

Off Road Cycling Training Guide



Introduction

Welcome to Mencap's official Cycling Event Guide. Whichever event you have chosen to take part in you have taken the first steps to helping those with a learning disability.

Our events are all about personal challenges and having fun so we've designed this training guide to take you from that first training ride right up to the finish line. The aim is to safely progress your fitness to the appropriate levels so that you will not just be able to complete your challenge but you'll be able to complete it comfortably. It is based around specific event training which will improve your overall fitness and provide you with all the tools that you'll need.

Don't forget its not just about the day, enjoy each ride and only push yourself in small steps

First things first...

To start with, it is vitally important to ensure that it is safe for you to begin any exercise programme. Complete the safety checklist below

Health-status safety checklist

- 1 Are you aged over 30 and/or have not exercised for some time?
- 2 Do you suffer from any medical conditions?
- 3 Are you a smoker or have recently given up smoking?
- 4 Have you undergone any surgery in the past two years?
- 5 Are you suffering from any injuries?
- 6 Are you currently on any prescribed medication?
- 7 Are you unsure about beginning an exercise program?

If you answer YES to one or more questions, or alternatively, if you are at all concerned about starting training, then make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up before you start.

All the gear...no idea?

With so many products on the market, it can be hard to tell what you'll actually need for your cycling challenge. Our checklist will help you select everything you need

Bike

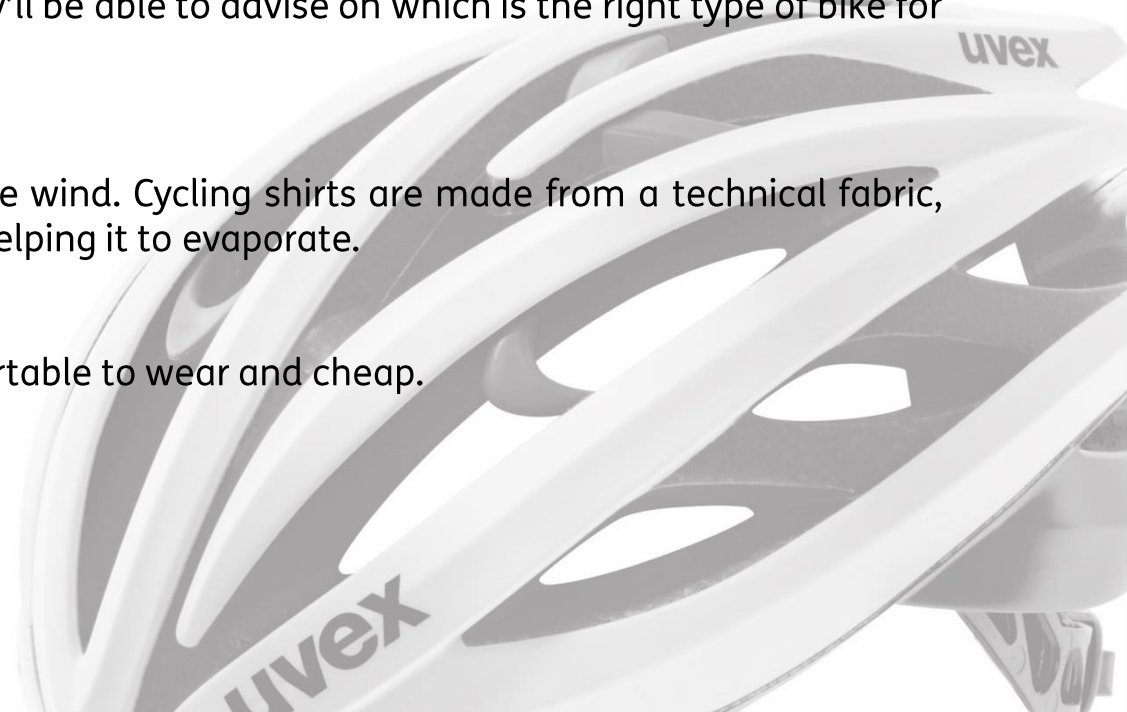
You'll need a well-maintained, reliable and safe bike for your challenge. There are so many different types of bike at a range of prices so it's worth going to a specialist bike shop and getting fitted. They'll be able to advise on which is the right type of bike for you.

