

Training Guide

When training for an extended ride like the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure, it's important to remember that the most challenging part of any long-distance tour is the daily repetition of riding. This is also the most important obstacle that spending time on your bike and training can help overcome. Additionally, factors such as age, previous cycling experience, and personal training condition can help or hinder one's ability to prepare for an extended ride.

However, before you get discouraged, remember that with a little work, a lot of determination, and the support of an awesome team behind you, nearly anyone can ride a bike for the distances we'll be covering this summer! Fuller Center Bicycle Adventurers range from beginners to seasoned cyclists, young and old—you can totally do it! Here are some of our training tips to get you ready to ride safely and comfortably:

- First, if you're been away from cycling or exercise for a while, or have any health concerns we suggest that you talk about your plans with your physician before starting a training program.
- **Bike Fit:** Make sure your bike is fit well to you and the type of riding you're planning to do—a long distance supported tour. You can do your own research on proper bike fit (there's a lot of information online), or talk to a professional at your local bike shop. A professional bike fitting can be expensive, but many people find they make a big difference in their riding comfort... plus if you tell your bike shop what you're up to they may even give you a discount (it never hurts to ask)!
- **Start small:** You should start your training at a distance and speed that you're comfortable with and work up to longer rides and the minimum average speed (12 mph). You won't need to put in the sort of mileage we'll do on the trip. In fact, the only occasion most people have the time to bike 4-8 hours every day is when they're on an epic journey like the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure, and that's ok! Some of your "training" will actually come while you're on the ride itself—after a week or two your body will begin to adapt and things will get a little easier. A good minimum goal is to complete a ride that's at least about 2/3 the length of longest ride you'll do on the trip, and log some back-to-back long rides on consecutive days to get used to spending time in the saddle.
- **Know yourself:** Keep in mind that training needs can vary greatly between individuals and can depend on a lot of factors, including age, experience and current physical fitness. We have learned that those who are older (especially if inexperienced in cycling) typically require a greater amount of training to obtain the needed level of speed and endurance. In fact some of our successful older riders have told us they logged as many as 2,000 miles in training, while other younger riders who are in good shape from other physical activity have been successful with as little 500 training miles. We generally leave it to each rider to determine for themselves whether they will be in adequate physical condition for the event, but if you have questions don't hesitate to give us a call!
- **Cross-training:** Basic cardiovascular fitness and strength is very important to the successful completion of the ride, and can be developed through many different kinds of activities (running, swimming, etc.). However, of equal importance is the ability to just be "in the saddle" for hours every day. For that reason, the focus of your training should be cycling, but if you'd like, you can add other endurance activities into your training. Exercises that strengthen core muscles like crunches, planks, or yoga can also be beneficial.

- **Indoor vs. Outdoor:** You can also incorporate some cycling indoors into your training, especially if it helps you train through cold winter months, or if you're able to fit it more easily in your schedule. You can get a training stand to ride your bike indoors which is a great way to log more time in your saddle. Some of our past riders have also found spinning classes or training on a standard exercise bike to be beneficial. Make sure you do at least some of your training out on the open road, though! It'll help you get used to what the ride will be like, and give you an opportunity to practice some key cycling skills listed below.
- **Be consistent, but avoid overtraining:** With any training plan, consistency is the key. Create a training routine you can stick to and train regularly from week to week. Consistency also means don't make up for lost time. If you do miss a few of your planned workouts, start with your training plan again where you left off—trying to cram missed training into a shorter amount of time will put you at greater risk for injury. Similarly, try to avoid overtraining. Don't push your body to its limits with every workout, and try to finish most of them feeling like you could have done more. Be sure to take your rest days seriously as well. During rest your body adapts to training and it's when you'll experience the biggest gains in strength!
- **Don't forget the most important thing... have fun!** Try finding a group to ride with—talk to your local bike shop or search online for bike clubs or group rides. Riding with a group can make the miles fly by, help motivate you to train a little harder and more consistently, and help you learn more about some of the key cycling skills listed below. Try searching for fun new routes to ride on websites like mapmyride.com or using the google maps bike routes feature, ask your friends or family to come out and support you with snacks and encouragement on your longer rides, or sign up for an organized event for that big training ride!

