

# Chapter 1

## Aligning Goals With Reality

I'm sure you have heard about the tremendous amount of training that professional cyclists put in: 20,000 miles per year, four to five hours per day. You, on the other hand are struggling to fit in five hours per week! If you don't have more than five hours a week to devote to cycling training, then there is a good chance you are doing something else for a livelihood, which is good, because you will not become a professional cyclist if you only have five hours to train. However, this doesn't mean you can't be a good cyclist; you can, and a darned good one at that. But you need to realize that your cycling fitness to a large degree is a function of the amount of time you have to train and set your goals accordingly. However, the purpose of this book is to help you make the most out of the few hours you do have available.

**Step 1:** The first step is to honestly assess the amount of time you have available to train. Don't forget, time doesn't just happen. You have to plan your schedule and make time for cycling. If you wait until you have time, chances are you won't have any left. Be sure to read through Chapter 3 as well; you may have more time available than you thought you did. If you have at least three hours to train per week, you can make good progress towards being a good cyclist. Any less than that and it becomes very difficult. Most cycling events are endurance oriented so there is a limit to how little you can train and still be a proficient cyclist. I draw the line at three hours per week. However, if you can only manage two, by all means do two – it's better than not training at all. But if you can only do two, consider it maintenance and don't expect to make a lot of gains through this much training. If you can manage five hours per week, then you ought to be able to ride well and keep up with most other cyclists who lead a normal life with work and family priorities.

Equally important, you need to assess your energy and motivation level – how much energy do you have to train per week? It doesn't matter that you have 10 hours a week to ride if you are too tired to actually get out there and ride, or ride with intensity. You can be fitter by riding five hours per week with a lot of intensity than if you ride 10 hours per week at a moderate pace. So really evaluate how many hours of good quality riding you can get in each week.

## Chapter 2

# Training Smarter Rather Than Longer

There are two ways to get stronger and faster: Train more extensively or train more intensively. 'Extensive' training means more mileage, more hours in the saddle. It is often referred to as volume of training. 'Intensive' training refers to training more intensely, riding harder and faster. Both are important for a fit, well rounded cyclist. But as you can guess, this book is going to talk about training more intensively rather than training more extensively because you don't have the time to train extensively. Again, both are good and riding longer is helpful to gain more fitness, but without the time, then the focus needs to be on intensity. So if you are training five hours or less each week, then you need to concentrate on intensive training. As you find or make time to ride, then you can use that time additional time to add more volume or distance to your training. Here's something to keep in mind: **When you have limited time to train, every ride needs to have a purpose.** You can't afford to go out and 'just ride' if you want to improve. Cyclists have a term for this – we call riding without purpose 'junk miles'. This is because these miles are not high enough quality to really train or improve any aspect of your riding, they are just making you more tired and slowing your recovery.

So what is meant by intensity? Intensity is the amount of effort you expend while riding. Think of a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is sleeping and 10 is doing an all-out sprint. When we ride at a leisurely pace, we are typically doing 2-4 on this scale, which is often referred to as the Borg RPE scale, where RPE stands for Rate of Perceived Exertion. A level 5 is where your effort begins to get hard, where you have to start putting in a lot of effort and concentration to maintain that pace. Think of when you have ridden with others who are faster than you and you are trying to keep up and stay on their wheel. You are breathing very hard, and you can't maintain this pace very long. That would likely be a 5 to 7 level. When you get into a level 8 or higher, these are short, extremely hard efforts which can't be maintained for more than a minute. To improve, you need to push yourself into this level of effort. Riding in your comfort zone of 2-4 just won't do much when you only have 45 minutes to ride. Think of it this way. If you want to improve your endurance, you need to ride a long time and put in a lot of miles. Those miles don't have to be very intense because the main objective is to get hours in the saddle. If you only have 45 minutes to ride, and you do these at endurance

## Chapter 3

# Strategies and Tactics for Making More Time to Train

Although you may now be convinced that you can get into decent shape riding and training five hours or less per week, you need to be certain that is all you really have available to train. This chapter is intended to give you some ideas on where to look to find those few extra minutes or hours each week to ride. Any additional time can be used to further increase your fitness and endurance. You may not be aware of how much extra time you actually have, if you change a few things in your schedule.

**Prioritize.** The first thing you should consider doing is putting together a schedule each week, such as on Sunday evening, of all the things you need to do the next week. Start by plugging in your training time. If you leave this until the end, you may not have much time left. By putting together a schedule, you may actually realize how much time you have that isn't accounted for by something important, such as work, sleep, family, etc. Just by looking at your schedule you may determine that you do have another half hour here or there during the week. Give exercise the priority in your life it deserves and don't feel guilty about doing so. This is about your health and being fit. What is more important than that? Sure family and earning a living is important, but if you maintain your health and fitness, you will be better able to do those things. You will also sleep better and feel better during your waking hours.

**Negotiate 'Your Time' with your family.** If you have family obligations you may feel torn between riding and spending time with your family. You may even feel guilty about sneaking out for a ride and feel selfish. But as mentioned in the point above, taking a few hours to exercise will pay benefits to both you and your family. And we are only talking a few hours per week – realize that 5 hours per week is only 3% of your week. What other 3% of your schedule can offer so much benefit? So discuss your goals and plans with your family and try to get them to understand that these are a few, but important hours you need for yourself, so you can be fit and healthy for them for years to come. You may find that they are very happy to support you, especially if you tell them you are using your few hours very efficiently. You may also find that your family is willing to support you in carving out a few more hours per week. If not, hopefully you can at least get their blessing to ride for five hours and not feel guilty about it.

