

15 Weeks to 150 Miles

A Training Guide to Prepare for Bike MS

Brian Bors and Matt Sodnicar

This plan will help you prepare for and get in riding shape to enjoy one of Arizona's signature cycling events – the Bike MS. Over the next few months, you will gradually transition from winter hibernation to a fitter, faster cyclist to train for this ride – and excel!

The Bike MS is a two-day cycling event, March 27-28, 2010. On Day 1 bike MS will offer a 35 miles, 75 miles, or a century, 100 miles, option. On Day 2 bike MS will offer a 30 miles, 45 miles or 60 mile option. While this may seem overwhelming now, a consistent, gradual, and focused effort will help you achieve your goals.

After reading this, you will hopefully have an understanding of the effort, exercise, equipment and preparation to not only survive, but enjoy the result of your hard work this spring. Starting in mid-December, dedicate a little time to yourself and your bike, and this will be one the most memorable weekends of your life!

The best advice I've ever received about training was "Listen to everyone, believe no one." This means that you have to find what works best for YOU – we are all different. What works for me, may not work for you. Ask questions, try, and experiment.

I. EQUIPMENT

The Bike

This section will address the necessary equipment for the Bike MS event. Let's start with the obvious – the bicycle. You'll see all kinds of bikes on this ride; road, mountain, hybrid, cruisers. The style of bike you ride is not important, but making sure the bike is in proper working condition is critical.

Take your bike in for a tune-up now, so when your training starts, you'll have a fine tuned machine.

Ask the mechanic at a local bike shop to perform these tune-up basics:

- Check brake / shifter cables and replace if necessary
- Check brake pads
- Check tires for wear
- Verify brake / shifter operation
- Check wheels for proper alignment, also called "truing" the wheels

Another critical component related to the bike is the fit. The seat height and position, handlebar rotation, and other small adjustments have a huge impact on comfort and performance. You'll be spending time in the saddle, and a properly fit bike can improve your experience. Schedule a fit with a certified coach or fit specialist at the shop when you pick up your bike.

The Clothing

Like golf, scuba diving and skiing, cycling has a set of specialized clothing that makes a difference in your ride. Here is a list of what you'll need for the Bike MS weekend:

- **Padded cycling shorts.** This is the must-have. Tight lycra shorts or baggy shorts is a personal preference – but the padding is essential. Also, the shorts are designed to be worn **without** underwear.
- **Helmet.** The ride requires a helmet, and a proper fitting one is essential to your safety.
- **Cycling gloves.** These are padded and can help reduce numbness in your hands.
- **Sunglasses.** Protects your eyes from bugs, debris and UV rays.
- **Cycling top.** Cycling jerseys are nice for a variety of reasons. The fabric is lightweight and wicks perspiration from your skin; long zippers allow the wind to cool you; pockets help carry food, wallet, keys, cellphone.
- **Cycling socks.** Much like the jersey, cycling socks are lighter weight, and have tighter cuffs to prevent rocks from getting into your socks.
- **Cycling shoes.** Even if you do not use clipless pedals (where the shoe clips into the pedal) consider using cycling shoes. The stiff sole helps your pedaling form and is more efficient than running shoes.
- **Warm apparel.** The mornings will be cool, and afternoons in Colorado pose the possibility of thunderstorms. You'll want lightweight removable

cycling-specific apparel; arm warmers, chest warmers, skull caps, wind jackets.

II. Basic Training!

Prior to any riding, or gym work, please consult your doctor and inform them of your plans to ride, and make sure you are healthy enough for this event.

If you are unfamiliar with any of the exercises or machines, consult a certified personal trainer

A strong healthy cyclist has 6 components to their training plan: **riding, strength training, core strength, flexibility, recovery and nutrition.**

We'll start with strength training, flexibility, core strength, recovery, and nutrition – devoting a full section to cycling training.

a. Strength Training

You won't need to spend hours in the gym, but performing a few key exercises will deliver countless benefits to you. If you visualize the rider on a bike, a portion of the upper body weight is supported by the arms. Lighter weight with higher repetition is what is needed.

If these exercises are unfamiliar to you, please consult a certified personal trainer at your local fitness or recreation center.

Here's an example of a recreational cyclist's weight training routine:

- **Frequency:** 1x – 2x per week
- **Repetitions:** minimum 12, maximum 25
- **Sets** :(number of times each exercise is performed): 2 to 3

Here are the muscle groups to focus on, and some recommended exercises:

- **Triceps:** pushups, tricep pushdowns, tricep extensions
- **Biceps:** pullups, curls
- **Shoulders:** shoulder press, pushups, side / front raises
- **Back:** pulldowns, seated rows

Again, the goal of these exercises is not to build large muscles, but add strength and stamina to help support your upper body during the ride.

b. Flexibility

Flexibility can help athletic performance, aid recovery after training, and reduce the likelihood of injury. The beauty of cycling is that it is low-impact, but it uses very specific muscles in a repetitive motion.

