



## *Tips for Successful Training*

Before beginning any intensive training, make sure you are cleared by your doctor to participate in a long distance cycling event.

Planning your goals, training objectives and a training program take very little time and is extremely valuable. Take a few minutes to think about your goals for your training. When can you make time to ride, where you can ride, and who might you ride with? Make sure your goals are achievable and monitor them weekly. It can be helpful to break larger goals into smaller, more specific objectives that have a time goal attached to them (e.g. "Ride 40 miles by June 15 without getting off the bike before 20 miles). These goals can change, but it helps to commit them to paper.

Before getting on your bike for the season, make sure it is in good working order. It's a good idea to take it to a bike shop and get a tune-up. Plan for another tune-up about 1 to 2 weeks before your big ride.

In addition to having a working bike, you should have the proper tools to fix a flat, spare tubes, snacks and water with you.

Be sure you are consuming a diet that is healthy and compatible for training. Consuming healthy snacks prior and during long rides will help your body avoid running out of energy, otherwise known as the "bonk." You want to build up a good supply of carbs (stored as glycogen) in your muscles so that you can use that energy on your rides. Consult with a nutritionist if you are unsure of proper diet.

Staying hydrated will help you during those hot days on the bike when you will sweat a lot while training. Try bringing a reusable water bottle to work and taking small sips throughout the day.

Make it a goal to consume two full water bottles on top of what you will drink when cycling or working out that day. It's difficult at first especially if you are not used to drinking lots of water, but your body will thank you and you will have more energy during the day.

While training, eat a light snack and drink plenty of water or sports drinks during breaks and while you're riding. To avoid "bonking" or dehydration, you should follow the rule of "drink before you're thirsty; eat before you're hungry." In summer-like weather, you should finish at least one water bottle per hour, if not more. Don't spend too much time at the rest stops. If you rest too long, your body thinks it's done for the day, and then you'll have to warm up all over again when you get back on the bike.

After one hour or many hours in the saddle, it's always a good idea to stretch. Your muscles have worked hard and chances are you are carrying some tension and stress in your neck, back and shoulders. Be sure to stretch your calves, quads, glutes and hamstrings. Be good to your upper body as well, stretching out the fingers, shoulders, chest, sides and neck.

Consider treating yourself to a massage every three weeks during your training program. This is excellent for working out any knots, working the hydrogen ions (lactate build-up) out of your muscles, and effectively draining the lymphatic system. As a bonus, you'll enjoy a good night's sleep.