

ADOPTION TOUR TRAINING GUIDE

Adoption Tour Training Tips

It is easy to be anxious with the unfamiliar or what we really do not like to do, but we encourage you to use the training as an opportunity to build new skills and confidence that will be invaluable to you as take on the experience of a lifetime.

Training focuses on training your body and mind to deal with the challenges. I don't care what anybody says, you can train your body all you want, but if you don't train your mind to handle the emotional and mental challenges, you ain't going to overcome. Keep in mind that these training tips are intended to help prepare you physically, but more importantly, these tips are intended to help, "you banish the demons of doubt when they come to play pee knuckle on your snout."

Demons of Doubt

Joanna Lawn, a professional triathlete, once stated when describing a portion of the 112 mile bike in the Hawaii Ironman, "You're at pretty much one of the hardest parts of the course. You're facing your demons every time we go out [and ride it]." Not unlike the bike course in Hawaii, riders of the Adoption Tour will face long, challenging portions that will greet the riders with 'demons'. Even the well-trained and conditioned rider will experience periods of prolonged, troubling doubt. Know that during the Adoption Tour you can fully expect to experience doubt, too—doubt about your conditioning, your capability, even your purpose of continuing. It is essential, however, that you realize you're not alone. As Lawn added, "It's such a hard and long and enduring race. Everyone is on this journey together and you need to have mates because it would be a lonely way without anyone." Similarly, you must remind yourself, just as we remind the families we serve during troubling times, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** The suffering, doubting individual can be buoyed and strengthened by the mantra of the body collective: *this too shall pass!* A little humor along the way doesn't hurt either. We often will make jovial reference to the demons that visit and "play pee-knuckle on our snouts." The wisdom of those who have been plagued by the demons of doubt should provide some reassurance that demons, in time, will pass. Remain optimistic and positive ... and don't forget to laugh. With practice, you, too, can learn to adopt the philosophy of national triathlete Lisa Bentley, who said, "I confronted a lot of demons riding the other day. It didn't make me not want to ride, it made me want to go back out there and do better next time." So, when you are visited by the demons of doubt and they play pee-knuckle on your snout, may you find yourself strengthened by their timely departure and ready to cope anew with their next visit. So, we'll see you out there amidst the demons!

(Quotes from Inside Triathlon, October 2006 vol. 21/Issue 10)

“Do not let fear limit what you can do, imagine what you can do and become a slayer of fear.”

(Michael Yates, 2006 Adoption Tour)

Riding in Traffic- You don't have to like it, just try to get comfortable with cars coming up behind and passing you. This gives you some experience in reacting in a controlled manner as possible to avoid a panicked reaction which could result in swerving into a vehicle or another rider. Face it, there is not much of a contest between 20 pound bicycle frame and a two ton motorized vehicle, so be smart, stay out of the middle of the road and ride close to the shoulder when possible. Also, be aware, pay attention to your surroundings and use hand signals to let drivers know what you are doing. Remember, cyclists have to obey the same laws as drivers. *The Adoption Tour* uses Highway 70 for the entire journey, which is still a heavily used major route through most of Tennessee. Some sections have a wide shoulder or are less traveled, while other sections have almost no shoulder and are very busy. The more experience you have dealing with traffic, the more confidence you will have in handling yourself and your bike. *The '05 and '07 Tours* were accident free, but the *2006 Tour* had one serious accident at the very beginning in Memphis in which a car backing out of a driveway hit a driver. Sometimes things just happen; we mention this not to scare anyone, but only to emphasize the importance of looking out for one another the best we can, staying together when riding through major cities and towns, and that while it may be beyond our power to totally eliminate accidents, we can do a lot to decrease the likelihood of one occurring.

Not to beat this to death, but I can not emphasize enough how important it is to always stay as far as possible on the right side of the road. Just because we are riding for the Tour, it does not mean that we can take up the entire road or ride near the center of the road. Every rider needs to be able to "hold a line." This means that cyclists need to be capable of riding a line parallel with the edge of the road. Practice this skill by riding 12 to 24 inches to the right of the white shoulder line while trying to keep parallel with that line. This also means that riders need to ride single file, except in low traffic and rural areas that are safe enough permit riders to ride side by side. Even so, when a vehicle comes up behind them riders need to immediately get in single file position to let the vehicle pass in a manner that is safe for everyone. When riding in a group this is accomplished by the end rider calling out "**Car Back!**" Each rider continues to call out until all riders in the group are aware.

Cold Weather/ Rain- With spring and summer soon arriving, you may have limited opportunities to get more comfortable with this challenge. If you have the opportunity, it is a good way to discover your own personal tolerances and what gear will keep you most comfortable. The last two days of the 2006 Tour were very cold, although typically the temperatures are still fairly warm around this time of year. You may want to consider acquiring some basic cold weather gear;

you would be surprised how layering different lightweight items together can keep you toasty, even in cooler temperatures.

