



Training Tips from Olympic Cyclist Jamie Staff

I'd like to take part but I'm not sure I can cycle 75 miles.

If you haven't cycled for a long time and have never ridden anywhere near that distance then yes it might be too far, but you can ride one of the shorter routes (45 or 47 miles) if you wish. There will be support vehicles looking out for people who may be struggling.

If you do ride a bicycle a little, but have never ridden that far before then you probably will be able to do it. It will just take a little preparation before hand, such as eating correctly and having the right foods in your system before you leave and also continuing to eat while you ride.

It will be all about pacing yourself and not trying to keep up with someone who maybe more used to distance riding.

How long would an averagely fit, social cyclist take to complete the distance?

75 miles is a long way, unless you're Mark Cavendish! A professional would probably be able to do it in about 2 to 2.5 hours.

An amateur who does cycle for fitness will probably be able to do it in 4-5 hours. A complete beginner will need to pace themselves; so will look to do it in 6-8 hours. These times may not include stops to eat.

Do I have to have an expensive bike?

Not at all. The more expensive the bike, the lighter it generally is. So going up a few of the hills might be a little harder, but generally on the flat roads you wouldn't need to pay too much. As long as your bike is in good condition, such as correct pressure in the tyres, brakes not rubbing, seat at the correct height, then you should be fine.

What should I wear?

Look ahead of time to see what the weather forecast is going to be. If there's no rain scheduled and it's not too cold, I would suggest wearing a tracksuit that isn't too baggy. For your top half I would suggest wearing a few thin layers. Maybe bring a back pack so you can take layers off as you get hotter or add them on if it gets cold.

If you have or can afford proper cycling kit, then I would suggest using it. It's very light, but keeps you warm and is not going to wave around in the air causing you to slow down! The shorts have padding in too, to stop you getting a sore bum!

If it's scheduled to rain, then wear a thin waterproof jacket over your top. I would also suggest wearing a helmet and gloves in case you do happen to fall.

What should I eat before and during the challenge?

In the days leading up to the event, try to eat healthy high carb meals like pasta. Maybe add slightly more to the plate than you normally would or even an additional serving in the two days leading up to the event. Make sure you're drinking lots of water (not soda) as this will help you stay hydrated.

On the day, have a big breakfast 2 hours before you set off. Once off, have a little snack bar

or gel bar every hour, plus try to drink a 16 ounce bottle of water mixed with either fruit juice or other carb drink every hour. This will stop you getting cramp. It may also be wise for those who are novices to stop and have a small meal half way.

What tips would you have for me if I hit the pain barrier during the challenge?

In cycling terms, it's called "Bonking"! It's not pleasant, but will generally happen if you haven't had enough fuel (water and food). If you do feel like you've hit a wall and can't go any more, try resting for 30 minutes and eat something substantial. Try setting off again, and if you still don't feel well, or are in too much pain, STOP. Call for help or wait for the support vehicle to pick you up.

How can I stop myself from aching the next day?

If you don't do any training prior to the event, then ride 75 miles on the day, the chances are you will be sore! I take Ibuprofen to help with soreness, but consult with your doctor first regarding any medication.

If you have prepared, even a little, then you shouldn't get too bad.

Most people, when given a challenge will train for the event the week before it. This is probably the worst thing you could do. If anything train the week before that and have the week before the event as an easy week.

We do all our training for months and years leading up to an event. The 10 days leading up to a competition we actually take it really easy. This gives our bodies time to freshen up before our event.

Ideally you should try and get at least one ride in a week for 8-10 weeks before the event. If you do this, your body will start to get used to riding and the demands it places on you body. You don't need to ride 70 miles a week, just 10-20 miles a week would drastically make a difference when it came time to ride 70!

An example training planner for beginner:

10 Weeks to go: 5 miles

9 Weeks to go: 5 miles

8 Weeks to go: 10 miles

7 Weeks to go: 10 miles

6 Weeks to go: 15 miles

5 Weeks to go: 15 miles

4 Weeks to go: 20 miles

3 Weeks to do: 25 miles

2 Weeks to go: 30-40 miles

1 Week to go: 10-15 miles

Ride day: Pace yourself!

I'm currently losing weight but am still overweight, is it safe to take part?

If you are on a diet, which generally means that you are lowering your calorie intake to allow your body to burn off those extra pounds then please be careful how you approach the ride. I would speak to your doctor if you have any concerns, but generally speaking, I would try to make sure you get an average person's daily calorie intake for the few days leading up to the ride. You are going to exhaust so many calories on the ride that you will easily burn off any you just put on, but you need to make sure you have enough blood sugar to stop you potentially passing out. I would encourage you to speak to your nutrition expert or doctor for advice, as everyone's situation is different.

I would just say, use your common sense.