

Training plan update

As well as your physical training, your diet also needs to be a key focus during your training as well on event day(s). So, as well as sticking to your training plan, make sure you are clued up on what you should be eating and drinking to get you event ready. Below is some essential advice on how to best fuel your body.

Nutrition insight: The right diet for training and event day is essential

During preparation for an endurance event, such as the Barclays Wheels for Change, what you eat is as important as your training and recovery routine. You need to provide your body with the right fuel for training as well as the important nutrients to complement recovery in between these sessions.

A good diet allows for:

1. More consistent & intensive training by promoting recovery between training sessions
2. It reduces interruptions of training through illness or injury
3. It enhances competitive performance

Your overall diet needs to be adequately high in carbohydrate, for muscle fuel stores and sufficiently varied so it provides food from all essential food groups ensuring that you have an adequate supply of all nutrients.

- Tidy overall diet accordingly
- High Energy
- High carbohydrate – for muscle glycogen stores, to maintain a strong immune system & for daily recovery between heavy training sessions
- Adequately varied to provide enough protein, vitamins & minerals
- Regular meals & snacks
- Sufficient Iron intake: Lean red meat, chicken, fish, green vegetables & wholegrain cereals

Good nutrition is equally important for training sessions as it is for the event. Training is also your opportunity to experiment with what works best for you ahead of the date.

For rides over 1 hour long carbohydrate and fluid intakes should be organised. Portable foods include: dried fruit, bananas, cereal bars and sports gels and bars. The carbohydrate intake should be before hunger hits. Intake should be between 30-60g of carbohydrate per hour. Start this early in the race or training session to prevent low muscle glycogen stores later in the ride.

What 50g of Carbohydrate looks like:

- 800-100ml sports drink
- 2 cereal bars
- 2 sports gels
- 3 medium pieces of fruit – with a handful of nuts
- 500ml juice
- 800ml cordial
- 1 sandwich – with nut butter, jam etc.

Be careful not to overestimate carbohydrate needs and consequently consume too many sports gels, sports drinks and bars.

Fluid levels also need to be kept up and the water deficit should be kept within 1-2kg (see fluids section.)

Before the event:

The aim is to top up muscle glycogen stores and to keep the stomach comfortable for the race.

- Have a normal portion meal approx. four hours prior to the ride and a snack one to two hours before.
- If you are starting early then have a high carbohydrate meal the night before and a snack one to two hours before the event.
- Choose high-carb and low fat foods to make digestion easy and top this up with carbohydrate fuel supplies (see above)
- Experiment with time, content and portion of meals and snacks to find out what suits you best.
- Include fluid with all pre-race meals and snacks. Drink at regular intervals prior to the race to keep fluids levels topped up (but not too much so that you feel uncomfortable) and then have approx. 300-400ml of fluid immediately prior to the start of the race.

During the event:

- During the event you will need to start topping up carbohydrate levels to ensure you don't run out. Start after about 30 minutes into the ride, aim for about 30-60g carbohydrate per hour and continue at regular intervals. Try energy bars, gels, bananas, dried fruit-bars or an isotonic sports drink.
- Don't wait to become thirsty start to replace fluids early into exercise. It is easier to drink small amounts frequently. Start replacing fluids within the first 30 minutes of exercise.

Ideas for carbohydrates during the race:

800ml sports drink, 2 pieces of fruit, energy gel, flapjack, 2 handfuls dried fruit, 2 cereal bars.

Post-Event Recovery:

- Recovery of fuel stores is enhanced when a snack that provides carbohydrate and protein along with other nutrients such as vitamins is consumed post exercise.
- Organise to have suitable drinks and snacks available after the event.
- See 50g Carbohydrate examples above for some post-race recovery – add an element of protein to any that don't already have any.

Fluids:

Because even small losses of water can cause a drop in performance, optimum hydration is extremely important to athletes. Fluid requirements vary based on the intensity of exercise and training conditions. Aim to estimate your own fluid requirements by weighing before & after riding. Fluid is necessary to replace that lost via sweat and urine but water is also a necessary component to help fix carbohydrate into muscles in the form of glycogen.

Each Kilogram of weight loss is equivalent to one litre of fluid (1000ml) and shows the net deficit at the end of the session. The volume of any fluid consumed in the exercise session should be added to this deficit to estimate total fluid losses during the session. So, a cyclist who finishes a session 1kg lighter and has consumed 750ml of fluid has a total fluid loss of 1750ml for the session and has a remaining fluid deficit of 1000ml (1 litre)

You can also assess your level of hydration from your urine, which should be dilute pale-coloured urine. Concentrated dark-coloured urine of a small volume indicates that you are dehydrated.

To Do:

- Drink a sports drink that encourages better fluid intake because of its taste – as well as supplying extra fuel.
- Pre-hydrate
- Fluids are key after hours in the saddle esp. in high temperatures
- Start the ride with a water bottle, replace this when the need/opportunity arises
- Ensure cage that holds the bottle is secure enough to keep it in place over the roughest terrains
- Practice good drinking strategies in training sessions.
- Drinking 400-600mls of fluid, two hours before the race, to enable you to hydrate and also find time for a visit to the bathroom.