Cycling Shirts

We recommend you wear a close fitting shirt to eliminate drag from the wind. Cycling shirts are made from a technical fabric, which will keep you dry by wicking away the sweat from your body and helping it to evaporate.

Helmet

There's no excuse for not wearing a helmet - they're lightweight, comfortable to wear and cheap.



All the gear...no idea?

Cycling shorts

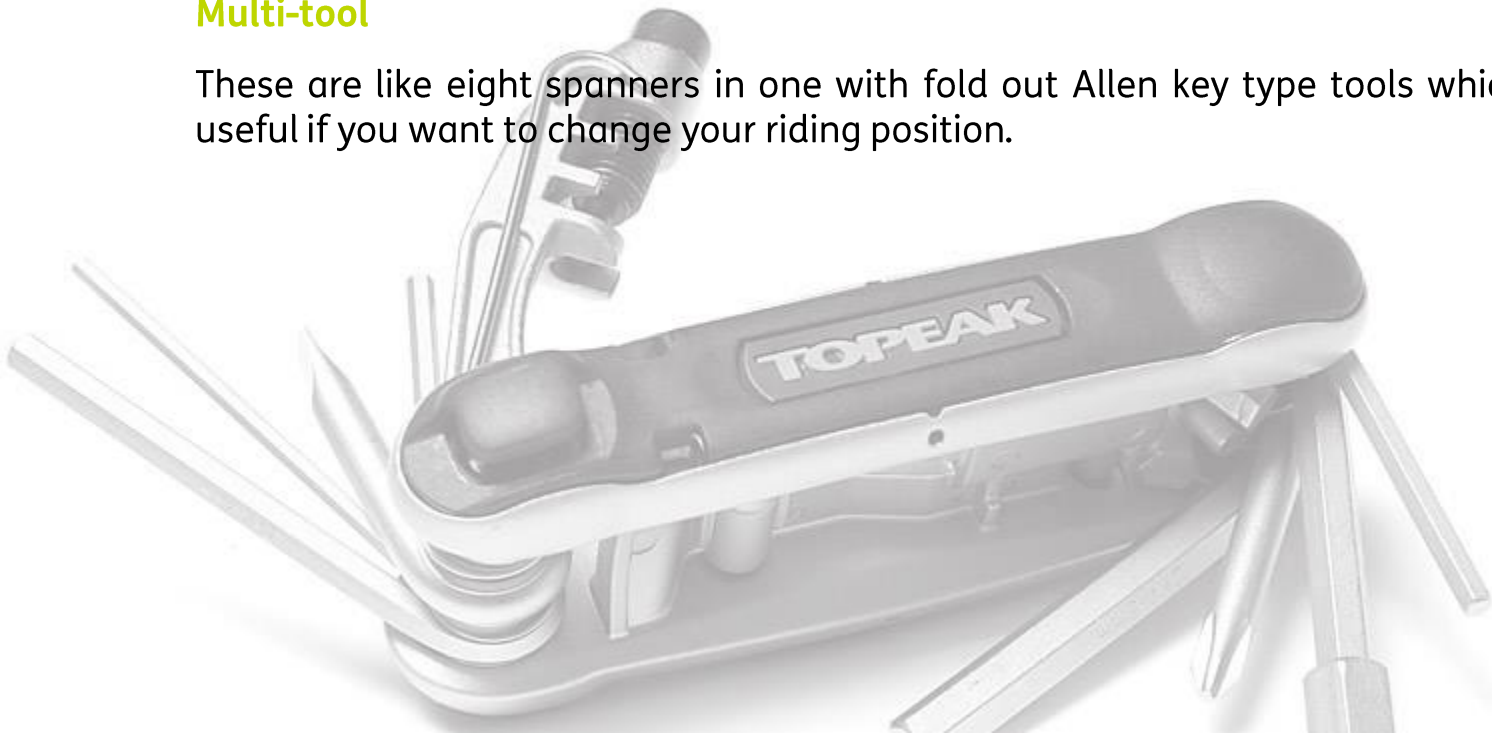
The padded seat will help you feel more comfortable on those long rides. These shorts are also made of a technical fabric which will keep you dry by wicking away sweat and helping it to evaporate.

