

TOUR DE BEARA TRAINING GUIDE

It's a 160km event with 2600meters of climbing with hard roads in between, so it's a challenge!

With good preparation over 20 weeks, you can be confident of completing the event comfortably.

What are the main components of fitness that you will need to for a Sportive like the Tour de Beara?

Endurance / Aerobic fitness: A good engine! So, a good base fitness.

Strength Endurance: Strength to last the day and also to climb.

Speed: Leg speed i.e. good cadence and speed of leg movement. But also, high end speed.

Skill: Being able to ride in groups, eat and drink while cycling, cornering, descending but also climbing and good use of gears. Something you should be working on all the time.

The 20 week plan will be a progressive plan, week to week, month to month, building on the main components of fitness **Endurance, Strength and Speed** leading up to the Tour de Beara with a taper period before the event.

Recovery is a major part of training for a big event.

It's important to recover properly after training sessions. Build in recovery days every week, but also a recovery week every month. This lets the body recover and build itself stronger after a period of training.

Proper nutrition and hydration play a vital role in your event both in training and everyday life but also on the event and in recovery.

On the bike it's important to eat and drink regularly when on a long spin. Make sure you are drinking **a min of 500ml of fluids every hour**. This makes a huge difference to your performance especially towards the last ¼ of the day but also for your recovery after the event and in the days after.

You should aim to eat a minimum of 30-40g of Carbohydrates per hour. To give you an idea, this is the equivalent of 3 Fig rolls! Some bars have 25-30g of Carbohydrates. So, aim to eat at least 1 bar over each hour of the event and on your long training spins! You can also get some carbohydrates in a commercial drink that you can take with your bottle.

Getting regular food and fluids in during the long spins and on the event will make a massive difference to your performance on the day and your recovery. You need to get into the habit of it now, don't try it for the first time on the day. You need to train your body and stomach to get used to this. Also, you will figure out what food and drink works best for you long before the event.

Before any of your big weekend spins make sure to have a good breakfast high in Carbohydrates.

Use of a Heart rate monitor:

Most of us have a Garmin or Wahoo computer or something similar that either came with a Heart rate monitor strap or are compatible with a heart rate monitor strap.

It is so worth using a heart rate monitor and getting used to the feeling of different heart rates and knowing what your heart rate zones are.

Using a heart rate monitor has the benefit of:

Knowing that you're not **overtraining**

Knowing that you're not **undertraining**

Is great **to identify the onset of possible illness or tiredness.**

You need to work out your Heart rate training zones.

The main zones are:

Zone 1 Recovery 60% (Real easy perceived exertion feeling of 2-3)

Zone 2 Aerobic 70% (Your main endurance zone for long spins, not easy but not hard, a little out of breath short conversation possible. Perceived exertion feeling 4-5)

Zone 3 Upper Aerobic 80% (Still within your main endurance zone, little harder, out of breath short conversation only. Perceived exertion feeling 5-6)

Zone 4 Tempo 85% (Sweet spot, hard but not flat out. Heavy breathing and short sentences only possible. Perceived exertion feeling 7-8)

Zone 5 Threshold 90% (Time Trial type effort, very high end, very hard. Effort you can only hold for 20 mins to 1 hour depending on fitness. Perceived exertion feeling 9)

Zone 6 Max HR 100% (Max out effort. 30sec to 1min max. Extremely hard. Perceived exertion level 10)

To work out your Heart rate for each zone you need to know your **max Heart rate and your resting Heart rate.**

Resting HR: Check your resting Heart rate in the morning before you get out of bed. Take it from your wrist or side of neck for 1 min. Do it 4-5 mornings in a row to get a good average.

Max HR: The safest way is 220 minus your age. However, if you are fit and healthy this can be inaccurate. You need to maybe do a hill climb test and push yourself and see what your Max HR is.

It's great to know your resting HR. When you are not feeling great or tired you should check your resting HR. If it is 5 beats or more higher than normal, then this is a sign your body is tired or coming down with a cold or flu and you need to rest up.

Perceived Exertion scores:

In the training programme I mention zones to work in but also the perceived exertion score if you are not using a Heart monitor. **These scores are on a 1-10 basis, 1 being very easy recovery to 10 being very hard max effort.**

1-2: Very easy day, recovery

3-4: A bit an effort. Your main Aerobic long endurance spins/efforts. You can maintain for a good number of hours. Not easy but not hard either. Bit of an effort and a little out of breath you could maintain a short conversation.

5-6: Tempo effort. So, a hard effort but not flat out. Out of breath but able to speak a few short sentences.

7-8: Threshold type effort: Like a Time Trial, type effort, so very hard, something you could maintain for 20 mins to max 1 hour if you've trained well. Yes and No answers to questions only.

9-10: Extremely hard efforts: Max efforts 20 secs to 1 min max. Completely out of breath and unable to talk!

PLAN:

It's important to plan your next few months. Work back from the event to today and put a plan in place where you can train consistently every week but build gradually to the event week to week month to month. Build in rest days every week but also a good rest week every month too.

Consistency is the key. We all have things in life that get in the way of training, that's normal and the same for everyone, once you can manage some consistency week to week month to month then this is what will make the difference.

How much training do I need for the event?

Everyone is different. Some have a big athletic background and lots of time on their hands, others are new to cycling and training and have commitments in life like work, kids etc.

You need to be training min of 3 sessions per week and min 6-8 hours per week. This could be 2 short session Tuesday and Thursday and a longer session at the weekend.

E.G. 1 hour Tuesday, 1 Hour Thursday, 4 hours Sunday.

Don't worry!

Don't panic if you miss a session here and there or the odd week. Life is life and family, work, illness and friends come before any event or training. We all miss sessions and that's ok. Just try being reasonably consistent.

If you get sick or injured and have to take a week or two away from training don't panic and try jump straight back into training. Always build things back up gradually for 2 weeks so you don't get a setback.

The week before the event, again **DON'T PANIC!** The work is done, you won't gain anything by doing big sessions that week. You need to just take it easier that week and taper down.

The week before the event:

This week, cut the volume of training down by 50%. Still do your days of training but just cut the length of your session in half.

Make sure you have all your kit ready for the day. Don't be afraid to pack everything, you never know what the weather will be like on the morning.

Have your bike well serviced and clean. You have done all the training and commitment it would be silly to have your bike let you down because you haven't looked after it.

The few days before the event make sure to keep well hydrated and take in high carbohydrate food especially the 2 days beforehand.

Enjoy the day and most importantly **HAVE FUN AND BE SAFE!**