Here I some cold weather riding gear you may want to check out at your local bike shop and see what they have to offer:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Leg/ knee warmers | Wool socks |
| Tights | Skull cap or toboggan |
| Arm warmers | Thermal top |
| Toe/ shoe covers | Jacket |
| Long fingered gloves | |

As for rain, well, there's just no way to make it sound enjoyable. Then why am I suggesting that you actually fit it into your training? Your bike will ride and handle differently when conditions are wet, and it is good to have a idea of how your bike will handle (including braking and making curves). I am not suggesting that you go riding in a lightening storm, but this can assist you in building confidence in your ability to handle yourself and your bike in less then ideal conditions. Yes, it did rain in the 2006 Tour, I remember riding very closely behind the rider in front of me just so I could feel the warmth of the water splashing up from the rear wheel because it was warmer then the cold rain (it was the only thing that was warm). Thankfully it only rained at the end of day three and in the 2005 Tour we did not receive any major rainfall at all.

Drafting and Pace lines- This is not just for professional cyclists! When you are struggling or having a bad day (and it will happen), drafting can be a lifesaver. It can also be an excellent way to increase your endurance and stamina over long distances or challenging terrain. You can save as much as 40 percent effort, when you are riding close behind another rider. This actually takes some practice as you need to ride close behind the other rider(s) to gain the full benefits of drafting (within 1-2 feet). As you can imagine, there are risks involved if the riders are not aware and cautious. You do not have to be Lance Armstrong, most anyone can learn to do this with enough practice. Usually the preferred method is for the lead rider to break to the left with the other riders continuing to move forward at the same pace. The lead rider then rejoins at the tail of the pack. Every rider takes a turn in the lead position for as long as they feel that they can. Keep in mind that it is easy to get carried away or feel pressured to go fast! Stay in front only as long that you can keep a comfortable pace, while it is important to take a turn at the front, there is no rule as to how long you have to stay in front. If you ride long enough, you will be "dropped" by other riders, meaning that you get left behind. It happens to everybody and it is better to drop off a pace line if you are expending too much energy. Also, caution is required from the riders, be aware of riding your brakes and sudden movements. Slang for drafting is called "wheelsucking", remember that it can be considered somewhat rude to ride with a group and not take a turn leading. This is when being referred to as a "wheelsucker" is not a complimentary term.

Riding in Groups- Even if you do not prefer to draft or pace lines, you need to be comfortable riding in groups of riders, this just takes some time and experience. This will be unavoidable in the *Tour* as we will usually be riding in groups starting, stopping, and when we ride through large towns or cities. Hey, when you're all bunched together, things happen, but you can certainly reduce the chances. This is especially important if you are new to clipless pedal systems where you are basically one with your bike. Practice makes perfect, it just takes practice to feel comfortable, but at first it can feel pretty confining. Practice starting and stopping until you feel more comfortable, you will be surprised how fast you pick this up. Event rides held by local bike clubs or cycling organizations are a great way to get some experience riding with groups of people and of how to be aware in larger groups of riders. Also, when riding in a group of riders, it is often good etiquette to call out or use hand signals to inform other riders of road hazards (such as road kill, potholes, gravel, etc.), approaching vehicles, turns, and when stopping.

Solo Rides- Cycling is often a social sport, offering great opportunities to spend time with friends and meet new friends. Especially when completing a long ride, having your buddies along your side can mean a great deal. At the same time, it is also a plus to get comfortable riding by yourself and being aware of how this will affect you when the going gets tough. Just because you are riding alone, it does not mean that you are alone! When you do some rides solo you are helping to train yourself mentally, more than physically. It is an especially good opportunity to practice "dancing with the demons" when they come to visit. You need to be familiar with the feeling, if it happens in the *Tour*, you've experienced it before which makes it a little easier to get through. Practice doing what it takes to finish a ride; positive self-talk, cutting a long ride into smaller sections instead of thinking of the entire distance at one time, and remembering that there are others going through the same thing you are!

