



Building fitness for the STIHL Tour des Trees

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Monday: Rest day

Tuesday: 60-75 minutes total, with periods of brisk riding.

Warm up for 10 mins, then find ways to push yourself harder and raise your heart rate. Ride some hills, do a series of 5-8 minute time trials (a time trial is how much distance you can cycle in a fixed amount of time), do accelerations between every other telephone pole, sprint for a minute each time you see a silo or yellow mailbox...be creative and make it fun! Undulating heart rates build fitness better than steady riding, and you'll develop riding skills by climbing hills, sprinting and settling in to extended periods of fast riding. Be sure to leave time for easy spinning to cool down on the way home.

Wednesday: 2 hours of steady aerobic effort

Aim for up to two hours at the pace you plan to keep on the Tour. Even if you can't go very long, keep it steady, this aids recovery between the more spirited workouts on Tuesday and Thursday.

Thursday: 60-75 minutes total, with periods of brisk riding

Don't repeat Tuesday's workout today. While you want to tax yourself physically in a similar way, a different approach will keep your riding fresh and fun.

Friday: 45-minute spin or day off if you're feeling sore or tired.

Active recovery in the form of an easy ride is often more beneficial than plopping on the couch. Don't give in to the temptation to up your effort. Ride at a slower pace than your anticipated Tour pace. Just enjoy being out on your bike.

Saturday: Build endurance

The weekend is your opportunity to:

- Improve your endurance and ability to be comfortable on the bike for several hours.
- Get accustomed to the back-to-back long rides that the Tour requires.

Saturday should be your longest ride of the week. Begin at the level that's right for your present fitness level, and add 15-20 minutes each week. Strive to ride in a terrain similar to the course you'll be riding. Eat and drink to maintain your energy level and to accustom your stomach to digesting food while riding.

Sunday: Endurance plus group riding skills

Aim for 80 percent of Saturday's time. Ride with a bike club or group, especially if you do most of your other riding alone. You'll ride with up to 100 other cyclists during the Tour, so you need to be comfortable in the midst of all those wheels. Group rides alleviate boredom and often offer beneficial pace changes. As you train, remember this maxim: You grow stronger when you're resting, not when you're riding. Adequate recovery is essential! If you're feeling fatigued, not sleeping well and getting grouchy, take an extra day or two off or substitute a short recovery ride for Tuesday or Thursday's workout. You are an experiment of one, listen to your body and adjust your training accordingly.

Use a training journal to record your time, distance and physical response to each ride:

You'll achieve optimum results if you hold your weekly increases to 10%-15%. Bigger increases are tempting, but could lead to fatigue and worsening performance instead of the gains you're striving for. You can't boost your training a safe amount unless you know how much you did the previous week. Also, your training journal will help you train better for next year's Tour! By writing down what you did each day for eight weeks you'll know what felt right and what didn't, what worked well and what didn't and you'll know what to repeat and what to avoid. It's often said that a training diary is the most helpful book a cyclist can own.