

United Response

Cycling Toolkit



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Response**
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Cycling

Thank you for signing up to cycle for United Response. Now let's get training!

Warming up

Improve your performance and reduce risk of injury by warming up before every cycle. What's more; you will lessen post-exercise soreness, so don't just jump on the bike and go! Ensure a 15–20 minute warm-up for rides under 90 minutes.

To prevent muscle strain, begin in a high gear and spin rapidly at about 80 revolutions per minute and increase to 90/100. This will get your blood flowing and increase efficiency!

After 5 minutes lower your gear and remain around 80 revolutions per minute, build speed and then gradually increase intensity. By this point you should be breathing heavily and feeling warmer. Try cycling off the saddle to get blood flowing through the groin area, and finish with some on-bike stretches.

Cooling down

A good cool down will prevent you from feeling dizzy or faint, reduce the level of adrenaline in your blood and slow your heart rate. It will also speed-up recovery and help eradicate substances like lactic acid that you may have built up. This helps ease some of the muscle stiffness you might otherwise experience after you've been cycling hard.

For the perfect cool-down; cycle slowly in small gears followed by gentle stretching. Avoid abrupt changes in pace and gradually bring your body back to a pre-workout state.

The warm-up, stretch and cool-down is a simple routine you should apply to your cycling. It doesn't take long, and it will give you that extra edge to perform at your peak.

Stretching

Stretching is not the same as warming up. But it can be an important part of warming up. Whether you prefer to stretch on or off your bike it is important that you warm up your muscles beforehand. Why not try out a few routines and see what is best for you?

If you do decide to stretch, it is very important that you follow the dos and don'ts of stretching.



Do

- ◆ Warm up your muscles beforehand. Stretching cold is the third most common cause of injury.
- ◆ Cool down first after cycling and then stretch.
- ◆ Pay attention to your breathing.
- ◆ Listen to your body.
- ◆ Stretch slowly and hold the stretch for approximately 30 seconds. You will notice that your muscle tension will fall and your muscles will begin to be able to stretch further.

Don't

- ◆ Stretch on your bike on a dangerous road, whilst in a group or in traffic.
- ◆ Bounce your muscles while you are stretching because this can pull or tear the muscle.
- ◆ Stretch injured muscles.
- ◆ Hurry through your routine.
- ◆ Stretch if you feel tightness or pain in the muscle.

On-bike stretches

Legs

- ◆ Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat a few times.
- ◆ While coasting, straighten one leg in the 6 o'clock position and drop your heel.
- ◆ In the 3 and 9 o'clock position, stand and drop both heels; switch feet and repeat.

Back

- ◆ Hold each stretch for 5 seconds and repeat a few times.
- ◆ Arch your back and lower your head slightly (keep your eyes on the road).
- ◆ Straighten your back and lift your head up to straighten your spine.



Training schedules

Having a training plan is vital to help you meet your goals. To find a training plan that suits you visit: www.cyclingweekly.com

In addition to your training plan, keeping a training diary can help you improve. Keeping a personal record of how the ride went, how long it took, if you met your target, what you ate and drank and how you felt after the ride will all help you monitor progress and spot trends for improvement.



Avoiding injuries

- ◆ If you are worried about an ache or pain, consult your doctor.
- ◆ Increase your training gradually to prevent muscular aches and pains.
- ◆ Rest days are crucial for recovery.
- ◆ Follow long cycles with one or two days of lighter training.
- ◆ If you feel ill, do not cycle or train until you have fully recovered and then build up gradually.

Top training tips

- ◆ Mix up your training to get fitter faster!
- ◆ Eat carbohydrates 2 or 3 hours before a long cycle.
- ◆ Wrap up warm in the winter and wear reflective clothing.
- ◆ Find a friend to train with; a bit of healthy competition is good for the soul!
- ◆ Bored of cycling? Try swimming, spinning or rowing to compliment your training.
- ◆ Try to train outside instead of the gym to prepare yourself for open air cycling.
- ◆ Pick the right training gear – comfort is incredibly important on those long rides.
- ◆ Be safe and give your bike a health check.
- ◆ Pack some snacks for longer rides, to help you overcome 'the bonk'.
- ◆ Refuel straight after your ride to replace the nutrients lost and help your body recover.