A note on speed: As you've probably gathered, we require that riders be able to keep a minimum average speed of 12mph on the summer adventure. We believe that, with training, this speed should be an accessible goal for beginning riders.

On the other end of the spectrum, we do not set an absolute maximum speed. However, it's important to us that this ride is accessible for cyclists of a range of abilities, and this means we have to look out especially for the beginners. For those more experienced cyclists who can keep a higher pace, you will be expected to stay within at most 20 miles of the back of the pack to ensure that our rest stop system works for everyone. This may mean decreasing your pace a little or spending more time at rest stops. Remember that the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure is not a race, but an invitation for all who have the drive and courage to be involved in our mission to end poverty housing... and know that your skills and expertise will be an incredible asset to the team!

Training Plans

Past riders have prepared for this adventure in so many different ways! Some follow a very strict training plan while others just start biking when they have time. Again, this is where it's important to know your own body, physical fitness, and cycling experience level. Here are a few training ideas that we've found to be a helpful starting point, but don't let them limit or intimidate you. Do what works for you and your schedule, and remember, any training is better than none! Get out and ride!

The "Give Up Your Car" Plan

Total training mileage = 500 miles

Try biking instead of taking your car on trips to work, school, the grocery store, etc.! You could stick to just leaving your car at home, add in a few true training rides, or join an organized ride to get some experience with higher mileage (50-75 miles). To add a little more structure, try keeping track of the miles you ride and aiming for a goal of biking 50-100 miles per week and / or a total of about 500 miles before the start of the trip.

Beginner Training Plan (2-3 days/week)

Total training mileage = 500 miles

This plan is a good starting point for riders who either have some riding experience or are physically fit from other athletic activities. It works up to a 75 mile ride (which is about 2/3 the distance of our longest ride on the trip) and includes a couple of back-to-back long rides.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Intensity	Easy	Optional	Brisk	Rest	Optional	Pace	Pace	
Week 1	5		10	Rest		20		35
Week 2			10	Rest		20		30
Week 3	10			Rest		30		40
Week 4			10	Rest		35	20	65
Week 5	10			Rest				10
Week 6	10			Rest		45	35	90
Week 7	10			Rest		55		65
Week 8			10	Rest		30		40
Week 9	10			Rest		75		85
Week 10			10	Rest		30		40
Rest Week				The adventure begins!				0

Beginner Training Plan (3-4 days / week)

Total training mileage = 750 miles

This plan is a good starting point for riders who have minimal riding experience. It works up to a 75 mile ride (which is about 2/3 the distance of our longest ride on the trip).

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Intensity	Easy	Optional	Brisk	Rest	Optional	Pace	Pace	
Week 1	5		5	Rest		20	10	40
Week 2	7		8	Rest		25		40
Week 3	10		10	Rest		30	20	70
Week 4	10		15	Rest		35		60
Week 5	10		10	Rest		40	20	80
Week 6	10		10	Rest		45		65
Week 7	10		15	Rest		50	35	110
Week 8	10		15	Rest		60	30	115
Week 9	10		15	Rest		75		100
Week 10	10		10	Rest		30		50
Rest Week	10		10	The adventure begins!				20

Intermediate Training Plan

Total training mileage = 1300 miles

This plan is for riders who have been able to maintain a schedule of riding about 50 miles per week for at least about 3 or 4 weeks and can devote a little more time to training (about 10 to 15 hours per week). It also works up to a 100 mile (century!) ride to provide a little more confidence at that distance.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Intensity	Easy	Pace	Brisk	Rest	Pace	Pace	Pace	
Week 1	6	10	5	Rest	10	30	10	71
Week 2	7	11	8	Rest	11	35	15	87
Week 3	8	13	10	Rest	13	40	25	109
Week 4	10	14	15	Rest	14	45	20	118
Week 5	10	15	20	Rest	15	50	20	130
Week 6	10	15	25	Rest	15	55	25	145
Week 7	15	15	25	Rest	15	65	30	165
Week 8	15	15	25	Rest	15	75	20	165
Week 9	15	15	25	Rest	15	100	20	190
Week 10	15	15	25	Rest	10	30	5	100
Rest Week	10	Rest	10	The adventure begins!				20

(Training plans adapted from www.bicycletouringtales.com/training2%20info.html)

Definition of Intensity Levels:

Optional = You can choose: rest, take an easy spin for no more than 10 miles, or cross-train (run, swim, yoga, etc.).

