



PHASE 2

Duration and level 3 training intensity

Cycling is a beautiful activity that can transport us away from the hustle and bustle of life. In a matter of minutes we can be carving our way through tranquil landscapes, between rolling hills, passing rivers, reservoirs and lochs. Sharing space with wildlife and the elements allows the mind to relax and take a well-earned rest. It's not uncommon to hit the road and come back feeling more balanced, refreshed and relaxed. Regardless of your current fitness, all who commit themselves to cycling will experience this in time.

Last month we explored training levels (1-5 scale). This month we will look at the three F's: fitness, fatigue and form. It's important to understand these concepts to connect you deeper with your body and its response to cycling.

Fitness refers to an individual's overall physical capacity to perform activities with efficiency and effectiveness. Good fitness is essential for cycling as it allows you to sustain high-intensity efforts, endure long rides and recover more effectively between them.

Fatigue is the temporary decline in a cyclist's physical and mental performance due to the accumulated stress and strain of training. Fatigue will increase perceived effort and can decrease motivation. This is normal and not a bad thing - in fact it's necessary to drive adaptations that provide better results in the future.

Form, also known as freshness or readiness, is a cyclist's current state of physical and mental preparedness. A cyclist in good form is likely to perform at their best, feeling energised and confident about the upcoming session.

The relationship between fitness, fatigue, and form is dynamic and can fluctuate over time. Structured training and recovery management can help optimise these factors to keep you on track through the hard days, performing well on the good days and minimising fatigue throughout your cycling journey.

There's still plenty of training time until the event. Gradual progression, consistency and listening to your body will be key to crossing that finish line on 3 September.

The 1 to 5 training level scale is a common way to classify the intensity of bike training, with level 1 being the easiest and level 5 being the hardest. Here's a brief description of each level:

LEVEL	INTENSITY	USE IT FOR...	% HR MAX	NOTES
1	Easy	Warm-up, cool-down, recovery.	50-60%	This is about time in the saddle and improving your fat utilisation. It's ideal for beginners or those just starting out.
2	Endurance	Longer rides, recovery.	68-78%	This involves bringing more rhythm into your ride, close to or around your event cadence (rpm). It's good for improving overall fitness.
3	Tempo	Longer efforts, building speed & strength.	70-85%	This is the event cadence (rpm) that you feel comfortable with and that can be sustained. It's often described as 'comfortably hard'.
4	Threshold	Short, hard efforts, interval training.	85-96%	This is intense, an effort that can be sustained for short periods building Vo2 MAX (speed at which you reach maximal oxygen consumption).
5	Anaerobic	Short, all-out efforts, sprint training.	96-100%	This is working at your maximum heart rate (HR- MAX). It's good for improving power & speed but should be used sparingly.





TOUR O THE BORDERS

TRAINING PLAN: WEEKS 6-9

GOALS

Increase the duration of weekend rides. Up the intensity level on planned tempo sessions.

PLAN

Complete 3-4 rides per week. Keep a note of your rides in a training diary and complete the 33km Two Valleys Loop (or equivalent) in week 3.

EQUIPMENT & TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Stationary bikes can still be used in this training block but more time has been planned out on the road – preferably a road bike for the scheduled long ride.

Work slowly to increase the duration of your rides to avoid overtraining

and reduce the risk of injury. As duration increases, pay attention to how your body feels during and after rides. If you are sore or overly fatigued, take extra rest or downscale the intensity with lighter recovery rides (level 1). Golden rule: never upscale a session when following a plan – only downscale when effects of fatigue are evident.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GOAL
WEEK 1	30mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	45mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady Ride	Rest	30mins Exercise Bike Level 3: Tempo	Rest	1 hour 15mins Long Ride Outdoor Level 2: Steady Ride	Complete 4 Sessions 180mins Endurance building
WEEK 2	40mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	60mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady Ride	Rest	30mins Exercise Bike Level 3: Tempo	Rest	1hr 15mins Long Ride Outdoor Level 2: Steady Ride	Complete 4 Sessions 205mins Endurance building
WEEK 3	45mins Outdoor or Exercise Bike Level 2: Steady Ride	Rest	60mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady ride + some hills	Rest	35mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	1hr 35mins Long Ride Outdoor Level 3: Tempo (Two Valleys Loop – 33km)	Complete 4 Sessions 235mins Endurance building and power development
WEEK 4	30mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	40mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady ride + easy hills	Rest	30mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	60mins Long Ride Outdoor Level 1-2: Easy/Steady Ride	Complete 4 Recovery Sessions 160mins Endurance and recovery

Note: In week 3, refer to training rides on the website for Two Valleys Loop. If route is completed in under 1hr 35mins continue for full time duration. If it takes longer, continue until complete but decrease intensity to level 2.