

# 5 Tips: Be Prepared for Your First Long Bicycle Ride



## **PLANNING A LONG DISTANCE RIDE OR GOING ON AN ORGANIZED TOUR?**

Here are five tips from [\*\*Vision Quest Coaching's Jason Schisler\*\*](#) on how to be prepared including what to eat, what to pack and what to wear.

## **1. FUEL YOURSELF WITH FOOD**

### **BEFORE THE RIDE:**

Our calorie intake is one of the most important parts of a long ride and will help to maintain energy levels. Be conscious of your diet, which foods are beneficial to consume and when. During training, focus on eating:

- Lean proteins like beans and fish
- Healthy fats like nuts and avocados
- Lots of fruits and vegetables

A common misconception leading up to a ride is that you need to consume a significant amount of carbohydrates before the big day. Schisler says that heaping plates of pasta just aren't necessary.

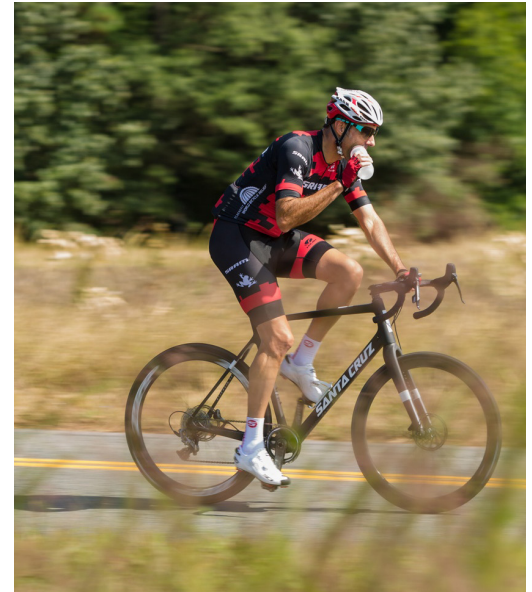
***Pro Tip: A few more carbs the night or two prior aren't a bad idea, but make sure to get a good night's rest. For breakfast, include some simple carbs and a bit of protein like oatmeal with fruit and nuts or a small plate of pancakes and scrambled eggs.***

### **DURING THE RIDE:**

During the ride, stay tuned in to how your body is doing. You will start with about 2000 calories worth of stored carbohydrates and fats. Feeling fatigue due to low energy levels is a key signal that you need to replenish calories.

Aim to consume 100-200 calories per hour. A good rule of thumb is to pack one energy bar, gel packet or the like for every hour of biking. Store your food in an easily accessible area such as a frame pack to grab on-the-go.

***Pro Tip: Low-intensity riding will burn more of the stored fat, but as you start working harder, you'll start dipping into your carbohydrate reserve. Your nutrition goal during the ride is to replace some of the lost carbohydrate calories so that reserve doesn't get too low.***



### **AFTER THE RIDE:**

With the end in sight, a rush of adrenaline will carry you over the finish line. Completing the ride will be a great feeling of accomplishment. Now is the time when carbohydrates are king. Carbs are quickly absorbed into the muscles to help assist in repair. Simple carbs like fruits and breads are easily digested, so start with these. Then introduce a small amount of protein like nuts or yogurt.

***Pro Tip: Depending on how tired you feel and the distance of the ride, you may need to continue with simple carbs and small amounts of protein for a few hours. However, by dinner time, you should be ready to return to your normal eating habits.***

## **2. HYDRATE HARD & PRACTICE TAKING A SIP**

As water is lost through sweat, regular hydration is essential to keep the body cool. Liquids also assist in moving calories and nutrients into the bloodstream. Nutrients and oxygen can then be delivered to the working muscles. Furthermore, water helps cushion and lubricate the tissues and joints you use while riding.

Schisler suggests to drink frequently in small amounts and consume about one bottle (approx. 1 liter) of fluid per hour. To get in the habit of this, build it into your training so that it becomes first nature to drink every 10-15 minutes. This will also give you an idea for your preferred drinking amount – one water bottle, two, or a reservoir in a light backpack.

***Pro Tip: To get in the habit of hydrating, build it into your training to drink every 10-15 minutes.***

If adding calories or electrolytes with sports tabs, consider also bringing plain water as the sweetness may become cloying later on.

### 3) BE A PREPARED PEDALER

#### ***MONTHS BEFORE THE RIDE:***

A few months before the ride is a good time to start training. During these next ten to twelve weeks, consistency and self-discipline will be key. Make it a weekly routine to ride 3-4 times.

Each ride should focus on strengthening a different area. One ride should include some intensity such as completing a long climb, joining a group ride or mixing in some interval training. The other rides should be lower intensity and focus on aerobic development, building endurance and going the distance.

***Pro Tip: While strengthening different areas is important, completing a long ride (at least 75-80% of the distance of the actual ride) at least once is strongly recommended.***

#### ***WEEKS BEFORE THE RIDE:***

For example: if you are riding a century 100-mile ride, try to go 80 miles about 3 weeks out. From the time you start training, plan to add about 5 miles each week to your longest ride the week prior. Along with building stamina, utilize this time to practice pacing yourself. This is also a good time to test nutrition products to see which ones work best to maintain your energy levels.