Water bottles

It's important to make sure you stay hydrated on the road. Most bikes will have a holder for two water bottles.

Multi-tool

These are like eight spanners in one with fold out Allen key type tools which fit nearly every bolt on the bike. They are really useful if you want to change your riding position.



Be seen. Be Safe!

It is illegal to cycle in the UK at night without proper bike lights. At the very least you should have

One steady, fixed white light that conforms to BS6102/3 mounted centrally or offside (closer to the middle of the ground) and no higher than 1500mm from the ground. It should be visible from the front and aligned in that direction.

One steady, fixed red light that conforms to BS6102/3 or BS3648. This should be mounted centrally or offside at the rear of your bike and should be between 350mm and 1500mm from the ground. It should be visible from the rear and aligned in that direction.

Four reflectors, coloured amber that conform to BS6102/2. These should be fitted to each pedal so that one is clearly visible from the front and one is clearly visible from the rear. If you cannot fit reflectors to your pedals, then you can use a reflective trouser clip or band.

[Check lighting packaging or the manufacturer's website to see if their bike lights conform to the Department for Transport's regulations](#)



Be seen. Be Safe!

In addition to lights, we strongly recommend that you wear bright clothing when cycling at night. Preferably something fluorescent and reflective so that you are more visible to motorists and other riders like:

- High visibility vests/jackets
- High visibility belts
- High visibility trouser bands and arm strips
- Reflective rucksacks or rucksack cover



Riding at Night

Whether you are riding all the way through the night or it is likely you will start or finish your ride in the dark there are some key points to remember when riding at night.

Additional Kit

Back up lights, helmet lights or head torch, rear light, extra layers

Punctures

Are even worse at night, tubeless tyres work best or if this isn't possible self healing tubes

Batteries

Monitor your battery power and bring lots of extras just in case

Technical sections

Are harder to negotiate and see. Relax, breathe and stay calm and avoid anything too daunting

Getting ready to train

A realistic target is to try and do a mid-week ride of 1-2hrs and a bigger ride at the weekend, with a couple of sessions of cross training, such as running, swimming, strength training and some yoga/stretching in between.

In principle all training should follow the below points as a guide:

Quality not quantity

If you want to improve your performance and make the most of your time, your ride should have a purpose and goal. If you can only fit in a quick session, make it a high intensity one.

Recovery is key

Ensure you are fully recovered before undertaking your next training session.

Time Management

It's all too easy to have a reason to miss a training ride, so build it into your schedule and ensure your bike is working and kit is ready to go, before you need it. Short of time can you commute to work or make journeys by bike instead?

Be honest with yourself and work on your weaknesses

Nutrition and Hydration

Nutrition and hydration are enormous subjects, however, to kick-start your healthy nutrition plan, try and follow the five golden rules below:

