

Heather Sullivan, mom, wife, student, full-time employee and Tour de Pink Rider

As you try to get your head around training and preparing yourself for the ride, I wanted to share some of the ways I train, and offer up some thoughts and suggestions to help you be successful.

I work full-time with a crazy job that has me working all hours of the day and night and traveling around the world. I am a full-time MBA student. I am a mom of two very active teenage boys, and a wife to a man whose travel schedule rivals mine. When I'm not on the road, he travels. To maintain our sanity, our schedules are a carefully constructed game of Tetris.

Based on this, I've had to become very deliberate about how I train and prepare for Tour de Pink. Here are some of my thoughts:

- [Training Guide](#) – Someone worked hard to set up suggested workouts and weekly mileage goals. Use it. It will help. If you get too far behind, don't stress out or give up. It's a guide and a resource, not facts. I use it as a gauge to know how many miles I should aim for in a given week.
- **Be Disciplined** – Schedule your workouts like you would schedule a meeting. For me, 6am spin classes seem to work great, and weekend rides when I can squeeze them in. These scheduled workouts are in my calendar, and I know we need to honor them.
- **Multi-Task** – If you are riding on an indoor trainer, you can “kill two birds with one stone” – For me, that means popping on a school lecture and watching that instead of a movie for long indoor training rides, or listening to audiobooks on days when I can't fathom watching another lecture. **Safety Note** – I do this on my indoor trainer or at the gym on a stationary bike. Please don't try either of these tactics on the open road.
- **Squeeze in Bike Time** – If you live in a place where you can easily commute to work, commit to riding at least once per week. Try for more, if possible. My office is 6.3 miles each way. Those 12.6 mile rides are a great way for me to gear up for the day (or blow off steam!), and every mile counts towards training.
- **Be Smart About Your Training Time** – If I have an hour or 90 minutes where I can ride my bike, I aim for a hillier route so I can work out a different set of muscle groups. If I have more time, I try to find variety in my terrain – city (frequent stops) + quiet roads (get in your zone); hilly (practicing effective gear shifting) + flat (work on cadence; throw in a couple of sprints for fun).

Even off the bike, there are little ways you can squeeze in some training:

- **Commercial Breaks** – If I'm sitting at home watching TV with the kids, a great way to squeeze in a workout is to use the commercial breaks – 2 minutes of lunges or squats every 8 to 10 minutes adds up. Same goes for foam rolling those hip flexors and quads – What could be better than a little foam rolling while watching the latest episode of Walking Dead?!
- **Stairs, Stairs, Stairs** – Any opportunity you have to take the stairs, go for it! Climbing stairs is a great way to work out important muscle groups necessary for the ride. I live in a single story house, but work on the 6th floor at my office. I walk up and down those 6 flights of stairs as much as possible and even more so on rainy days or days that I won't be on my bike. Find. Some. Stairs. And. Climb. Them.
- **I Scream, You Scream** – Did I mention I'm a mom? My kids like ice cream. My kids REALLY like ice cream. There is an ice cream parlor 4 blocks from our house, and there is another one 1.6 miles from our house. We opt for the parlor 1.6 miles away and hop on our bikes to get there. Find ways to incorporate cycling into your family life. My kids don't even realize they're “working” for their ice cream (and helping me sneak in a small workout!).

My last suggestion is to **find a friend to ride with**. Whether it is someone else who is riding TdP, or just a random friend or family member, enlist their support (and comradery) in training. 60 miles goes WAY faster

when you are chatting with a friend. They can also help hold you accountable. My 15 year old son has been my training buddy for the last 2 years, and it's so fun to hop on our bikes and catch up on what's going on in the world.

Happy Training! See you at one of the 2017 rides!

I started to ride because I wanted to honor my mom and mother-in-law. Now I come back every year because of the amazing people I've met, the challenges the ride brings, the sense of accomplishment, and the knowledge that we're helping so many people. -HEATHER SULLIVAN

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