



12 WEEKS TO GO! TIME TO PRACTICE GOING DOWNHILL

With 12 weeks to go it is worth mentioning what's in stall for the remaining 12 weeks!

The next 3 weeks will be about increasing the distance/time of the one main weekly ride, with a couple of shorter rides during the week. As the distance increases, it is even more important to make sure you are considering each of the 5 key checks before your long rides:

- 1 Bike check (brakes, wheels, bolt checks, tyres)
- 2 Clothing (prepare for bad weather)
- 3 Food (take extra and gels if you use them)
- 4 Fluids (carbohydrate mix like High 5 is a good option)
- 5 Money and fully charged phone (in weather proof bag)

TRAINING ZONES

You will see each ride has a training intensity level 1-5. Use the Training Zones chart below to establish the training intensity of each ride and how this should feel (perceived effort).

ZONE	EFFORT	YOU CAN...	IT FEELS LIKE...	USE IT FOR...	% HR MAX	% FUNCTIONAL THRESHOLD POWER	PHYSIOLOGICAL ADAPTATIONS AT THIS TRAINING ZONE
1	Easy	Chat easily	Warming up	Warm-up, cool-down, recovery	60-65%	56-75%	Muscles become looser and body temperature gradually increases
2	Steady	Speak one sentence at a time	Riding along with a bunch on the flat	Long rides	65-75%	76-90%	Primary oxidative energy systems working. Muscle glycogen storage increases
3	Brisk	Speak a few words at a time	Breathing deeply and working hard	Long efforts of 10-20 minutes	75-82%	91-105%	Oxidative and glycolytic energy systems are both in use. The body is working just below threshold level
4	Hard	Say one word at a time	Really pushing like a hill climb	Hard efforts of 2-8 minutes	82-89%	106-120%	Blood lactate levels start to rise. Hypertrophy of slow-twitch muscle fibres
5	Very hard	Unable to chat, gasping	Flat out sprint	Very short max out efforts of 10 secs to 2 minutes	89%-Max HR	121%+	Heart rate, blood lactate levels and other physical parameters start to reach maximum levels

Following the next 3 weeks, there will be an easy recovery week. This will leave 8 weeks to go and at this point you will enter the final part of your training before easing into a pre-event recovery period (taper).

About Phil Mack

Phil Mack is a Specialist Sports Physiotherapist and Sports Scientist. He has six sports injury and peak performance clinics located in Edinburgh and Peebles (view website).

Phil was previously Strength and Conditioning Coach to the South African Triathlon Team, South African Springboks, Leicester Tigers and Ulster rugby teams, to name a few. He has developed a global reputation in both strength and conditioning and sports injury rehabilitation.

As a triathlete and duathlete, Phil has represented both Great Britain and South Africa. He is also a keen climber and enjoys mountaineering.



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TRAINING PLANS - WEEKS 11 & 12

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	NOTES
WEEK 11	Recovery day	45-60 minutes level 2-3 (Optional if fully recovered from weekend)	Recovery day	45-60 min turbo/Zwift Or alternative training (eg. circuit class, cross-trainer).	Recovery day	3-3 ½ hour ride Mainly level 2 and level 3 on the hills	Easy recovery ride or rest	Make sure you take sufficient food and fluids with you on the longer ride
WEEK 12	Recovery day	45-60 minutes level 2-3 (Optional if fully recovered from weekend)	Recovery day	45-60 min level 3 Faster hilly ride level 3 for as much of the ride as possible.	Recovery day	3 ½ hour hilly ride Level 2 with level 3 on hills (you can take a breather at the top)	Easy recovery ride or rest	Make sure you take sufficient food and fluids with you on the longer ride



TIPS FOR WEEKS 11 & 12

Master descending

Mastering efficient and safe descending is an often overlooked and yet very important skill to have at any level of cycling. Like climbing hills, it is probably obvious that practicing descending is the best way to get better. However, there are a few fundamental points to help develop a good technique. They will also help you gain confidence and remain safe when descending:

General

- Be aware of where other riders are around you
- Being relaxed and not tensing will allow you to control the bike more effectively and help maintain a smooth non jerky descent
- Descent at a speed you are confident with (which will increase with practice)
- A tucked ergonomic position more efficient
- It is not recommended to be scrambling for food from your pockets or using your water bottle on descents

Brakes

- Try not to be constantly on the breaks

- Avoid sudden aggressive use of your brakes
- Easing off the front break during a corner will allow you to steer round a corner a lot easier

Corners

- Always slow up before a corner, not during it
- Drop your inside knee going round the corner
- Look around the corner

So, keeping smooth and relaxed going downhill will help you maintain good control which in turn will help with your confidence. Being relaxed during descending will also provide you with a chance for a brief recovery from the long ride.