

A training guide to build cycling fitness!

Cycling has many health benefits that can be built into your everyday life. As little as 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day can help improve and maintain good health, also reducing the risk of chronic health conditions.

It is also a great mode of transport that helps improve the environment by reducing the use of motor cars. You can get to know your local community by cycling to local shops, parks, enjoying coffee shops and much more. There are many social benefits including meeting new friends by joining cycling groups or attending cycling rides and events.

Get fit gradually:

- Start easy and build up slowly, trying to increase your longest distance by about 10 - 20 percent each week until you reach your goal
- As it gets easier, challenge yourself to gradually go longer, faster or include more hills
- Don't forget to drink plenty of water before, during and after the ride
- Have a good stretch before and after each ride.

If you are training for an event, ease off the workload in the two weeks prior to the event date. Don't forget to get your bike checked before the event as well.

This training guide is for people who can already cycle for about 10 minutes. If you are over the age of 35 or not regularly active, you should see your general practitioner for a check up before starting any training program. If you feel pain, discomfort or dizziness at any stage, stop immediately and see your GP.

Sample weekly schedule

Active living = Your choice of moderate paced physical activity for at least 30 minutes e.g. walking, swimming, exercise classes, gardening and so on.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Recovery Ride	'Active Living'	Mid-week Pedal	'Active Living'	Rest day	Weekend challenge	Back up day, or 'Active Living'
Leisurely paced ride, flat terrain	Choice of other physical activity for at least 30 minutes	Moderate paced ride with sections at faster speed	Choice of other physical activity for at least 30 minutes, or an extra ride	A day off the bike!	Longer distance ride with some hills	Choice of other physical activity for at least 30 minutes

Sample four week training guide

Week one

Start with an easy 10 minute ride on Monday over flat terrain, followed by an easy 15-minute ride on Wednesday, building up to a longer ride on Saturday of about half an hour. On Tuesday and Thursday choose another activity for 30 minutes and have a rest day on Friday. On Sunday plan some easy paced Active Living.

Week two

This week extend the distance a little. Start with an easy 15-20 minutes ride on Monday and an easy to moderate paced 20-30 minute ride on Wednesday. On Saturday build up to about 45 minutes at a pace you can handle. Include Active Living choices on the other days and give yourself a rest day on Friday.

Week three

Start with an easy 30-minute recovery ride on Monday. Pick up the pace a bit on Wednesday including some gentle hills in low gear. On Saturday aim to extend your distance from last week, riding up to an hour. Have short rest breaks if you need them. Include Active Living sessions on the other days but have a rest day on Friday.

Week four

This week try and include an extra ride if you can. Start easy on Monday with 30 minutes on a flat course. On Wednesday plan a 30-minute ride that includes a change of pace with some faster sections. You may choose to work harder up hill and easier downhill or on flat stretches. Thursday go for an easy to moderate paced 30-45 minute ride. On Saturday push out a long, slow ride working up to an hour-and-a-half if you feel fit enough.

What cycling activities are out there? Rides, events, courses

There are many great cycling rides and events locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. There is plenty of information on the internet – “ride” through the broad range of activities. Also cycling organisations and magazines have lots of information on what cycling opportunities are available.

Bicycle NSW www.bicyclensw.org.au

Rides; events (Sydney Spring Cycle, Big Bike Ride); bicycle user groups (BUGS), ride books (Bike it Sydney Cycling Around Sydney); information on where to locate maps; etc ph (02) 9281 4099.

Cycling courses

Check out cyclingconnectingcommunities.net for details of free courses in Fairfield and Liverpool

Back on your bike; Commute by bike

Sydney Community College
Ph (02) 8752 7555
www.sydneycommunitycollege.com.au

Learn how to ride a bike

email: onyabike@ozemail.com.au

Cycling Australia
Ph (02) 9644 3002
www.cycling.org.au

For other ‘Active Living’ ideas see the National Physical Activity Guidelines:
www.healthyliving.gov.au