

Pedal Ypres Training Guide





Pedal Ypres

Am I fit enough?

This training plan assumes a base level of fitness before starting. This is a challenging effort, and the training needs to be appropriate to the physical demands you will face.

If you do not feel ready to complete a 90-minute continuous ride at an easy effort, start with going out on your bike for a few miles and build up your mileage until you're ready to start the plan.

You can do it!

Approximate distance: 290km

Day 1: Approx. 120km

Day 2: Approx. 101km

Day 3: Approx. 67km

You will be cycling in a group for this event and will be fully supported by Ride Captains and fellow participants.

Group 1: Approx average pace – 15mph

Group 2: Approx average pace – 12mph

(This may vary based on participant numbers)

This is a challenge that you will need to train for, and we recommend following the training plan.

You should have a basic level of fitness with the commitment to prepare properly in training for the challenge.





Pedal Ypres

Training for your ride is so important.

Being fit enough to cycle high mileage and on consecutive days is no mean feat, so make sure you're prepared and have adequate fitness levels for your ride.

So that you can fully enjoy your ride, we recommend you undertake prior training which should start several months before the event, allowing you to build up your fitness and stamina slowly.

The following is a guide for a person of average fitness.

Long-distance cycling isn't just about the distance, there are also external factors such as climate, terrain, hydration, hills and endurance to consider.

For this reason, we strongly recommend the bulk of your training should be actual on-road cycling.

Take your time and build up your strength gradually.



Top tips for getting started

GET INTO A ROUTINE

Your body likes consistency and patterns.

Regular consistent training will yield better results.

PLAN IT OUT

Keeping variety in your training and progressing at a sustained, sensible pace is vital.

KEEP TRACK

Use a GPS tracking app to record the lengths of your training. Get the sessions into your diary. Choose times and days that will work for you - don't set yourself up to fail!

KEEP IT SOCIAL

Train with other people. This can help you train more consistently.

Get involved on the [Facebook Group](#), [Strava](#) and online Sunday morning rides too.

SET TARGETS

Training plans contain weeks of effort. Motivate yourself and set some targets that are realistic within this journey to event day.

FUEL & RECOVER

Your body needs rest and fuel in order to train and improve. Sleep well, have a diet rich in protein and micronutrients supported by high-quality carbohydrate.

BUILD UP YOUR ENDURANCE

Don't go too big too soon, give every ride a purpose! Recovery rides, hill rides, sprints and endurance rides are all important.

HAVE FUN

Enjoy the process, and surroundings, document it to support your fundraising and think of how amazing you'll feel at the finish line.

Find more top tips here - [Skills & Techniques: Getting Started - British Cycling](#)



Take a look at The British Cycling website to find a local club - [Club Finder - Club Finder \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](#)



Bike Basics

Handlebars

Do you like to ride crouched over, head down and bum up? Or perhaps upright on the saddle, nice and tall? Your position affects your choice of handlebar, even your choice of bike.

If you ride leaning forward placing weight on your hands, the handlebars should be narrower than (or the same width as) your shoulders. The stem by which the handlebars are attached to the front forks should not be so long as to risk pitching you over the bars when braking hard.

If you plan to ride sitting upright or leaning very slightly forward then it is simply a matter of deciding where you can comfortably place your hands. There is a range of adjustable stems available to allow for these changes.

Drinking and Eating

Learn to drink and eat whilst riding. This is so important to keep you hydrated and energised.

No one wants to stop in the middle of a hill to take a drink and then lose all their power and momentum, so being able to get your bottle out of the holder and drink from it whilst still riding is a vital part of cycling.

If, after practising, you aren't able to do this, we highly recommend you get a Camel Back. These can be picked up easily from sports or outdoor stores and also online outlets like Amazon.

Saddle Height

A simple method to determine a good saddle height is to work out your inseam measurement and then put the saddle at 109% of this measurement when taken from the pedal axle to the top of the saddle's height.

Saddle Position

How far forward or back your saddle is will change the pressure/angle of your knee joint.

If you have small feet then push your saddle well forward. This will ease the strain on your knees.

Pedals

We recommend you try clip-in cleats, practise off the road and somewhere with a soft landing. Using these over traditional pedals enable you to push AND pull, resulting in using less energy and effort.

If you are unable, consider toe clips to secure your foot in the correct position.

Other Considerations

The saddle. Spread your load appropriately between these points. There are five pressure points; two hands and feet and your bottom.

Lowering the bars shifts some weight to the hands.



Get kitted out for training

YOUR BIKE: Bikes come in all shapes and sizes but comfort and fit matter more than cost. You don't need an expensive bike, we recommend a road or hybrid bike – mountain bikes are not suitable for this challenge. If you're not sure about your bike, [contact us](#) and we can help. It may be beneficial for you to book in a bike fit with your local shop or mechanic to ensure you are positioned correctly.

