



Cycling and training for the beginner

The Bike-

If you don't have a bike, Do Not Borrow One. If you have to, take it to a shop and make sure it is the right size for you and then have it fitted to you. A good fitting session should take at least 2 hours. If you are going to get a bike, try as many as you can, they all ride differently and will fit differently. Then have it fitted to you. A good fitting session should take at least 2 hours. Otherwise you may end up suffering immensely.

Training-

Start your training in small increments, 15-20 miles the first week and moving up to longer distances as you progress. You will need to be able to do a multi-day ride, with 102 miles being the longest. This may sound easy, but it takes time to get to that distance. The first month, should be just riding distances that you can tolerate. Known as base miles. Your goal needs to be the Overnight Ride, which is one month before the tour and the best way to gauge if you are ready or need more work. To get where you need to be, you should be riding 3-4 days a week with one day being longer than during your regular rides. If you can't get out on the road there are alternatives, you can put your bike on a stationary trainer or join a spin class. The spin class is the best because it will push you harder than you will on a trainer, plus it pushes you at different levels.

The one thing you need to be concerned with besides getting mileage in is speed. The average speed of the tour is 15 mph., so you need to be able to maintain that speed for anywhere from 80-100 miles. The best way to improve speed is to do repeat sprints with a break in between. Start with picking a sign, post, tree, etc. and sprint to that location or do it for 10 seconds then wait for your heart rate to settle and do it again. Slowly extending the time or distance as you get stronger.

Eating & Drinking-

Before you go for a long ride, especially in the morning, is you must eat!! Do not go out for a long training ride on an empty stomach, you will bonk!! Most common intake for cyclists before they ride are oatmeal, bagels with peanut butter and a banana. If you are doing a long ride, say 50 miles, take food with you, Power or Cliff Bars are very common.

Two water bottles. If you're doing a short ride, up to 25 miles, plain water will work. If you are doing a longer distance you will want a drink designed for re-hydration, such as Gatorade or Cytomax. If you have never used either, mix it half and half until you know your stomach can handle it. Most can.

When you get home, have something, protein/carbo. to eat within 30 minutes to help with your recovery. Very important!!! And hydrate throughout the day. This will flush the lactate acid out of your muscles

Stretch, Stretch, Stretch, especially your quads and hamstrings.



Clothing-

Cycling clothing is very simplistic and functional. Below are recommendations that have been found to work very well by many riders. Sweat shirts, heavy jackets, etc. do not work well because they are very bulky and when you warm up you have no place to put it. Never ever tie clothing around your waist. It will eventually come loose and fall off into the rear wheel and cause an accident.

Jerseys-

They have three pockets in the back so you can carry what you need. You should be able to carry everything you need and not carry a pack.

Shorts-

They should fit tightly but be comfortable for better compression which helps with better circulation. The padding, better known as the Chamois, is very important and should be thick enough to give you all day comfort. The thickness and quality of the short and chamois will increase with the cost, but you don't need to spend a lot to get a decent short. Bib shorts work best as they keep the short tight and eliminate bunching in the crotch which causes friction and discomfort. The best bang for the buck for the beginner is the Performance Ultra or Ultra SL shorts. "performancebike.com"

Until you get your back side accustomed to the saddle/seat, you should apply Chamois Butt'r (Good) comes in a tube, or Bag O'Balm (Best) which comes in a square green tin. Chamois Butt'r is available at most bike shops and Bag O' Balm is found at Rite Aid and CVS stores. Both reduce friction, the main source of saddle soreness and have medication to help heal any problems. Try to stay away from chamois products that have menthol in them, especially ladies. Nothing will be a substitute for riding time in the saddle.

Arm, Leg Warmers, Knee Warmers, Jackets and Vests-

Arm warmers cover the arm from the wrist to the arm pit. Leg warmers, from the ankle to the top of the thigh. Knee warmers, below the knee to the top of the thigh. All of these can be taken off, rolled up and put in a back jersey pocket.

Jackets can be very limiting but must be kept light weight so they can be rolled up and put in a back pocket. Some jackets have zip off sleeves and make into a vest, which will serve two purposes.

Vests do a great job of keeping your core warm. A combination of a vest, arm and leg or knee warmers will do a great job of keeping you warm when riding.

You should start off cool, because you will warm up as you ride and find yourself overheating. Another source of warmth is undershirts, sleeveless and short sleeved undershirts work best. Long sleeves can be difficult because you can't take them off like arm warmers when you get hot. There are a lot of companies that make cycling specific undershirts, Craft, Defeet, Under Armour, etc. with a variety of warmth levels.



Your Head-

75 % of body heat is lost through the top of your head. A good skull cap will prevent a lot of that, especially if you are balding or have a shaved head. It will also help to prevent sunburn.

How to take care of your bike-

Keep your bike clean. Cleaning your bike is one way of making sure there are no problems, such as cracks in the frame, cables or housing that needs replacement and worn parts. Lube your chain and all moving parts. To lube your chain properly, it should be done about every week if you're riding at 3-4 days a week. Apply the lube to the top of the chain at the bottom of the run, after it leaves the rear derailleur and before the chain rings. As you apply it turn the pedals backwards, 5 revolutions is sufficient. Let it settle in for at least five minutes, overnight is best. Then wrap a rag around the chain in the same place, lower run, and pedal backwards changing the rag several times until all the exterior oil is gone. This will keep it from splashing up on you leg and all over your bike. The oil needs to be on the inside not the outside. Oiling the chain will extend the life of your chain considerably. If you wash your bike, use Dawn and a sponge so you don't scratch your frame. After it has dried, lube the chain and all pivot points on the bike. Such as where the derailleurs pivot, brake pivots and chain pulley wheels on the derailleurs.

Once a year have all your cables and housings replaced, headset serviced, bottom bracket and wheels checked for play or roughness. One important point, learn the nomenclature, parts, of your bike so you look like you know what you're talking about and don't get taken advantage of. You should also make sure you know how to change a flat tire. And always carry at least one spare tube with Co2 or a small pump, the Lezyne Road Drive Mini Pump is a great choice. Two tire irons and a mini tool in your saddle bag.

Should you have any questions or need clarification, don't hesitate to contact Craig White at cyclecraig@gmail.com or 818-522-0744