

Training for your **big** weekend



Riding a Century by Ride Marshal Josh Clingan

So you've signed up and are committed to riding your bike 200+ miles at Tour de Pink, and raising a pile of money for a fantastic cause. Now it's coming down to go time and you're thinking "what have I gotten myself into?" **Fear not, with a little preparation and training you'll be set for the big ride and will crush your first century ride.**

Mentally:

It's funny how emotions can fluctuate throughout any given ride. When you first start out for the day you'll be fueled by the energy of your fellow survivors, friends and supporters. Use that positive energy to drive yourself to complete your first 100 miler. **Commit mentally to the day and rely on your fellow TdP cyclists to get you through the day.** As the day rolls on you may find a shift in your mental state to fatigue, sadness and even doubt. Physical fatigue does funny things to your brain. When I get super tired and drained mentally on the bike, I'll start singing a song or repeating a mantra over and over. My favorite one comes from the movie Finding Nemo where Dory sings "Just keep swimming, Just keep swimming, Just keep swimming swimming swimming." I replace swimming with pedaling and now I'm singing to myself "Just keep pedaling pedaling pedaling." It's silly but works for me when I'm tired.

Be your sister or brother's keeper during the ride. Even the smallest words of encouragement can push someone to keep riding when they are tired and their brain is telling them to stop. If you see someone struggling, give them a friendly "You got this!" or "Looking good!"

Nutrition:

Your body needs consistent fueling and hydration to keep the pedals turning, especially for a century. You want to avoid bonking at all cost. Bonking is when your body goes into shut down mode and you have no energy, both mentally and physically. It's a bad state to get to and takes a while to recover. A good rule of thumb is to eat ~300 calories and 1 water bottle per hour. How you get those calories are up to you. You can go the traditional route of energy bars that have about 35-45 grams of carbohydrates or eat more common items like bananas, PB&J sandwiches or fig newtons. A personal favorite is a peanut butter and banana sandwich drizzled with a bit of honey. Avoid eating so much at the rest stop that you feel bloated and uncomfortable when you get back on the bike. Eat pickles, pickles provide your body with nutrients that help prevent cramping. If you want to get adventurous try a peanut butter and pickle sandwich. Don't knock it until you try it.

Water is good for hydration, but some kind of sports (electrolyte replacement) drink is better. Here's an area where you need to do a little experimentation to find what works best for your body. The goal is to find a drink that provides some electrolytes and not a ton of calories. It's best to get your main source of energy from solid foods. Aim for 1 bottle an hour to keep yourself hydrated. Drink before you are actually thirsty. A good rule of thumb is to drink every 15 minutes of activity. A consistent hydration strategy will keep you from cramping.

- If you feel yourself starting to bonk, you need to get some food and drink in your body ASAP. A Coca-Cola usually does the trick to stop the bonk. Energy gel packs are also a good way to keep from bonking. Again, the goal is to stay in front of the bonk and never get to the point where you feel sick.

Recovery could be an entire topic in of itself, but after your ride get something easy on the stomach in your body within 20 minutes of getting off the bike. Chocolate milk is a great recovery drink. Then within an hour eat some real food with a good balance of protein, carbs, and fat to refuel your body from the day's activities and prepare you for the last day of TdP.

Physically:

You may think to prepare physically means to build your fitness. While that's certainly true, I'm going to go a different route. You can do some things to prepare your body physically to set yourself up for a great day on the bike. Starting from the top of your body down, make sure you have a comfortable helmet and some way to manage the sweat if it's hot out. The worst is to have sweat running down into your eyes, a good cycling cap, bandana, or sweat band will do the trick. Find a good pair of sunglasses whether they are cycling specific or not. Any glasses with rubber nose and ear pieces seem to stay in place much better.

Bike position is crucial for a comfortable ride and your neck, back, hands, hips, and knees will thank you for a good fit. Find a local bike shop that has a certified bike fitter that can help adjust your bike to better fit you. A lot of the bike fit will adjust your reach to the handlebars both vertically and horizontally. Poor fitting bikes can contribute to numb and burning hands. You can help with the numbing by finding a pair of good cycling gloves. These will typically have some sort of padding like foam or gel and come with cut off fingers for warm weather riding. You can get the same type of gloves for cooler weather.

Perhaps the most important piece of kit are your cycling shorts. These lovely form fitting shorts have a pad in them called a chamois that will protect your butt while you sit on the bike all day. A good pair of shorts can be the difference between a good and bad day on the bike. There are special creams that are like a lotion you can use to put on the chamois or direct on skin to help with any chaffing. Chamois cream will become your best friend on a long ride.

Socks and shoes play an important role as they are your direct connection to the bike and means of applying power to the pedals. Most people opt for cycling specific shoes and clipless pedals because you can dial in your foot and knee position and transfer power a lot more efficiently to the pedals. Cycling shoes come in all shapes, sizes, and widths just like any other shoe. Find one that fits you snug but doesn't cut off circulation or cause hot spots. You can usually upgrade the insoles to get a better fit. Pick a synthetic blend sock (not cotton) as it will wick away from your foot and allow it to breath.

Also don't forget sunscreen. A century will take you 5+ hours so you'll be in the sun a long time. Make sure to reapply at the rest stops.

Summary:

Riding 100 miles in one day can seem like a daunting tasks at first but if you prepare yourself mentally, nutritionally, and physically you will have a great day. TdP ride marshals are there to help so never be afraid to ask for assistance, advice, or even a little push up a hill if you need it. You've got this!



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3 DAYS.

200 MILES.

1 PURPOSE.

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