YOUR HELMET: A helmet is compulsory and should be the first part of your kit. A correct fit is important, so measuring your head circumference before purchase is recommended. Most modern helmets can be tailored to fit your head size, often with an adjustment dial.

YOUR CLOTHING: A base layer, short-sleeved jersey and bib-shorts with padding, paired with arm and knee warmers, gilet, and lightweight packable rain jacket should see you through poor weather. Consider gloves and overshoes and replace your short-sleeved jersey with a long-sleeved equivalent or soft shell. For all other garments, choose mid-weight sweat wicking technical fabrics. Cycling-specific shoes with hard soles and cleats that clip dramatically increase the efficiency of your power transference. If you decide to purchase these, then practise using them before going on the open road.

YOUR OTHER KIT: Punctures are the most mechanical issue you're likely to suffer so carry an inner tube or (ideally) two, tyre levers, and a pump. A multi-tool fitted with a selection of Allen keys, and sometimes a flat-bladed screwdriver, Torx bit, and chain-link extractor is another essential piece of on-the-go maintenance equipment and easily stowed in a jersey pocket or saddle bag. Finally, depending on your level of mechanical knowledge, a spare chain link and gear cable are worth space in your mobile tool kit. Make sure your bike is fitted with two cages for your water bottle – one should have electrolytes/squash and the other water.



Nutrition - Food before exercise

An hour before exercising, having a light snack that contains some protein and is higher in carbohydrate and lower in fat, can help you perform during your training and recover afterwards.

Choose a snack that you'll digest quickly like:

- Porridge
- Fruit, such as a banana
- A slice of wholegrain bread spread thinly with a nut butter
- A plain or fruit scone with low-fat cheese
- Yoghurt or non-dairy alternatives
- Cottage cheese and crackers
- A glass of milk or non-dairy alternatives

*source - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-and-drinks-for-sport/>



When life gets busy...

Something is always better than nothing! Keep 'ticking over' with easy-paced cycles. Once life returns to a level of normality so too can the cycling.

Cycle to enjoy cycling. No pressure, the same mileage or maybe less, but simply completed as an easy-paced cycle.

Get organised. Aim to predict your week and then place your cycles within it.

Grab opportunities. Be spontaneous and always have your kit to hand!

Maximise your weekends / days off. Use weekends for longer cycles and big quality sessions.

Be creative and set your own sessions if you can't get to your local club or regular rides.

Be flexible and listen to your body. Be prepared to adapt.



Pacing

This training plan stretches over a total of 16 weeks and is designed to get you ready to tackle this challenge. The plan mixes rides of varying lengths and intensities and you'll train in different perceived effort zones to maximise your training.

The goal of the plan is to adapt your body to the challenge of riding a multiday event.

This plan is not a tablet of stone and is designed to work for cyclists of a broad range of abilities. If you are more experienced, look to add some of the additional sessions or increase the time and effort. If you don't have time to complete all the sessions in the plan, prioritise long rides and aim for the lower end of the time options.





Training Plan Glossary

Hills

Riding hills will help develop more power and strength endurance in all your riding.

The plan includes short hill efforts, building to long continuous blocks of 8-10 minutes of hills.

For these you will likely need to repeat one hill several times to make up the volume required, just take an easy effort back down between each up hill effort.

Easy

These rides are carried out at a lower intensity but for longer durations, so they build your ability to perform exercise for prolonged periods of time.

"All day" pace, or classic long slow distance (LSD) training.

Strength and Conditioning (S&C)

Use these days to build up muscular strength.

These can be a mixture of weights at the gym or home strength building exercises – you can find out more about them here - <https://bit.ly/3ymL46O>

Cross Training (XT)

Anything you enjoy. Swimming, running, rowing, dancing or boxing can be used to improve your fitness.

Mixing up your activities allows you to work different muscle groups while giving your main cycling muscles a break.

Rest

Ensure you are taking these rest days. They are vital.

Think about incorporating stretch sessions.

Make It Personal

The following training plan is a guide only.

Please ensure you are using your own personal level of fitness and check with your GP before undertaking this plan.

Please adjust the plan to suit your level of fitness.

Before and after any exercise or training we recommend warming up and cooling down.

You'll find lots of information on warming up for your training and cooling down afterwards on the NHS website.
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/how-to-stretch.aspx>



RPE Scale

The RPE Scale is a self-reported scale ranging from 1 – 10, so it'll be completely unique to you as an individual. Next to the number on the RPE scale, you will find the corresponding pace which will be shown in the training plan.

Remember, that the plan can be changed to suit your fitness level, for example, if a ride is between 1 hr 45 and 2 hrs 30, ride for the time that suits you and your current fitness level.

