

Safety and Education
Vol. 21/23
Ride Farther, Ride Faster, Move Up
Part 2 of 2



INTRODUCTION

Greetings fellow riders. Hopefully you are reading this because you read last week's article (Part 1) and are eager to start a ready-made training plan or are at least curious.

It could only be easier if I come over to your place and ride it for you!

A 6-Week Cycling Training Plan for Beginner and Intermediate Riders

THIS PLAN WILL HELP YOU BUILD CONFIDENCE, SPEED, STRENGTH, AND ENDURANCE IN LESS THAN TWO MONTHS.

By Selene Yeager and Leslie Bonci R.D. / Published October 13, 2022 / Bicycling.com

If you want to [burn calories](#), enhance your sleep quality, reduce your risk of [chronic disease](#), and improve your [brain health](#)—all while having fun—then to simply put it, you should be cycling.

More specifically, to gain all of these health benefits and more you need a cycling training plan that's beginner friendly like this one. Why? Because even if you're not a beginner, this training plan will challenge your speed, strength, and endurance for better performance. Plus, it's one you can follow straight through winter!

This step-by-step plan will push [your strength](#) and cardiovascular system while improving your abilities on the bike in a carefully calibrated (but relatively short) amount of time. The more you focus and follow along, the greater the results.

About those results: You'll feel [stronger](#), more energetic, sharper, and happier. And there's a good chance you'll see some change on the scale, too. So, pull your bike out of the garage and join the ride. Let's go!

Why do you love following a training plan?

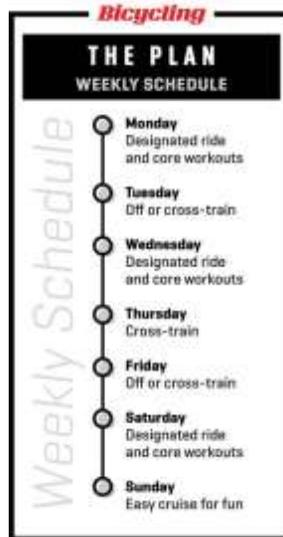
It keeps me accountable and on schedule, plus I don't have to plan my own workouts!

So I can get stronger and or speedier on the bike. I love chasing goals.

How to Follow this Cycling Training Plan

Follow this weekly schedule for rides and [workouts](#). For cross-training days, activities such as running, swimming, or even walking work well. Just make sure you stay active, plus do a [warmup](#) and cooldown and [focus on recovery](#) too.

One tip: If you can't remember the details of the rides, screenshot it on your phone or write notes on masking tape and stick it on your bike's top tube. Then you're ready to go.



How to Determine the Right Level of Intensity

Below, you'll find rough estimates of the intensity levels in each workout. So many factors affect [speed](#) (wind, terrain, bike type), that it's impossible to take them all into consideration. Don't get hung up on the numbers—effort is what counts. The max effort level doesn't factor into this program, but it appears in the second half of the plan in *Bike Your Butt Off!*

Bicycling

INTENSITY-LEVEL GUIDELINES

WHAT ZONES MEAN WHAT

Zone 1
Intensity EASY
Typical Speed* 8-12 mph
How It Feels Nearly effortless pedaling. Light tension in your legs. Steady breathing, but no huffing and puffing.
Zone 2
Intensity MODERATE
Typical Speed* 12-16 mph
How It Feels Pedaling with purpose. More (but manageable) tension in your legs. Steady, heavier breathing; can still carry on brief conversations.
Zone 3
Intensity HARD
Typical Speed* 16-20 mph
How It Feels Jamming. Legs and lungs are working near their capacity. No talking.
Zone 4
Intensity MAX
Typical Speed* 20+ mph
How It Feels Full throttle. Legs are at full tilt. Huffing and puffing. Can't stay here long.**

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 1:

Bicycling

WEEK 1

GET YOUR WHEELS SPINNING
(FLAT TO GENTLY UNDULATING TERRAIN)

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Steady effort	Zone 2	5 minutes
Go Hard	Zone 3	3 minutes
Back Down to Easy	Zone 1	2 minutes

Repeat this sequence (minus the warm-up) two more times. Finish at the pace of your choice going home.

Total Time: 40 minutes
If you're already riding longer than that, extend the beginning or end of your ride or add another interval sequence.

What You've Done
This workout helps you gain confidence in basic bike handling and control your effort on rides.

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 2:

This week's workout helps you gain confidence [using your gears](#) to control your pedaling [cadence](#) and effort, so you'll feel more comfortable tackling [longer rides](#). For more experienced riders, pushing against bigger gears and spinning rapidly in smaller ones helps you [gain strength](#) by working different muscle groups.



