



PHASE 5

Introducing the taper

Tapering your training volume will be a crucial step in preparing for Touro on 3 Sept. Reducing your training in the weeks leading up to the event allows the body to recover, replenish energy stores and optimise performance. Your specific tapering approach may vary based on preferences, training history and the race event distance. Here are some general guidelines to help with the final training block:

Reduction in volume: During this training plan, you will note a gradual reduction in volume over a three-week period leading up to the event.

Maintain intensity: Whilst you are reducing the overall volume, try to maintain the intensity of your workouts. The goal is to keep the body accustomed to the effort required during the event but also allowing it to recover. You will notice there are still intervals, steep hills and tempo sessions in the plan.

Focus on recovery: Emphasise recovery during the taper period. Get enough sleep, maintain good nutrition and incorporate light stretching or mobility exercises to keep the body loose.

Avoid new challenges: Avoid new, intense workouts during the taper period. Stick to what has been prescribed.

Last long ride: About 10-14 days before the event, consider one final long ride to maintain endurance without overly fatiguing yourself. After this ride, gradually reduce the duration and intensity of your training.

Rest days: As you approach the event, add more rest days to your schedule. Listen to your body and don't hesitate to take an extra day off. There are no extra days off in the plan but adjust as you feel would benefit you.

Short intervals: In the final week, consider incorporating short/moderate distance, high intensity intervals (e.g. 30-second sprints) to keep your legs sharp without causing excessive fatigue.

Remember that tapering is a balancing act – you want to reduce fatigue and optimise performance but don't want to lose the fitness gains you've made during training. Be flexible and adjust if needed. Trust your preparation and enjoy the event after many weeks and months of hard work!

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.



PHOTO CREDIT: JERRY TATTON



TOUR O THE BORDERS

TRAINING PLAN: WEEKS 18-21

GOALS

Balance your taper to reduce fatigue and optimise performance without losing your fitness gains.

PLAN

Complete 4 rides per week including 3 interval sessions. Complete one last big ride in week 1 (88/120km).

EQUIPMENT & TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Stationary bikes can still be used but time out on the road is best for the scheduled long rides. If you are not local to the Scottish Borders, plan a substitute to the big ride (week 1) that is approx. the distance of your chosen Touro route. Remember to listen to your body and focus on other aspects of recovery in the lead up to the event. Establish a good

sleep routine, eat and drink well and avoid any new intense workouts or training. Check out the Getting Ready pages of the Tour O The Borders website for advice on race day prep – including nutrition and bike essentials for your big day out on the road.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GOAL
WEEK 1	45mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 3: Interval Session 1	Rest	60mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 1: Recovery Ride	Rest	45mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 2: Endurance	Rest	Big Ride 88km/120km 120-300mins Level 1-5: Prep Ride	Complete 3 Sessions and your longest ride 270-450mins Prime the legs and mind for event day
WEEK 2	45mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 1: Recovery Ride	Rest	60mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady Ride + easy hills	Rest	44-54mins Exercise Bike Level 1-5: Interval Session 2	Rest	80mins Ride Outdoor Level 1-2: Recovery/Endurance	Complete 4 Sessions 229-239mins Taper week 1. Recovery & endurance maintenance
WEEK 3	45mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 2: Steady Ride + easy/moderate hills	Rest	60mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 3: Steady Tempo ride + some steep hills	Rest	30mins Exercise Bike Level 1: Easy Ride	Rest	70mins Ride Outdoor Level 1-2: Recovery/Endurance	Complete 4 Sessions 205mins Taper week 2. Hill practice to maintain intensity and skills
WEEK 4	45mins Exercise Bike/Outdoor Level 2-5: Interval Session 1	Rest	75mins Road Bike (Outdoor) Level 2: Steady ride + easy hills	Rest	30mins Exercise Bike Level 3: Tempo	Rest	Event Day Level 1-5:	Complete 4 Recovery Sessions 150mins Taper week 3. Reduce volume/hills/tempo to keep legs sharp



TOUR O THE BORDERS

TRAINING PLAN: WEEKS 14-17

INTERVAL SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

INTERVAL SESSION	ESTIMATED TIME	INTERVAL LEVEL(S)	RECOVERY LEVEL(S)	NOTES
1 2 X 20-MINS THRESHOLD INTERVALS	80mins	3-5	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Warm up for 10-15 mins ·Ride at your threshold (the max effort you can sustain for 60 mins) for 20 mins ·Recover: 5-10 mins easy spinning ·Repeat the 20-mins threshold effort ·Cool down: 10-15 mins easy spinning
2 3 X 3-MINS VO2 MAX INTERVALS	44-54mins	4-5	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Warm up for 10-15 mins ·Ride at a high intensity, aiming for your max effort for 3 mins ·Recover: 3 mins easy spinning ·Repeat x3 with 3 mins recovery ·Cool down: 10-15 mins easy spinning
3 EVENT DAY PREP*	240mins (-/+)	1-5	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Complete 88km/120km Touro route (or similar in your area) ·Recce the route and mentally prepare for the day ·Aim to ride out of the saddle on hill sections ·Move on to a three week taper following this ride

About Jamie Millar

Jamie Millar is a health & fitness professional with over 10 years' experience in the world of sports and exercise. He has a BSc (Hons) Degree in Nutrition and is a fully qualified Level 3 Personal Trainer.

Jamie designs and delivers fitness programs tailored to the goals of his clients, helping people find structure, purpose and enjoyment through exercise and sport, whether that's gym-based strength and conditioning, running, cycling, swimming or more. For him, cycling provides the perfect platform to build physical fitness and reconnect with the outdoors – and he loves nothing more than a hill climb.

Supporting the Tour O The Borders training programme will help Jamie achieve his overriding mission: to share his knowledge and skills in nutrition, physiology and exercise programming to maximise everyone's enjoyment and passion for cycling.

*Note: Ride with plenty of water and replenishment snacks: gels, dried fruit, apples and bananas work best but sugary sweets/juice a good option for sudden energy dips.