



Pedal to Paris Training Guide



Am I fit enough?

This training plan assumes a basic 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, take the first step and get out on your bike, building up the pace and time in the saddle slowly.

Difficulty level: Challenging

Time to complete: 4 days

Approximate distance: 460km / 285 miles

Day 1: Approx. 136km / 85 miles

Day 2: Approx. 135km / 84 miles

Day 3: Approx. 104km / 65 miles

Day 4: Approx. 100 km / 63 miles

This is a demanding challenge, 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 - cycling a few miles to and from work is not going to be enough preparation for Pedal to Paris.

Training for your ride is so important.

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

So 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

HAVE 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. Take a look at [The British Cycling website](#) to find a local club.

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](#)

Tips for riding in a group

Communicate

Successful group riding is all about good communication. Along with verbal calls, there are a number of hand signals that you should be aware of. If you are unsure what a signal means, ask. Always pass signals on through the group. Communication is especially important if you're in the front of the group when you'll need to point out obstructions, hazards and any upcoming turns.

Look through the group

Don't just stare at the wheel or backside in front. Look through the group at the road ahead and try to anticipate how the riders ahead will respond to any obstacles or terrain.

Share the lead

Don't just sit and draft for miles on end - take your turn leading at the front of the group.

Easy on the brakes

Avoid grabbing handfuls of brakes. Freewheel, sit more upright or use light braking to adjust your speed gradually. This is one of the reasons why looking through the group and anticipating the actions of the riders in front is so important.

Don't overlap

It's okay to leave a bit of a gap to the wheel ahead and even to ride slightly to one side of it. However, always avoid overlapping your front wheel with the rear wheel of the rider in front as, if they have to swerve to avoid a hazard or just have a lapse in concentration, they'll take out your wheel.

Overtaking

If you find your group is catching one ahead, only overtake when you can do so safely and while maintaining 1m+ distancing from other riders. Communicate with the riders in your group so that everyone is aware you're passing another group and give the riders in the group you're passing a shout that you're coming by. Remember a sportive isn't a race and, especially in these challenging times, you should rein in those competitive instincts.

Get kitted out

YOUR BIKE. Bikes come in all shapes and sizes. Getting a well fitted bike you feel comfortable on is crucial but don't feel you need to spend thousands on the latest carbon-fibre road bike, your fitness and training is more important. Make sure you check permitted cycles for Pedal to Ypres.

YOUR HELMET. Helmets are compulsory for sportive events and should be the first part of your kit. A correct fit is everything with a helmet, 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 but also 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 in, 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 a cage for your water bottle.



Cycling – The 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. If you are unable to, consider toe clips to help secure your foot in the correct position. Using these over traditional pedals enable you to push AND pull, resulting in using less energy and effort.

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.



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/>

Pacing

This training plan stretches over a total of 16 weeks. It is designed to get you ready to tackle this challenging 4 day, 460 km ride. The plan mixes rides of varying lengths and intensities. You'll train in different perceived effort zones to maximise your training for Pedal to Paris. 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 threshold and long rides and aim for the lower end of the time options.



After starting the plan and cycling for a few months, you'll have a great idea of what your average pacing will be for the event. This will help you know which group will best suit your ability on the event.

Cycling speeds:

- 12mph - 14mph
- 15mph - 17mph
- 18mph +

Training Plan Glossary

Hills

Riding hills will help develop more power and strength endurance in all of 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 uphill 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/3ymL46) -
<https://bit.ly/3ymL46>
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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.

On the below link, you'll find lots of information on warming up for your training and cooling down afterwards.
<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 medium ride. With 5x6 minutes at a medium 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 with 2-3 minutes easy recovery. Medium effort	90 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 medium ride. Include 2x12 mins medium-hard ride, with 3 minutes easy recovery.	Rest	45-60 minutes with 3 x 8 minutes continuous hills with 2-3 minutes easy recovery. Medium - Hard	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 ride 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 ride, 20 minutes easy effort, 20 minutes, Hard effort.	1 hour 45 minutes – 2 hours 30 minutes - medium ride.

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 spin 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 spin 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 30 – 2 hours 45 minutes medium ride 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 ride with the final 20 at medium – hard effort	Optional S&C / XT 30– 60 minutes	45 minutes with 5 x 4 minutes hard effort with 90s easy ride recovery.	Rest	45-60 minutes easy ride.	Ideal weekend for a 50-60km sportive or group ride. If not 2 hours 45 minutes- 3 hours easy ride + with the final 45 minutes at medium to hard ride.

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. 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. Rest 2-5 mins between sets	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	65-75 minutes combined ride. Hill climbs and easy 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 recovery	3.5-4 hours with 3 x 10 minutes continuous hills with 3-5 minutes easy recovery between sets	3.5 hours easy - medium 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 recovery	4 hours easy ride	3.5 - 4 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 ride recovery ride or XT	Rest	4-5 hours easy ride	4 – 6 hours easy to medium ride with hills
Week 14	60-90 minutes easy ride	90 minutes - 2 hours with 4x10 minutes hills easy-medium ride with 3 mins recovery	Optional S&C / XT 45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes to include 8 x 3 minutes at hard ride	Rest	90 minutes with 3 x 10 minutes max effort hard ride	5 - 6 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 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



Good Luck

We couldn't continue to provide lifelong support to serving personnel, veterans and their families without the help of wonderful fundraisers such as yourself.

Thank you.