Keep in mind that a flexibility regimen is meant to be restorative, not necessarily challenging – meaning that you should not push your limits. **Pain and discomfort are not part of any flexibility program.**

Some examples of a flexibility program are:

- **Yoga**
- **Pilates**
- **Swimming.** Swimming is great for lengthening muscles, and helping your body recover
- **Massage**

c. Core Strength

Core strength is a new term, essentially meaning strong, fit abdominal muscles and a flexible, healthy lower back.

Yoga and pilates incorporate this at the heart of its training, but in cycling, a strong core is so essential that additional effort is recommended. **And you won't do one single situp!**

The Dimity McDowell at Bicycling Magazine have compiled a fantastic set of core exercises.

You can view it online by going to Bicycling.com and searching for “Core”. [Or you click here to open the webpage.](#)

d. Recovery

You'll want to make sure you get plenty of sleep, and monitor your mood, and your body. You are looking for signs of injury and overtraining. It's perfectly normal to feel tired after a long ride, but if you are continually exhausted, you may be overtrained. Keep this saying in the front of your mind:

“Train hard – rest harder”

On most days, you should look forward to your training. If you are dreading it, or are grouchy, know that it is perfectly acceptable to shorten a ride or even take the day off. Better to pass on one day and look forward to the next session, than to push it, and resent the bike – or yourself.

e. Nutrition

Every person has different dietary needs, and a single plan is not going to be compatible with everyone. These are just some general guidelines to start thinking about.

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet consisting of carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins.
- Drink plenty of water. You'll know you are properly hydrated if your urine is clear.
- Great carbs are whole grain pastas, breads, brown rice.
- Lean proteins are salmon, tuna, chicken, lean beef.
- Try to avoid fast food, junk food, processed food and sugar (candy and sodas).

Now is also the time to start thinking about performance nutrition, and what to eat and drink during the ride. Energy bars, gels, sports hydration drinks are going to help you maintain your energy during the ride and have the advantage of portability. Talk to cyclists you know and find out what they like – then buy one and try it. See how you like the taste, how your stomach tolerates it – and find what works best for you!

III. Cycling training

<i>Week</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Total Ride Time (hrs.)</i>
1	Ride 1 Hour	Flexibility		Core		Strength		1
2	Ride 1 Hour	Flexibility		Core		Strength		1
3	Ride 1 Hour	Flexibility		Core		Strength		1
4	Ride 1 Hour	Flexibility		Core		Strength		1
5	Core	Ride 1.5 Hours		Spin Class	Flexibility	Strength		2.5
6	Core	Ride 1.5 Hours		Spin Class	Flexibility	Strength		2.5
7	Core	Ride 2 Hours		Spin Class	Flexibility	Strength		3
8	Core	Ride 2 Hours		Spin Class	Flexibility	Strength		3
9	Ride 1 Hour	Ride 2.5 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour	Flexibility		4.5
10	Ride 1 Hour	Ride 2.5 Hours	Core		Ride 1 Hour	Strength		4.5
11	Ride 1 Hour	Ride 3 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour	Strength		5
12	Ride 2 Hours	Ride 3 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour			6
13	Ride 2 Hours	Ride 4 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour			6
14	Rest	Ride 4.5 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour			4.5
15	Rest	Ride 3 Hours	Flexibility	Core	Ride 1 Hour	Rest	Rest	4

Training Legend

- a. **Ride:** This can be at a spin class, inside on a stationary bike, or weather permitting, outside. Notice that over the 15 weeks, time on the bike is increased gradually, and extra bike training days are added. Also, as the event approaches, the ride time decreases, or tapers, to allow you to rest, recover and be fully prepared for the event.

Note on Week 15, you don't stop all activity – just decrease it a little bit.

- b. **Where to Ride:** Riding up hills will increase your strength and stamina. At least half of your rides should be up hills. Long, easy rides also have benefits by increasing your cardiovascular capacity and getting your body used to being on the bike and in the saddle.

- c. **Back to Back Days**

It is important to note that the ride occurs over two days, a Saturday and a Sunday. As the training progresses, note that we've included back to back riding days. You will need to prepare your body for this.

IV. Other Tips

- a. Never, ever, ever try anything new the weekend of the event. No new shoes, no new drinks, no new food. Set a cutoff of 2 weeks before to have everything locked in – from your equipment, food, sleeping schedule. Many disasters occur when people experiment on the big day.

V. GOALS

a. Have fun!

This is the most important goal. Bike MS is a great cause, filled with fantastic people, in a beautiful state. Put a smile on your face, and go ride your bike! Enjoy it!!!

b. Going the distance

Instead of viewing the ride as 150 miles, think of it like this:

- Five fifteen-mile rides each day.

Bike MS has 5 rest stops about 10-15 miles apart each day. This 15 mile distance usually takes the novice rider about 45 minutes to an hour to complete. By week 8 and 9, you should be able to ride without a stop for at least an hour. This will prepare you for carrying fluids and snack between rest stops. When doing rides longer than two hours, again attempt to take your breaks no less than an hour apart. This way you will get used to riding the distance between each rest stop.