u> Warmup- 15min gradually increasing pace and effort</p> <p>Set- 2x5min build as 3min Z3, 2min Z4. 5min recoveries.</p> <p>Warmdown-10min</p>	<p><b>RACE DAY!!!</b> If you have the opportunity, warm up! It's a great idea to include a few bursts of speed as well.</p> <p>Example: 10-15min easy spin, 5min build across Z3, finishing in Z4 with final 10 sec at sprint. Easy spin to race start.</p>	<p><b>Celebrate!!!</b> Celebrate your victories and ignore your inner critic until mid-next week when you're rested enough to think reasonably. Today is about victories only!</p>