

TRAINING TIPS from Carmichael Training Systems (Week 5 of 12)



Work in some intensity

By Carmichael Training Systems

Now that you're about seven weeks out from your event, it's likely you've been riding for a few weeks and have started to build some fitness and feel comfortable on the bike. To take your fitness and cycling ability to the next level you need to start to work in some intensity on the bike, in the form of intervals. But you say, "I'm not a Pro Cyclist, why do I need to do intervals?" To continue to improve your fitness you need to work some structure into your rides. Fortunately, it doesn't need to be complicated to be effective; you just need to add some more workload than you've been doing up to now.

While you could use a power meter or a heart rate monitor to monitor your intensity, you can also base your intensity on your breathing: Easy = barely out of breath; Endurance pace = need to breathe through your mouth; Challenging = labored but controlled breathing; Hard = uncontrollable panting. You'll want to spend most of your time at an endurance pace, and then increase your intensity to higher levels for relatively short periods. For instance, when you reach a hill your breathing might go from Endurance level to Challenging, but after the top of the hill you should return to Endurance intensity.

At this point in your Tour de Cure preparation, you should be ready to increase your total ride frequency to 3-5 rides per week and add one of the following interval sets into the middle of two of your 45-75-minute rides each week. Try to schedule these two interval rides at least one day apart so you have the energy to complete high-quality efforts.

Interval Set 1: Four 6-minute intervals at a challenging intensity and a cadence of about 90-95 rpm, separated by four minutes of easy spinning. If you're familiar with CTS Workouts, this is called a Steady State interval and time spent at this intensity improves power for sustained efforts, like climbs. If you can do these efforts on a climb, bring your cadence down to about 85rpm.

Interval Set 2: Six 3-minute intervals spinning a small gear (light resistance) at as high a cadence as you can hold without bouncing in the saddle. These are called Fast Pedal intervals and your heart rate and breathing rate will increase dramatically, even though the power output is not very high. In other words, your breathing will be in the Hard range even though you won't feel a tremendous workload in your legs. Take 3 minutes of easy riding between intervals. Fast Pedal intervals help to improve both pedaling mechanics and cardiovascular fitness.

These intervals are going to help you be as prepared as possible going into your event. One way to use these intervals might be:

Monday: Rest Day

Tuesday: 60-minute ride that includes Interval Set 1

Wednesday: 60-90 minute Endurance ride

Thursday: 60 minute ride that includes Interval Set 2

Friday: Rest Day or 30-minute recovery ride

Saturday: 2 hour group ride

Sunday: 90 minute ride that includes Interval Set 1

Carmichael Training Systems Founder and Head Coach Chris Carmichael is the 2012 National Spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure. This article is part of a series of articles prepared by Chris and the coaches at CTS to help you prepare for your Tour de Cure event. For more information on CTS and to sign up for our free newsletter and a chance to win a signed copy of "The Time-Crunched Cyclist" book, visit www.trainright.com/register.