Climbing and Hills- Some of you may be grimacing at just reading these words. You either love it or you hate it, but hills and climbing is a fact of life in the "Smokey Mountain" state. Since the *Tour* starts in Memphis and basically ends about 25 miles from the Smokey Mountains, the course starts out flat and becomes more hilly as we approach Knoxville. Some of the rider feedback that we received from the *2006 Tour* suggested that not enough emphasis was placed on the amount of hilly terrain. Here is a basic breakdown of Day 1 through Day 5 (*though I feel that this is fairly accurate picture, remember that your own experience with climbing and number of years of cycling will ultimately determine your own experience*):

Day 1 is "fairly" flat since we are coming out of Memphis. **Day 2** has some flat areas but is mostly characterized by rolling hills, some of these hills are steeper, but there is a lot of up and down. This is also our longest day, 100+ miles, so of course when you become more fatigued, the hills

can become more challenging. Rolling hills can be challenging, due to the continued up and down and when you go downhill your legs get cold. One way to minimize this is to keep your legs turning, even when you are going downhill. **Day 3** is our shortest day (60+ miles) and is a mix of some hills and some straight stretches. **Day 4** is no doubt the most challenging, as we are crossing the Cumberland Plateau, there is a lot of climbing! I want to add there is some nice downhill and beautiful straight stretches, but you may feel that this is overshadowed by the climbing. There are some parts that are steep and and/or continue for longer distances (such as over 2-3 miles). Now that I've stressed you out, keep this in mind, you can do it! This is a challenging day, but there are things you can do to prepare for it. We would suggest that when you begin training, you work in hill training 1-2 days a week. If you are using an indoor trainer, you can practice climbing by cranking up the tension on the spinning bike or by putting it in a larger gear for extended periods of times. On your outdoor rides, especially on your longer rides, work in some hills or that famous steep climb in your area. Remember, you are not training to win a mountain stage of the Tour De France, and no expects you to. When you practice climbing and hills, you are preparing your legs to handle the repeated stress and your heart rate to stay within tolerable limits. This is different for every person; find a rhythm and pace that works for you and one that will allow you to finish the day. Interval training where you combine periods of heavy effort with periods of lighter effort can also help in training for hills. This allows you to become used to the increased heart rate and heavy breathing that occurs when climbing. **Day 5** has some nice downhill since we are riding down the other side of the Plateau, but there are also some hills. When we arrive in Kingston around noon, we will then ride a 14-15 mile section from Kingston to Lenoir City. This section is full of rolling hills, some of the hills quite steep (it may bring flashbacks of the previous day!). This probably wouldn't be as bad if you already did not have over 400 miles on your legs. Again, remember that you are almost there, just find your rhythm and power through it. After this section, the terrain gets much easier and the pace actually begins to slow as we begin to enter Knoxville City Limits.

Nutrition and Hydration- I'm going to give you some general principles concerning eating and drinking enough while riding (this is pretty basic, a lot of cycling resources can provide more detailed information): hydration-16 ounces of fluid every 30 minutes Straight up H2O is always a good thing, but consider finding a sports drink that tastes good to you and your stomach can tolerate. Sports drinks are good for two reasons: they can provide some of your calorie intake and they can provide electrolytes that you lose through sweat. Nutrition- between 300 to 400 calories per hour after the first hour of riding on longer rides. Find foods that digest well and that you like, many cycling resources suggest foods that are high in carbohydrates and that contain some fat and protein.

Some examples are bananas, fig newtons, gels, sports bars (such as Cliff or Power bars), etc.

Three basic rules of thumb regarding nutrition and hydration: 1) Don't try a new food or sports drink on the day of the event, this may give you some problems with your stomach or other areas (if you know what I mean!), if your body has trouble digesting them. 2) The reason why you practice hydration and nutrition in training is because in long events you may not feel like eating or drinking, if you train yourself to eat and drink in training you will be more likely to during a long event 3) This is probably the most important, the effects of inadequate nutrition and hydration may not show until on down the line and by this time it may be too late to correct it. So, if you eat and drink enough at the beginning, you are helping yourself to start strong but to finish strong as well.

Headwinds- If you are ever riding on a fairly flat road and it feels like are working really hard and you should be going about 15 or 16 mph, but then you look down and see that you are only putting out a whopping 8 or 9 mph, good chances are you are in a headwind! This means you are traveling against the wind and that it is going to take more effort to generate the same speed. This is my advice; don't fight it, especially if you have a long distance to cover or if you are already fatigued. One way you can cope with a headwind is to adjust your effort to reflect the conditions, this will help you last longer and be stronger for the rest of the ride. This is where riding with another person or group can be a real plus, riders taking turns taking at the lead position, which gives everyone a respite and shares the extra effort.

Other Training Issues

Injuries- You don't have to get into an accident to hurt yourself! Again I'm going to keep it general, but this should be aware to make you aware enough to take appropriate care and action when needed. Remember, if you are new to cycling or are training on a level higher than you ever have before, it is possible that you may have more aches and pains for a while, until your body adapts and adjusts to the torture you are putting it through. Common areas affected are the legs, knees, back, neck, and upper arms. Like I said, some aches and pains are going to be common, but if the condition worsens or does not disappear, you may want to see your doctor. The common response for most people (including myself) is to ignore it until it becomes very painful or makes you stop. Also, I feel like a hypocrite in being the one to say this, but you may need to consider backing off your training until you see some improvement. I pretty much wait until I'm maimed and then I see the doctor or back off training. This pretty much goes against everything that all of the books on sports injuries has to say on the subject. Just keep in mind that this type of thinking can keep you from reaching your goal.