Bicycling
WEEK 2
PUT THE PEDALS DOWN
(FLAT TO GENTLY UNDULATING TERRAIN)

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Pedal briskly in a comfortable gear	Zone 2	5 minutes
Pedal strongly in a higher [harder] gear	Zone 2	5 minutes
Pedal very fast in a lower [easier] gear	Zone 3	2 minutes
Pedal briskly in a comfortable gear	Zone 1-2	2 minutes

Repeat this sequence (minus the warm-up) two more times. Finish at the pace of your choice going home.

Total Time: 45-50 minutes

What You've Done
This workout helps you gain confidence using your gears to control your pedaling cadence and effort, so you'll feel more comfortable tackling longer rides. For more experienced riders, pushing against bigger gears and spinning rapidly in smaller ones helps you gain strength by working different muscle groups.

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 3:

This week's workout emphasizes [bike-handling skills](#) and pedaling at a smooth and steady pace. It will help you feel comfortable coasting through turns smoothly and [taking corners like a pro](#).

Bicycling

WEEK 3
 TURN THE CORNER
 (FLAT TO UNDULATING TERRAIN)

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Pedal briskly; focus on coasting through turns smoothly	Zone 2	15 minutes
Increase effort; pedal out of any corners and turns, concentrating on maintaining your effort with minimal coasting	Zone 2-3	10 minutes
Back to brisk; keep corners and turns smooth	Zone 2	15 minutes

Finish at the pace of your choice going home.

Total Time: 45-50 minutes

What You've Done
 This workout emphasizes bike-handling skills and pedaling at a smooth and steady pace.

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 4:

Bicycling

WEEK 4
 INTO THE SPIN CYCLE
 (FLAT TO UNDULATING TERRAIN)

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Speed up to 90-100 rpm [shift into an easier gear if necessary]	Zone 2-3	1 minute
Pedal at your normal speed	Zone 2	2 minutes
Pedal fast [more than 100 rpm if possible]	Zone 3	1 minute
→ Repeat the above sequence [minus warm-up] two times.		
Pedal slightly faster than your normal speed	Zone 2	10 minutes

Finish with easy pedaling going home.

Total Time: 45 minutes

What You've Done
 At first it may feel unnatural to ride at 90 or 100 rpm, but before long you'll realize that a cadence above 90 feels like less work, which is helpful for longer rides. This workout makes those higher-rpm efforts more comfortable and teaches you to use cadence to control your effort. Don't use the proper form during this segment of the workout. If you start rocking at the hips or flailing at the knees, lower your cadence until you're in control, then try again.

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 5:

Bicycling

WEEK 5
 EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS
 [FLAT TO GENTLY UNDULATING TERRAIN]

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Increase pace/ intensity	Zone 2	10 minutes
Increase pace/ intensity to tempo	Zone 3	10 minutes
Ease back on the intensity	Zone 1-2	2-5 minutes
Increase pace/ intensity to tempo	Zone 3	10 minutes

Ease back and finish with light pedaling going home.

Total Time: 55-60 minutes

What You've Done
 This workout conditions your lungs and legs to withstand the challenges of maintaining a steady effort and gets you ready to meet the demands of longer, harder rides.

6-Week Cycling Training Plan, Week 6:

Standing gives your legs a break and helps you up [steep hills](#) because you're putting all your weight into your pedals—but it also raises your heart rate because your [upper body](#) has to work harder to support your torso and keep you balanced. This week's workout will [boost your fitness](#) and riding skills.

Bicycling

WEEK 6
 GO ABOVE AND BEYOND
 [UNDULATING TERRAIN, PREFERABLY
 WITH A MODERATE HILL]

What To Do	Intensity	How Long
Warm Up	Zone 1-2	5 minutes
Pedal briskly	Zone 2	15 minutes
Shift and stand seconds	Zone 2-3	30 to 60
Sit and pedal	Zone 2	2 minutes
→ Repeat standing-and-sitting sequence six times [if you can do it on some inclines, even better]		
Pedal briskly	Zone 2	15 minutes

Finish at the pace of your choice going home.

Total Time: 45-50 minutes

What You've Done
 Standing gives your legs a break and helps you up steep hills because you're putting all your weight into your pedals—but it also raises your heart rate because your upper body has to work harder to support your torso and keep you balanced. This workout will boost your fitness and riding skills.

Okay riders, print out the weekly training plans above, and tape them to your top tube (the tube that runs from your seat post to your handlebars) and follow the instructions week-by-week. Have fun, and.....

Make Every Ride Epic,

Darryl