

Our advices to get ready for the Tour des Stations !

We are glad to see you back, a bit less than two months to go before the event, and hope that your training is doing well, your endurance is improving and that you enjoy sunny days on the bike.

Today, we will discuss about specific exercises that you can include during your trainings and how to optimize recovery.

### 1. Which specific exercises can I add to my trainings to improve now?

Endurance is a big part of the effort you will have to give the D-Day, however it is important to vary intensities during your trainings. Those variations will not only help you to tolerate changes of pace (due to the course and its profile, due to the pace of other riders...) but also to improve your VO2 max, and thus your fitness in general.

Here you can find to types of exercises we recommend you integrate within your training sessions. Those exercises should be part of your weekly sessions, as those trainings are supposed to be shorter but more intense. And we advise you to plan longer rides, at endurance pace, for the weekend.

- **Interval's training or PMA/zone 5 efforts:** we are talking about efforts that are made directly in your VO2max zone. Tests that you might have done (cf. our last post) should have helped you to determine that power value. The goal of interval training is to increase the time spent in the targeted zone, using the benefit of a short resting period within the set of intervals, which is necessary to repeat that effort more and more.

Example of interval's training exercises: 3 sets of 7 repetitions of 30 seconds at 100-110% of your PMA (5min power value), with 30seconds of rest (endurance or recovery pace), in between.

In order to improve, it's important to repeat that effort in a regular way (i.e. 1x/week) but with increasing progressively the density within each set (one repetition more for each set, every week; thus 8 repetitions in week 2; 9 repetitions in week 3...).

You can also increase the duration of the efforts (i.e. from 30sec to 40sec or more) or decrease the resting time (i.e. from 30sec to 20sec) to make the exercise harder.

- **Threshold exercises:** threshold improvement will help you to maintain a "resistance-like" effort on a longer duration. This is the effort you give to climb at the strong pace.

Example of threshold exercises: several sets of 5min efforts in zone 4 (20min threshold or CP20). We advise you to start with 4 sets of 5min at your threshold power on week 1, and to increase the number of sets by adding one on week 2, another one on week 3,... or in increasing the duration of the time spent at your threshold power (from 5 to 6min, then 7min, etc...).

For cyclists who can add a second session dedicated to threshold improvement in their weekly trainings, we would recommend you include FTP efforts during that extra session, such as 3 to 4 sets of 10min interval at your FTP, in a climb.

Those specific cycling sessions will be even more productive in addition to long rides. We suggest you to progressively increasing the duration as well as the elevation meters of these rides, to get ready.



## 2. Optimizing my recovery:

Recovery is part of training! Training is a stress for your organism, and recovery allows your body to adapt and then, to tolerate harder training load, and thus improve.

Recovery includes different aspects that you might pay attention for, and more particularly when you are getting closer and closer to your goal. Here we offer you to consider different techniques that might help your recovery:

- 1) Sleep: a sufficient sleep quantity is necessary for your recovery. It varies along individuals, but we usually consider that 8 hours of sleep is good.
- 2) Hydration: is an essential part of recovery too. We consider that 2l. of daily water intake + 500ml for each training hour, in “normal” conditions.
- 3) Nutrition: balanced diet with carbohydrates, fats & proteins intake at each meal is recommended. We will develop more nutrition aspects in our next post!
- 4) Stretching: cycling is a sport where muscular contractions are usually concentrical, meaning that muscles are shortened. Regular stretching sessions (such as 3-4x a week, 15 to 30min) would help you, not only to give back their initial length to your muscles and find more articular amplitude, but also looseness induced by stretching will decrease compression of blood vessels and capillaries due to muscular contraction, and the blood circulation will improve, thus recovery will improve too.
- 5) Electrostimulation & massage: those two techniques will help muscular relaxation and increase blood circulation, in a passive way.
- 6) Foam roll: less passive than electrostimulation and massage, but nevertheless useful to relax specifically different muscular chains, as well as the muscles’ fascia (the envelop surrounding muscles), that stretching is not able to stretch. Foam roll also allows you to specifically target locations on which you can insist and remove muscular contractures, one by one.



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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