RPE Scale	Rate of Perceived Exertion
1 (resting)	Very light activity – Hardly any exertion
2-3 (easy ride)	Light activity – Feels like you can maintain for hours. Easy to breathe and carry a conversation
4-6 (medium ride)	Moderate activity – Breathing heavily, can hold a short conversation. Still somewhat comfortable but becoming noticeably more challenging
7-8 (medium - hard ride)	Vigorous activity – Borderline uncomfortable. Short of breath, can speak a sentence
9 (hard ride)	Very hard activity – Very difficult to maintain exercise intensity. Can barely breathe and speak only a few words
10 (very hard ride)	Max effort activity – Feels almost impossible to keep going, completely out of breath, unable to talk. Cannot maintain for more than a very short time



Training Plans – Weeks 1 - 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	50 minute easy ride. With 5x6 minutes at a medium ride effort. 3 minutes easy spin recovery	Optional S&C / XT 30-45 minutes	45 minute easy ride	Rest	45-60 minutes with 3 x 8 minutes continuous hills at medium ride with 2-3 minutes easy recovery	90 minutes - 1 hour 45 minutes easy ride
Week 2	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	50 minutes easy ride	Optional S&C / XT 30-45 minutes	45 minute ride. Include 2x12 mins medium-hard ride, with 3 minutes easy recovery	Rest	45-60 minutes with 3 x 8 minutes continuous hills at medium ride with 2-3 minutes easy recovery	1 hour 45 minutes - 2 hours easy ride
Week 3	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	50 minutes to include 5 x 6 minutes at medium effort. with 90s minutes easy spin recovery	Optional S&C / XT 30-45 minutes	40 minutes easy ride	Rest	60 minutes with 3x10 minutes continuous hills with 2-3 minute easy recovery, hard effort	2 hours 30 minutes easy ride
Week 4	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	50 minutes easy ride	Optional S&C / XT 30-45 minutes	40 minutes easy ride	Rest	40 minute combined ride, 20 minutes easy effort, 20 minutes, hard effort	1 hour 45 minutes – 2 hours 30 minutes easy ride. Easy – Medium ride effort.



Training Plans – Weeks 5 - 8

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 5	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60 minutes to include 4x8 minutes, Medium ride effort with 2 minutes easy spin recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45 – 60 minutes	45-60 minutes easy ride	Rest	75 minutes with 3x10 minutes continuous hills with 2-3 minute easy recovery	2 hours - 2 hours 15 minutes Easy ride
Week 6	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60 minutes with final 40 minutes to include 2x15 minutes Medium ride effort, with 5 mins easy ride recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45 – 60 minutes	45-60 minutes easy ride	Rest	80 minute easy ride, with 4 x 8 minutes continuous hills with 2-3 minutes easy recovery	2 hours 30 minutes Easy ride
Week 7	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60 minutes with final 40 minutes to include 2x15 minutes, medium ride effort, with 5 mins easy recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45 – 60 minutes	45-60 minutes easy ride	Rest	90 minutes easy ride with the final 20 minutes hard effort	2 hours 15 – 2 hours 30 minutes with the final 45 minutes working a big gear including rolling hills if possible
Week 8	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	45 minutes easy with the final 20 at medium – hard ride effort	Optional S&C / XT 30– 60 minutes	45 minutes with 5 x 4 minutes hard effort with 90s easy recovery.	Rest	45-60 minutes easy ride	Ideal weekend for a 50-60km sportive or group ride. If not 2 hours 30 minutes- 3 hours with the final 45 minutes at medium to hard



Training Plans – Weeks 9 - 12

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 9	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60-75 minutes with 6 x 6 minutes at medium ride effort. Rest 2-5 mins between sets	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	45-75 minutes combined ride. Hill climbs and easy ride recovery	Rest	2 hours easy ride	2.5-3 hours easy ride
Week 10	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60-75 minutes with 6 x 6 minutes at medium ride effort. Rest 2-5 mins between sets	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	65-75 minutes combined ride. Hill climbs and easy ride recovery	Rest	90 minutes with 3 x 8 minutes continuous hills, 3 minutes, easy recovery between sets.	3.5 hours easy ride
Week 11	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	60-75 minutes with 6 x 6 minutes at medium – hard ride. Rest 2-5 mins between sets	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	Rest	45-75 minutes combined ride. Hill climbs and easy ride recovery	3.5-4 hours with 3 x 10 minutes continuous hills with 3-5 minutes easy recovery between sets	2 hours - 2.5 hours easy ride
Week 12	Rest and recovery Optional S&C or stretch session	45 minutes with 2 x 15 at medium/ hard ride with 5 minutes spin recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	Rest	45-75 minutes combined ride. Hill climbs and easy ride recovery	4 hours easy ride	2.5 - 3 hours + to include 3 x 10 minutes continuous hills at with 4 minutes easy recovery between sets