#### ***DAY OF THE RIDE:***

Cover your bases by being equipped with important contact information. Essential items to pack the day of include:

- identification card
- insurance card
- cell phone
- map of the route with anticipated stopping points marked

### 4) BE A MAINTENANCE MAVEN

#### ***BEFORE THE RIDE:***

Anticipating a bump or two in the road is a smart way to prepare yourself if a tricky situation arises. To start, it's a good idea to get your bike professionally tuned-up to make sure that everything is in good working order. Next, you'll want to learn some basic tools and quick repairs such as how to change a flat. You don't have to be an expert but being savvy with some basic knowledge is extremely helpful. The more miles you bike, the greater the chance that something might go awry.

***Pro Tip: Learn how to change a flat by stopping by your nearest bike shop for a lesson or watching a tutorial online.***





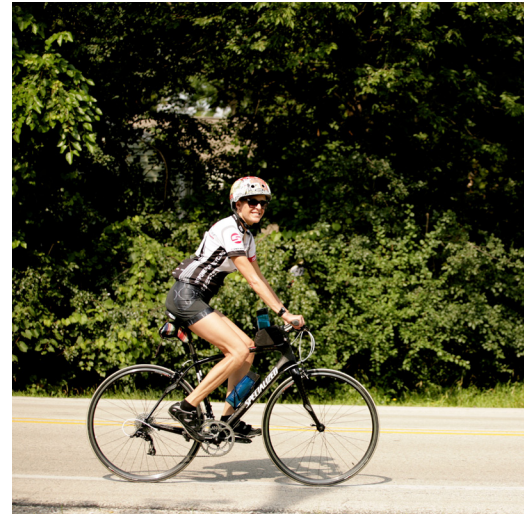
### ***DAY OF THE RIDE:***

Before the start of the ride, be sure to check your tire pressure and perform a manual inspection of the brakes. Make sure they are not rubbing against the brake pads as this can greatly affect performance and speed.

***Pro Tip: Perform a final quick “bounce test” by simply lifting the bike a few inches off the ground and letting it bounce to listen for any loose parts.***

Every rider should have an under-seat pack stocked with a few basic essentials:

- tire levers
- spare tube
- CO2 cartridge
- a multi-tool which can adjust almost any bolt
- a patch kit (optional)



## **5) DRESS FOR RIDING YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS**

As we know, a helmet tops the safety list in terms of importance. Aside from that, a quality pair of cycling shorts is going to have a big impact on your overall comfort. This will directly correspond to your enjoyment of the ride so it's crucial to find a pair you like.

Wear Lycra shorts with a synthetic chamois pad. For the top, zip-up cycle jerseys are great for their moisture-wicking qualities to keep you cool. Also, the easily accessible rear pockets make it convenient to store snacks or personal items.

If the weather is unpredictable, cooler or even rainy, pack layers including a lightweight rain shell. A key feature to look for in jackets is underarm vents to allow for nice airflow. Additional items may include arm and knee warmers or a light wind vest.

***Pro Tip: Make sure all of the clothing you plan to wear is made of synthetic athletic fabrics. Avoid cotton at all costs.***

## **READY TO RIDE?**

Taking on a long distance full-day ride requires a fair amount of preparation. Solid mental and physical commitments are defining factors. Remember that practice, comfort, safety and health should be top of mind while training, the day of and immediately after.

When you decide you're all in, like braving any endurance sport, you are bound to have some trials and tribulations. However, you will learn valuable lessons along the way, meet inspiring people and have an unforgettable experience.

These tips can be applied toward any long distance ride such as a 75-mile ride or a 100-mile century. We hope you've learned a lot and are able to ride with us.

## **PEDAL FOR A PURPOSE**

Each year, World Bicycle Relief has a series of rides around the country that you can participate in. These rides support and help fund World Bicycle Relief's mission to provide sustainable bicycle transportation to students, healthcare workers, and entrepreneurs across rural Africa.

**[SEE THE RIDES YOU CAN JOIN >](#)**



## **World Bicycle Relief mobilizes people through The Power of Bicycles.**

We envision a world where distance is no longer a barrier to independence and livelihood.

**[worldbicyclerelief.org](http://worldbicyclerelief.org)**



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## SPECIAL THANKS

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[Vision Quest Coaching](#) is a World Bicycle Relief partner. Thank you to Sara Chars for your editing and writing support.

Here is more information about these wonderful WBR supporters:



### **JASON SCHISLER**

Jason is the Director of Coaching for Vision Quest Coaching. He has personally taken part in many different cycling disciplines and helped hundreds of athletes prepare for their own personal endurance journey.

About our work, Jason says:

“World Bicycle Relief is a great organization and one that we’re [Vision Quest Coaching] thrilled to support because they take something we often take for granted as a source of enjoyment, and provide it to those in need where it can truly change a life.”



### **SARA CHARS**

Sara Chars is a World Bicycle Relief volunteer blogger. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from the University of Minnesota and currently works as an Art Director at Tiger Oak Media. In her free time she enjoys trying new restaurants, learning about other cultures, and exploring her surroundings by bike.