Great cycle snacks

- ◆ Cold jacket potato halves
- ◆ Peanut butter on apple or celery sticks
- ◆ Cubes of cheese
- ◆ Bananas
- ◆ Dried fruit and nuts

Fluids

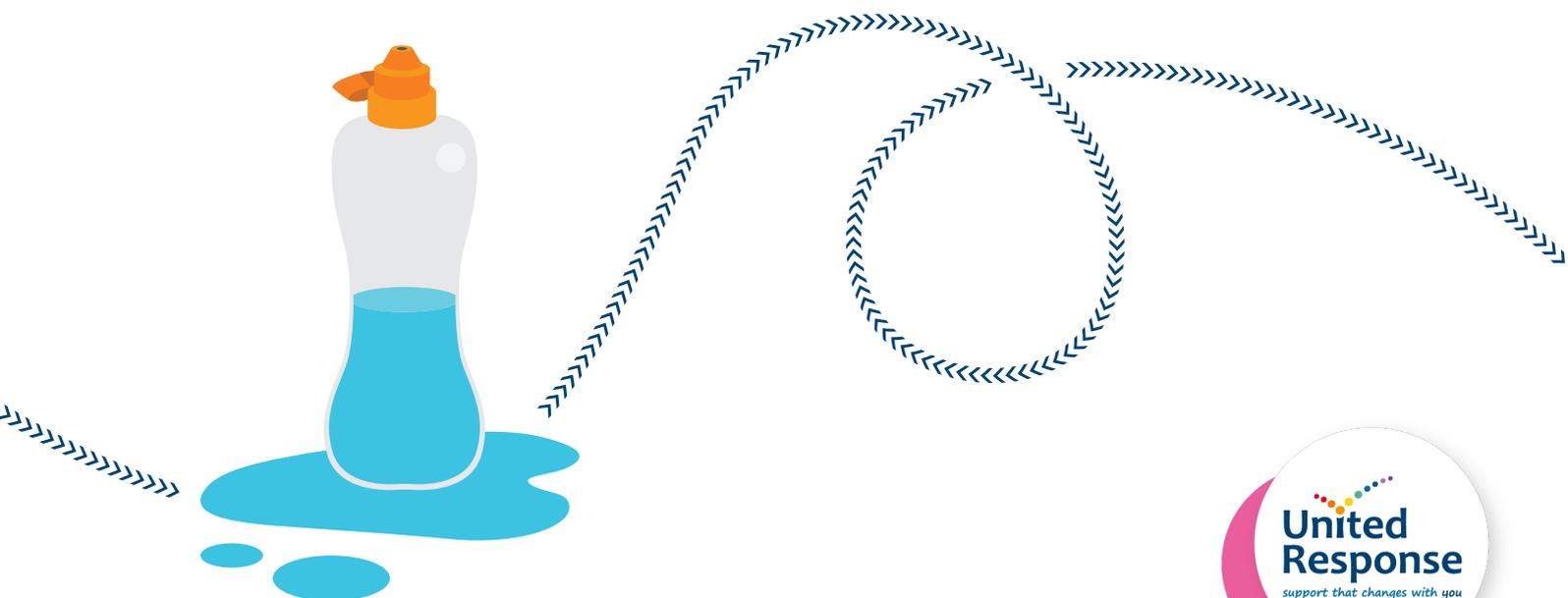
- ◆ Make sure you always drink plenty of water.
- ◆ By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.
- ◆ Drink plenty of liquids after training, especially long cycles.
- ◆ Avoid drinking alcoholic drinks in the lead up to race day.

Diet

- ◆ Eat a healthy well-balanced diet.
- ◆ Eat plenty of carbohydrates.
- ◆ Aim for at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- ◆ Try to eat within two hours of your long cycles and after the event.
- ◆ Do not change your normal diet drastically in the last week before the event.

Food tips

- ◆ Eggs are a good recovery food.
- ◆ Salmon is a great energy source and it increases blood flow.
- ◆ Kale is a super food, it is packed full of iron and antioxidants.
- ◆ Turmeric can increase endurance and speed recovery.
- ◆ Green tea can reduce muscle soreness.



Mobile apps

Strava shows you where you've been, helps you review your activities and see how you compare with friends and other local cyclists taking the same routes.

Cycle Maps gets you from A to B plotting the safest and nicest route.

Map my ride helps you map, log and compare your rides. You can upload your activities for analysis and feedback from more experienced riders.

Useful websites

Road Cycling UK is a great source of tips and advice: www.roadcyclinguk.com

Bicycling Magazine is a great place to start as a beginner: www.bicycling.com

Bicycle Tutor will help you keep on top of those repairs with video tutorials and guides on just about everything: www.bicycletutor.com

Connect with over 200,000 other members on the Cycling Forum: www.cyclingforums.com

Meet Up is a search engine helping you to connect with other cyclists in your area: www.meetup.com

If you are looking to invest in a new bike, Bike Radar takes a 360 degree look at mountain, road, and beginner bikes: www.bikeradar.com



Thank you!

Once again, thank you so much for your support and all your efforts to help significantly improve the lives of the people we support.

