

How to prepare your body in the days leading up to the ride.

A solid training plan in the months leading up to the big ride plays an important role in your success, but it's what you do in the final weeks that can push you over the finish line faster or leave you tired and running on fumes come ride day. Follow this pre-ride training checklist to get the most out of your training and prepare your body for peak performance.

✓ Start tapering your program

If you've been following a specific cycling program, it likely has a taper already built into it. This taper allows your body to rest and recover so you're not tapped-out prior to the ride. Not following a program? "A good rule of thumb is to reduce your volume by almost 50 percent a week or two prior to the ride while maintaining a little intensity," says Darcy Norman, a performance therapist and specialist at Athletes' Performance.

✓ Work on mobility and stability

As you begin to cut down your training, fill that time by focusing on improving your mobility and stability to counteract the hours you put in on the bike, says Norman. It's like cleaning your bike before ride day. It helps eliminate the risk of a mechanical problem (injury).

✓ Remember to recover

A mix of active recovery—taking a break from serious training and playing golf, tennis, or another low-impact sport—and passive recovery, like getting a massage or sitting in a hot or cold tub, gives your broken down muscles time to recover, your mind time to rest, and helps you avoid burnout. [Try these recovery techniques.](#)

✓ Practice your ride day nutrition

Trying a new food or beverage to fuel your body on ride day can leave you with an upset stomach, cramping issues, or a lack of energy. Test out any new bars, snacks, or sports drinks during a few of your training rides to figure out what works best for you.

✓ Take a deep breath

Practice deep breathing during your training to make sure you're oxygenating your muscles to perform your best, says Janet Jin, a physical therapist at Athletes' Performance. Proper breathing allows your body to metabolize oxygen and use it to push through the long rides. [Read more about performance breathing.](#)

✓ Warm-up on ride day

On the day of the ride, do Movement Preparation, or Movement Prep. It helps warm up your body, gets blood flowing to your muscles, and prepares your body to perform at its best. [Learn more about Movement Prep.](#)