

Our advices to get ready for the Tour des Stations !

The Tour des Stations will start in almost three months and this race will be though, no matter on which course you registered. However, SportQuest Geneva (physical & cycling training center) will offer you monthly advices to get ready on the D-Day and get the most of your preparation.

April just started, the ski season is over and sunny and longer days are back. It's time to get back on your bike if it's not already done it. In this first advices' section about "getting ready for the Tour des Stations", here are the topics we will discuss today:

1. **Target your goal**
2. **Know your actual level**
3. **Getting ready**

1. TARGET YOUR GOAL :

The easiest part so far, or the choice you made when registered for the Tour des Stations. You chose to be part of the e-fondo, mediofondo, granfondo races, or to meet the challenge of the ultrafondo and its everesting, alone or as a team? Challenge accepted and we are ready to help you meet it!

2. KNOW YOUR ACTUAL LEVEL :

The time has come to take stock and it's necessary to know your actual level, in order to measure the gap between your fitness today and the one you would like to get on August the 7th.

Nothing can replace the traditional effort test, however it exists several ways to do it, depending on the material you own (i.e. powermeter, ergometer, HR monitor,...) and your investment.



- a) **The ramp test on a trainer:** the most faithful test, allowing you to reproduce a steady effort (hard to get in outdoor conditions due to traffic, the course,...). The goal of this test is to increase, step by step, your effort till you reach your maximal aerobic power threshold (PMA), which correlates to your VO2max (maximal oxygen volume you can bring to your muscles), and thus representing your actual fitness.
- b) **The FTP test:** endless test on the trainer, we suggest you to ride this test outdoor. The use of a powermeter is strongly recommended to manage your effort during the test but also to measure your FTP (functional threshold power). In practice, the FTP test is a 20min all-out test, where you need to develop the strongest average power over a 20min period. This average power value will then be multiplied by 0.95 and will give you your FTP. If you only use a HR monitor, you can also do this test, on a reference course, and note your maximal HR, which will still be useful to determine your training zones.

Now that you know your PMA (ramp test), your FTP (20min test) and/or your maximal HR (both tests), you can enter those values inside the Excel Table attached, that will automatically define your training zones.

Each zone has a particular function, and the role of the cycling trainer will be to respect a certain logic as well as a balance regarding the work time in every zone, to lead the trainees to improve and reach their top form the D-Day.

Moreover, one main interest of tests is to compare your fitness at different time-points during the season, to measure your improvements. Tests should always be done using the same protocol, for the same cyclist (i.e. same ramp test or same reference climb), in order to compare results over time.

3. GETTING READY :

Now that you defined your goal and know your actual level, you just have to ride ! Actually, it's not that easy...



The basic training guidelines are: **regularity** (ride your bike often is the best way to improve) and **progressivity** (increase progressively your training load in order that your body can adapt to training).

Once those two basic training guidelines are applied, we can then talk about **specific trainings**.

The Tour des Stations is an endurance effort, where you will spend a lot of time on your bike. You will thus need hours of training in your endurance zone (zone 2 mostly), but there is also an interest to train in other zones such as threshold efforts (zones 3 & 4), that will help you climb better and faster, as well as your PMA (zone 5), which is directly correlated to your VO₂max, thus will directly improve your fitness as previously mentioned.

It also exists a certain order to respect in using these zones during training. We advise you to start first with basic endurance, at the beginning of your preparation, with a certain time spent riding in zone 2. However, in order to leave your comfort zone, you can include some short efforts such as interval-training (30/30 in zone 5), 1 or 2 times a week, during this period.

Then, after some weeks of basic endurance, you can start to include longer efforts in zones 3 & 4 (closed to your 20min threshold or FTP), such as in climbing hill and start to collect elevation meters.

You are looking forward meeting you again next month with our next advices section about getting ready for the Tour des Stations !

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