“Bottom Problems”/Saddle Sores- That’s right, I’m putting this one in its own little category. If you are new to cycling, you are going to have to break in your bottom. If you have cycled before, but have not rode this kind of distance, your bottom is still going to have to adjust to the experience. Expect some initial discomfort, but that should disappear after your bottom gets used to the increased mileage. If you have continued “bottom issues”, this may indicate a problem with your cycling shorts or with your saddle and you may want to consult your bike shop.

Saddle sores look like a boil and hurt like heck, you’ll know when you have one. Common causes are usually incorrect saddle position and/or fit, inadequate hygiene, or an issue with your cycling shorts. Sometimes though, they can happen just due to extensive time on the saddle. Again, you may need to check with your bike shop if you think your saddle is not positioned correctly or is not fitting correctly. Because sweat is salty and oily, it can cause irritation. Two things that can reduce the chances of a saddle sore are: wearing clean cycling shorts for every ride and cleaning yourself well after each ride. Another thing that can cause problems on long rides is the continued friction between your skin, your seat, and your shorts. A good chamois lubricant can help reduce the friction and adds a layer between your skin and everything else, helping to prevent sores and irritation. Check out what your bike shop has to offer, I would suggest thinking about bringing some on the *Tour* as it helps to protect your bottom area from the abuse of five days of riding. I will suggest two options: a lower cost option, “Bag Balm” which costs \$8 at Walgreen’s. I have seen this recommended in cycling magazines and it works well. Also, a more expensive option which I have found to work very well, Chamois Buttr’, sold for \$13 sold at bike shops. Lastly, cycling shorts, I know that budgets are an issue, but this is one item that I would not skimp on. A good pair of cycling shorts can be a life saver on a longer event such as the *Tour*.

“The Bonk”- Otherwise known as hitting a wall. Characterized by a sudden drop-off of speed, face and neck along with eyes most likely will have a flush appearance. Tongue wagging from mouth is an instant indicator of sucking air and thus “the bonk” or also as “bonking”. A careful response to this affliction is warranted. Initial intervention from other riders should entail a cheerleading approach in which the rider’s courage is affirmed and expressions of confidence in their abilities resounded. However, this is where being supportive becomes precarious and where knowing when to shut up and move on is the best course of action.

Building a Support System

What I love about cycling is the culture; cyclists are some of the friendliest, fun loving people I have ever met. Cycling is diverse and contains many subcultures, don’t get caught up in thinking of yourself of any less of a cyclist because you don’t own the coolest gear, have a expensive bike, or are a speed

demon. I guarantee that no matter your skill or experience level, there are others out there just like you. Go find them! Ride some local events, hang out at your local bike shop, join a local cycling club, and most clubs have regular rides on week nights and weekends that anyone can join. What's really neat is that on most rides, riders get spread out and group together according to ability and speed. Almost every ride I have been on, I have met and even developed good friendships with some neat people as a result. Also, let your friends and family support and encourage you in every way they can, this alone can make a huge difference.

Basic Equipment

Suggested equipment that you should bring with you on every ride:

- Helmet
- Gloves
- Sunglasses
- Saddle bag
- 1-2 spare tubes
- Patch kit
- Mini-tire pump or CO2 inflator
- 1-2 tire levers
- Multi-tool
- Water bottles or hydration pack
- Food
- Some form of ID (especially if you are riding alone)
- Cell phone (especially if you are riding alone)

Other Optional equipment:

- Strobe light (in case you get caught in bad weather or the dark)
- Rear-view mirror that attaches to your helmet or handlebars

Bike Maintenance

If you are like me, you may be “mechanically challenged”, this when a good relationship with a local bike shop is a very good thing. At the very least, know how to change a flat tire. Some pre-ride maintenance for every ride should include: making sure the tires have enough air, making sure that nuts and bolts are not loose, and making sure that the brakes are positioned correctly and not rubbing against the wheels. Basic rule of thumb is that bikes be tuned up once a year; you should have your bike tuned up a few weeks before the Tour. There are some parts such as the chain and cables that do wear out and have to be replaced. Every few rides, you will want to clean your chain and rear cassette of dirt and grease, you will find that your bike will perform better.

Cycling Resources

There are tons of books out there that you can find that cover the full range of cycling topics. One book that I have found a tremendous resource and would recommend is, "The Complete Book of Long-Distance Cycling" by Edmund R. Burke, PhD, and Ed Pavelka. A magazine that you may find helpful as well is "Bicycling", which you either can pickup at a bookstore or get an subscription for. The internet is also a great resource for about any cycling topic.

www.active.com

www.performancebike.com

www.bikenashbar.com