

Monthly Advice

Taking a steady, regular and progressive approach to your preparation will ensure that you can complete the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle.

Everybody is at a different level of fitness and has different lifestyles and expectations, so it is difficult to give a week-by-week training plan that would suit everybody. Therefore, you can adapt these basic monthly guidelines to suit your particular circumstances.

The two key principles to keep in mind at all times are:

1. Consistency – ride your bike as much as possible
2. Progression – begin at a level comfortable for you and progress slowly but steadily.

April

If you don't have a good fitness base:

- This month is all about building basic fitness – slow, steady miles at a pace which is comfortable enough to conduct a conversation
- Try to ride as often as you can, however short - at least four times per week would be ideal
- If you have to take a break for any reason don't let it discourage you – just get back into your routine as quickly as possible
- Don't let a bit of rain put you off – you might enjoy it
- Practice using gears regularly and keeping your cadence high
- Focus on spending time on the saddle rather than on average speed
- Aim for one long ride per week, beginning at an hour and aim to complete 25 miles (40K) in one ride by the end of the month
- Get your saddle height checked and learn the feel of correct air pressure in your tyres
- If you are going for weight-loss, eat well and sparingly and aim for a 4lb. (1.8Kg) loss for the month
- Expect mild aches and discomforts as the body adapts but distinguish these from niggling or developing injuries which should be checked
- If you are feeling particularly tired for any session, still try to motivate yourself to get out but go at a very slow pace – think of it as going for an easy walk on your bike – and you will still get benefit from this
- See our General Guidelines for further advice [\(link\)](#)

If you are starting with a good base of fitness but are not so used to cycling:

- Do all of the above for the first two weeks
- On the third week include a harder session with some intensity as described under the Fitness heading
- Extend your long ride to a distance you are capable of
- See our General Guidelines for further advice [\(link\)](#)

May

You should have a good base at this stage and May is an important month to consolidate this and develop your endurance further.

Priorities

Whatever your level of fitness or experience, the three most important points to keep in mind for the month are:

1. Consistency: ride at least four times per week, every week
2. Progression: gradually extend your mileage each week (or pace if you are short of time) and increase to five sessions if possible and you are not feeling too tired.
3. Extend the long ride especially: if you are a beginner aim for at least 60K (37 miles) or longer if you are more fit or experienced.

Target

We have suggested that the Ring of Kerry challenge may seem less daunting if you think of it as four separate segments or chunks of approximately 40K (25 miles) each with breaks in between.

In April we suggested 40K (25 miles) as your target and for May you could set 80K (50 miles) as your target long ride. This might be easiest done at a sportive, charity cycle or club cycle. However, don't be put off if this isn't feasible for any reason.

Optional Intensity

If you want to further boost your fitness you can add a little intensity if you wish (but it is not essential to complete the Ring of Kerry):

- If you are a beginner do one session a week which brings you out of your comfort zone to a level that makes conversation difficult – see the section on 'Fitness' above for some ideas
- If you have a good level of fitness try one 'tempo' session a week (moderate-hard but sustainable, with conversation difficult) of between 20 and 40 minutes, and one session where you do very hard efforts of between 2 and 5 minutes (10-12 minutes in total). Allow plenty of recovery in between – at least 5 minutes.

Unless you are quite fit it is advisable not to do more than two hard sessions per week – more will break down the body rather than strengthen it. Once per week is enough. If you are relatively new to this level of training: remember, time spent on the bike is key for endurance.

If you ride with a group that includes people of a higher standard you may get adequate intensity during those rides.

Always take a day off after hard sessions or go for a very easy spin of less than an hour – treat the effort the same as going for a gentle walk.

Recovery

If you have been able to ride consistency and have been progressively increasing your mileage or time, it is very important that you take a recovery week during the last week of May, especially if you are feeling tired or finding it difficult to stay motivated.

Remember, fitness occurs as the body responds to the effort and, if you have been progressively increasing that effort, the body needs recovery time to fully adapt to the extra load. This is when fitness occurs.

It will also help to refresh yourself mentally and get you ready for the final block of preparation in June.

If you need a recovery week a general guideline is to cut back on your volume between 50-75%. The exception is your weekly long ride – don't cut back on this and the end of a recovery period is a good time to do that extra-long spin as you will be feeling fresh.

Good quality food and good sleep will aid your recovery.

Additional Guidelines

In addition to these and the general tips given for April, the following may be helpful:

1. Time on the bike is more important than speed – reduce your speed if necessary in order to get in the distance, especially on your long rides
2. Consider entering a sportive or charity cycle this month – it will make the long miles seem easier and will be good experience
3. If you are aiming for weight-loss, continue to eat well and don't be tempted to eat extra as a 'reward' for your training!
4. If convenient do some long climbs with an easy gradient to practice your pacing (steady, at a high cadence using your gears)
5. As your training load increases, the quality of your food (not volume) and sleep become more important
6. Continue to practice the pacing, nutrition and hydration guidelines during your weekly long cycle.

June

Riding consistently through June and further building your distance will set you up for an enjoyable Ring of Kerry. Also, reinforce all the other suggestions we have made on pacing, equipment, nutrition and skill.

At this stage your experience is the best guide to the level of training you can sustain and try to gradually extend yourself further each week for the first three weeks of the month.

Along with the normal consistency and progression which we have stressed, you can set yourself a key target distance for June.

Target

We suggested mentally 'chunking' the Ring of Kerry into four approximate segments and completing the distance of the third one this month will ensure that you can complete the event.

Therefore, set yourself the target of approximately 120K (75 miles) in one ride, taking breaks if necessary. As in May, this will be easier at an organized event or with a group of similar standard.

However, this in itself is a good challenge and not being able to do it for any reason shouldn't rule out your attempt at the charity cycle.

Taper Week

It is very important that you take things easy during the final week and let your body recover from the weeks of effort to make sure that you are fresh on the day.

You want to be in the best 'form' for the Ring of Kerry, and form is a balance between fitness and freshness.

You will add very little to your fitness during the last week by 'cramming' further training, but you could ruin your freshness from making the body tired.

Therefore, back off quite a bit in the final week – approximately half your weekly effort for June – and get plenty of good food and sleep. Spend the 'spare' time checking your equipment and planning for the event.

And Finally

The main thing is to keep a sense of perspective, enjoyment and fun. The Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle is mainly about supporting deserving charities and providing a personal challenge and a great day out for the riders.

No matter how your preparation has gone there will be a big army of volunteers and thousands of supportive cyclists to make sure you complete your challenge and finish with a smile on your face and a great sense of satisfaction.

Enjoy the day!