## Chapter 4

### Example Workouts and Training Plans for Busy Cyclists

**How to use these workout and training plans:** These workouts and plans are meant to serve as a starting point for you to build your own plan. These workouts and plans can and should be modified to fit your own situation and schedule.

#### Daily Workout Examples

A variety of workouts are listed below, varying from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. These include aerobic and anaerobic workouts, leg strength workouts and endurance rides. Depending on the amount of time you have, pick and choose any of these to fit your time and schedule. You can also make up your own workout using these examples. If you only have 30 minutes available, look through the options for 30 minutes and pick one. Or, make one up yourself. Just allow yourself 10 minutes for a warmup because these should be intense workouts, and at least five minutes for a cool down and use the remaining 15 minutes for your intense workout. If you are doing an endurance ride, allow yourself at least 1.5 hours. Any less time than that and it's not really going to do a lot to benefit endurance so you'll be better off doing one of the other types of workouts instead. But if you have more than 1.5 hours, then by all means make your ride longer. More is better for an endurance benefit.

This is not an all-inclusive list of possible workouts by any means. You can find many additional ideas from the book ['101 Cycling Workouts'](#).

## **1 Hour Workouts**

### **Aerobic Workouts:**

#### Workout 1:

Warm up 10 minutes. Do a series of 10 minute intervals at your maximum sustainable pace, followed by five minutes of easier spinning. Do three of these 10 minute intervals. Cool down with 10 minutes of easy spinning.

#### Workout 2:

Warm up 10 minutes. Do a series of 15 second intervals at your maximum sustainable pace, followed by 15 seconds of easier spinning. Do a set of these 15 second intervals for 20 minutes. Then spin easily for five minutes. Then complete a second set of 15 second intervals for 20 minutes. Cool down with five minutes of easy spinning.

### **Anaerobic Workouts:**

#### Workout 1:

Warm up 10 minutes. Do a series of hard two minute intervals followed by one minute at an easier, but not easy, pace. Repeat three more times for a total of four intervals, then recover for five minutes by spinning easily. Do a second and third set of four x two minute intervals with one minute recoveries, with five minutes between each set. Cool down with five minutes of easy spinning.

#### Workout 2:

Warm up 10 minutes. First, stand and accelerate and then sit in saddle and continue to accelerate for a total of 30 seconds. Pedal easier for another 30 seconds and repeat the standing interval. This mimics standing out of a corner in a criterium race. Do 10 of these intervals, then recover for five minutes and repeat for a total of three x 10 minute sets. Cool down with five minutes of easy spinning.

## Weekly Training Plan Examples

The examples of weekly training plans listed below are meant to give you ideas on how to set up your own weekly plan. You can certainly use them as-is if that works for you, but feel free to modify them to fit your weekly days and time available. Do not feel obligated to do the exact workout listed either. You pick the workout and fit it into your weekly schedule, both in terms of time and frequency. Just try to get a variety of workouts in and avoid doing the same type all the time.

So let's build a weekly plan so you can see how to do it yourself. Start by writing down the days and time you have available to train. Let's say it looks like this for a given week:

Tuesday:	45 min
Wednesday:	1 hour
Saturday:	1.5 hours
Sunday:	1 hour

Since Saturday is the longest time, we will use that for an endurance ride. Then for the other three days, assign one aerobic, anaerobic and hill/strength workout to those days. This is what you might come up with for this week:

Tuesday:	45 min	anaerobic intervals
Wednesday:	1 hour	hill workout
Saturday:	1.5 hours	endurance
Sunday:	1 hour	aerobic intervals

As you can see, with four days and about one hour per day, you can get four quality workouts in each week and get a variety of your physiological systems covered.

If you can't afford a ride longer than one hour, then skip the endurance workout and try to get the other three types in. Look through the examples below to see various ways you can set up your training schedule. There are plans ranging from two days and two hours per week up to five days and six hours per week.

## 3 Hours per Week

### 2 Days & 3 Hours per Week

#### Plan 1

Wednesday:	1 hour	anaerobic intervals
Sunday:	2 hours	endurance ride

#### Plan 2

Wednesday:	1 hour	leg strength/hill intervals
Saturday:	2 hours	endurance ride

#### Plan 3

Saturday:	1.5 hours	tempo/endurance ride
Sunday:	1.5 hours	tempo/endurance ride

### 3 Days & 3 Hours per Week

#### Plan 1

Tuesday:	1 hour	aerobic intervals
Thursday:	30 min	leg strength/hill workout
Sunday:	1.5 hours	tempo/endurance ride

#### Plan 2

Tuesday:	30 min	anaerobic intervals
Thursday:	30 min	leg strength/hill workout
Saturday:	2 hours	endurance ride

#### Plan 3

Wednesday:	1 hour	anaerobic intervals
Saturday:	1.5 hours	tempo/endurance ride
Sunday:	30 min	leg strength/hill workout