

TRAINING TIPS from Carmichael Training Systems (Week 8 of 12)



Topping off on hydration and electrolytes

By Carmichael Training Systems

Hydration is just as important as fueling on the bike. Even if you have great fitness going into an event, failing to eat and drink properly during your event (and training) will ruin your day! If you lose 2% of your body weight due to dehydration it can negatively affect your performance by 10%!

This week we're going to talk about hydration and electrolytes. Just like training to be able to eat on the bike last week, the same goes for drinking on the bike. You should start drinking right away during your training ride or event, don't wait until 30 or 45 minutes into your ride to start drinking! You should be drinking a minimum of 1 bottle of fluid per hour. If it's a hot day you should be drinking more. At our cycling camps in the summer we encourage athletes to consume two bottles per hour on hot rides. And when you have a big training ride or are preparing for your event day, make sure you're hydrating prior to your ride. Whether before or during your ride, hydrate with a combination of water and electrolyte beverages. There are great electrolyte tabs on the market now, such as GU Brew Tabs, which provide you with the electrolytes even when you don't want or need to consume calories from a sports drink.

A simple test to do to see how you're doing with your hydration on the bike is to weigh yourself before your ride and after your ride. If you're doing a good job hydrating on the bike your weight will likely be lower after your ride, but not by much. As I said above a 2% drop (that's 3 lbs in a 150 lbs rider) your performance really starts to suffer. For every pound (16 ounces) that you've lost you need to rehydrate with at least 24 fld. oz of fluid (1.5x the weight you lost in ounces) within about 4 hours after your ride.

Now let's talk about electrolytes, specifically sodium, as it is the main player when it comes to electrolytes. The average cyclist benefits from consuming around 500-700 mg of sodium per hour. How do you know if you're a salty sweater and might possibly need more? Check your helmet, skin on your face and your clothing, is it salty? Do you have salt lines on your shorts? If you do, you probably should pay extra attention to the amount of sodium you're consuming during rides. You can get sodium from a number of different sources; most common is through an electrolyte drink or in a tablet or capsule form. Check the nutrition label on your sports drink and see how much sodium is in your drink! Different forms of sodium can cause some GI distress so be sure to try out products before your event. A blend of sodium citrate and sodium bicarbonate is usually tolerated best.

Everyone is different so it is very important that you try out different product and different combinations of products and find what works best for you in your training and rides. Remember practice during training will lead to success on event day!

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.