Easy = This is a recovery ride and you should barely break a sweat (unless you're training in the south Georgia heat like we are)! Ride a speed at or below your goal pace.

Pace = Ride at the speed you want to maintain during the trip (about 12 to 20 mph).

Brisk = Bike 2 to 5 mph faster than you plan to ride on the trip.

Key Cycling Skills

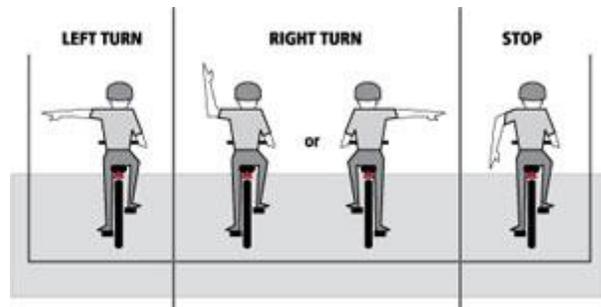
The Basics

Some of the fundamental skills you should practice as you're training:

- Riding through turns, crossing railroad tracks, and avoiding obstacles
- Drinking water while riding
- Getting in and out of "clipless" pedals
- Riding safely in traffic, and safely turning your head to watch for traffic coming behind you
- Changing flats or making small repairs on the road (we'll also go over this during orientation, and you'll be an expert after a few weeks on the ride!)
- Warding off dogs (ride long enough and you'll meet some!)

Hand and Voice Signals

There are a number of signals we'll use out on the road to communicate both with cars and fellow cyclists. We'll go over these in detail again during orientation, but here's a quick overview so you can begin practicing while you're cycling in traffic or with a group.



source: www.virginiadot.org/programs/bk-laws.asp

- *Right turn, Left turn, Slowing or Stopping:* See the image at the right for the appropriate hand signals, and be sure to call out "Stopping" or "Slowing" when in a group!
- *Road Hazard:* point down to the right or left at the hazard, and announce it ("Pothole up" for example).
- *"Car up":* announce a car approaching from the opposite direction
- *"Car back":* announce a car approaching from behind.
- *"Car left / right":* announce a car approaching from the left / right.
- *"Passing" or "On your left":* announce when passing another cyclist or pedestrian. Never pass on the right!

Drafting

Many cyclists choose to practice an energy-saving riding style called "drafting" because with practice, and constant alertness to other riders, this method of following in another rider's slipstream can be a rewarding and leg-saving practice. However, because of the increased risk,

we do not encourage drafting, and you'll never be required to draft during the trip. If you do choose to however, here are some basic drafting etiquette and safety guidelines:

- When riding in close proximity to other riders take extra care to call out road hazards such as "hole!"... "road kill!"... "car back!"...or "slowing!"
- Stay to the right of the white line when possible and ride single file.
- While leading a pace line, make a conscious effort to hold a steady speed that those following you can maintain. Watch your computer if necessary.
- If at all possible, do not use brakes in a pace line, instead anticipate decreases in speed and do something called "soft-pedaling" where a rider keeps spinning the pedals, but without applying power. This allows a rider to easily resume the previous pace of the group without rapid decelerations or accelerations. However, keep your hands on your brakes and be constantly vigilant of both the other riders and traffic in case there is a need to suddenly slow down or avoid a collision.
- Share the work load. No one wants to lead or be led all the time. Take a turn pulling at the front of the line and then signal to the next rider and peel off the front (when it's safe and traffic is clear) and slow down slightly to gradually drop to the back of the line. (See diagram below.) This rotation is the great thing about a pace line: the work is shared!

Here's a graphic to help illustrate a simple pace line:

