

TRAINING TIPS from Carmichael Training Systems (Week 2 of 12)



Pace yourself!

By Jane Rynbrandt, CTS Senior Coach

You've signed up for the Tour de Cure ride; you're excited and ready to start working toward your goal. A mistake that many new (and even some experienced) riders make is to do too much too soon. You're ready to go out and tackle your new goal, but let's take it one step at a time and make sure that you're doing it correctly! It takes a while to gradually make progress, and there are no shortcuts to performance, so it is best to start slow and continually build on your fitness. The last thing we want you to do is do too much the first few weeks and become burned out or too tired.

There are so many questions that arise when starting any new endeavor. Should I ride alone, or with a group? Where should I ride, how long, how fast? Well, let's take them one-by-one and get you out on the road on the right foot.

How fast should I go?

When you're starting out, you want to focus on building your endurance by maintaining a pace you can sustain for the majority of your ride. You want to ride at a pace that is comfortable for you, listen to your breathing and how your legs feel. You should be riding at a 5 or a 6 on a scale of 1-10 (1 being the easiest you could go and 10 being as hard as you can possibly ride). At this pace you should be able to speak to a rider next to you in complete sentences and even several sentences at a time. You should feel tired at the end of your ride, but not completely spent.

How many times and how long should I ride throughout the week?

If you are brand new to cycling, start with a few 30-45 minute rides. If you are more experienced you can up the time to 60 to 90 minutes. Your goals should be to ride 3-6 times a week. The last thing I want you to do is go out for a 3-4 hour ride and be tired for days! We will build you up to doing longer ride, but we want to do it gradually, not all at once.

I also want to talk about the quality of your rides. You're leading a busy lifestyle and time is of the essence! It is most important to maximize your time, especially if you have limited amounts of it due to work, family, and other obligations. Many of the athletes I train are executives who don't have a lot of free time, and they can reach their fitness and competitive goals on structured training programs that contain only 3-4 rides per week, 6-9 hours total.

Looking ahead: A little structure's a good thing

If you just go out and start riding your bike three or four times a week, you'll get faster...for a while but after a few weeks, your progress will stagnate and you'll stop getting faster and stronger. Adding a little structure to your weekly rides is crucial, but you say that you're not a pro athlete and don't want to follow some strict training program. That's ok; in the coming articles we're going to talk about how to incorporate some simple intervals into your riding to help you continue to improve.

Jane Rynbrandt is a Senior Coach for Carmichael Training Systems and an experienced road and mountain bike competitor. She has raced the Leadville 100 and the 4-day La Ruta de los Conquistadores mountain bike stage race across Costa Rica. For information about CTS coaching, camp, and performance testing call 866-355-0645, visit www.trainright.com, or register for our free training tips and a chance to win a signed copy of Chris Carmichael's "The Time-Crunched Cyclist" book at www.trainright.com/register.