Training Plans – Weeks 13 - 16

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 13	60-90 minutes easy ride	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes to include 8x3 minutes hill climbs, easy ride 2-3 minute recovery	Optional 45-60 minutes. easy recovery ride or XT	Rest	4-5 hours easy ride	4 – 6 hours easy ride with hills
Week 14	60-90 minutes easy ride	90 minutes - 2 hours with 4x10 minutes hills with 3 mins easy ride recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes to include 8 x 3 minutes at hard ride effort	Rest	90 minutes with 3 x 10 minutes max effort	3 - 5 hours with regular climbs throughout. Aim for controlled easy pace throughout
Week 15	Optional 30-40-minutes easy ride or XT	Rest	50-60 minutes Max effort for 6 minutes, 4 mins easy ride recovery	45 minutes easy ride	Rest	60 minutes with the final 25 minutes hard ride effort	2.5 – 3.5 hours easy ride
Week 16	30-40 minutes easy ride	Rest	25 minutes easy, check bike	EVENT DAY	EVENT DAY	EVENT DAY	EVENT DAY

Stretching

1 GLUTES (MAXIMUS AND MINIMUS)

Sit with one leg out straight. Cross the other leg over, keeping knee bent. To feel the stretch in the buttocks, hug bent knee into chest. Keep back straight.



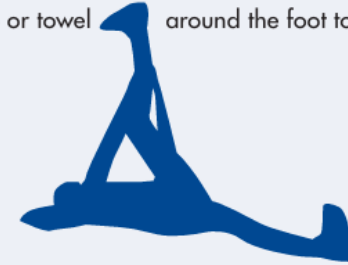
2 HAMSTRING (ORIGIN POINT IN BUTTOCKS AND GLUTES)

Lay on back. Pull one leg up to chest and hug with both arms. Keep one leg straight on floor, with the ankle flexed.



3 HAMSTRING (MIDDLE OR 'BELLY')

Lay on back. Keep one leg on the ground. Raise other leg, holding back of the calf. Bring up to feel the stretch in the middle (or 'belly') of the hamstring. Use a rope or towel around the foot to help if needed.



4 HAMSTRING (INSERTION POINT – I.E., BEHIND KNEE)

Repeat stretch number three but this time with a straight leg. Flex ankle to feel stretch in behind the knee. Use a rope or towel around the foot to help if you need to.

5 LOWER BACK / IT BAND

Lay on back. Bring one leg up to chest and rotate to lower knee to floor using opposite arm as a weight. Keep one leg straight and both shoulders on floor. Other arm should be straight out at shoulder level.



Stretching

6 GROIN STRETCH (ADDUCTORS)

Keeping the back straight, take the foot to one side and the knee over, but not further than your foot, transferring weight to the bent leg. You should feel the stretch on the inner thigh of the straight leg.



7 QUADS

This can also be done lying on your side in a straight line. Grasp the top of the ankle with the hand on the same side and bring heel to backside. Hip should be pushed forward.



8 HIP FLEXORS

Kneel on one knee. Take the other leg forward with a large stride. Push hips downwards until a stretch is felt in the front of the hips/quads.



9 CALF STRETCH (GASTROCNEMIUS)

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Take one foot forward and keep feet parallel. Maintain the arch in the forward foot by pressing down with the toes to stop it rolling in. Straighten back leg and feel the stretch in the top area of the calf.



10 CALF STRETCH (SOLEUS)

Repeat position as for number nine, but this time bend back leg to take the stretch into the lower calf above the Achilles tendon.



REMEMBER...

- Don't forget to stretch both legs and to repeat holding the stretch for 40–45 seconds each time.
- Never stretch cold muscles. The main benefit for endurance runners is stretching after the run.
- Unfortunately, running makes your muscles shorter and tighter, so a good stretching routine will help restore muscle balance and allow you to be more flexible.
- Do not underestimate the value of cross-training, massage and stretching in your schedule.



Remember to rest!

Rest is essential for recovery. If your plan includes a rest day, it's there to help your body heal, repair, and restore energy. Use it to step back from training, prioritise extra sleep, and avoid tiring activities like heavy DIY.

Aim for at least one full rest day each week. Many people need two or three. With busy work and family schedules, all sources of fatigue add up, so consider your whole lifestyle when deciding how much rest you need to keep progressing.

Sleep is equally important. Good sleep supports injury prevention, mood, appetite, muscle growth, repair, and immune health. During deep sleep, your body releases key growth hormones needed to adapt to training. Even if you can't always get ideal hours, try to improve your sleep habits and aim for a little more each night.





GOOD LUCK!

Without wonderful fundraisers like you, we couldn't continue to provide lifelong support to serving personnel, veterans and their families that we do. **Thank you.**

myevent@britishlegion.org.uk

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