Always eat breakfast

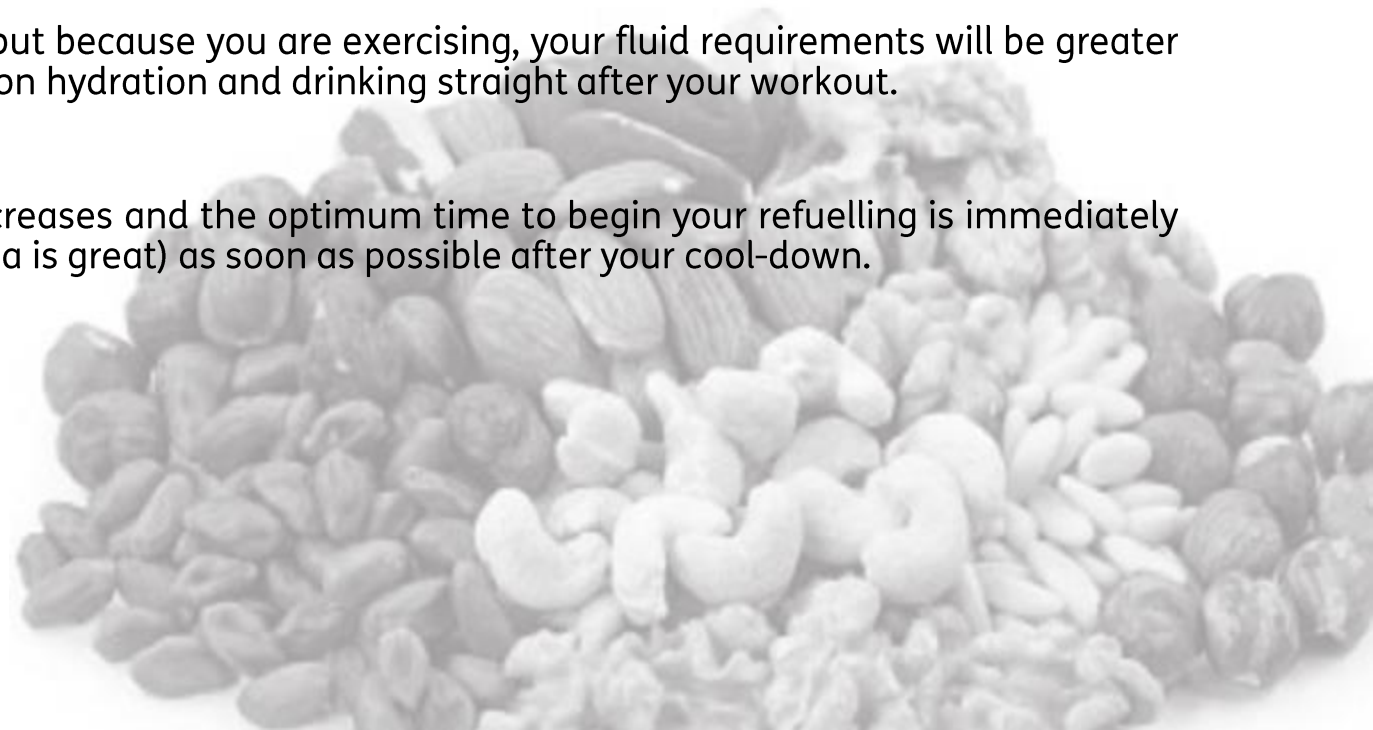
Your body needs good quality fuel for training and by waking up your metabolism after sleep; you actually burn more calories through the day.

Hydrate

Drinking water regularly throughout the day is important, but because you are exercising, your fluid requirements will be greater due to sweat losses. However, you will need to focus more on hydration and drinking straight after your workout.

Refuel

Your energy requirements will increase as your training increases and the optimum time to begin your refuelling is immediately after your workout. Always try and eat something (a banana is great) as soon as possible after your cool-down.



BEGINNER TRAINING PLAN

Week	Day A	Day B	Day C	Day D	Day E	Day F	Day G
1	30 minute easy ride	Rest	45 minute easy	Rest	45 minutes easy	Rest	60 minutes easy
2	Rest	45 minutes steady	Cross Training	Rest	45 minutes easy	Rest	1.5 hours easy
3	Rest	1 hour steady	Cross Training	Rest	45 minutes steady	Rest	2 hours easy ride
4	30 minutes easy	Rest	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	2 hours steady
5	Rest	1 hour steady	45 minutes easy	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	2.5 hours easy
6	Rest	Cross Training	60 minutes steady	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	3 hours easy
7	30 minutes easy	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	3 hours steady
8	Rest	60 minutes steady	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	3.5 hours steady
9	Rest	60 minutes steady	60 minutes easy	Rest	60 minutes easy	Rest	2.5 hours easy
10	Rest	60 minutes easy	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes easy	Rest	Event Day

INTERMEDIATE TRAINING PLAN

Week	Day A	Day B	Day C	Day D	Day E	Day F	Day G
1	45 minute easy ride	Rest	60 minute easy	Rest	60 minutes easy	Rest	1.5 hours easy
2	Rest	60 minutes steady	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes easy	Rest	2 hours easy
3	Rest	1 hour steady	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	2 hours steady
4	60 minutes easy	Rest	Cross Training	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	2.5 hours steady
5	Rest	1.5 hour steady	60 minutes easy	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	3 hours steady
6	Rest	Cross Training	1.5 hours steady	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	3.5 hours steady
7	60 minutes easy	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	4 hours steady
8	Rest	60 minutes steady	Cross Training	Rest	1.5 hours steady	Rest	4.5 hours steady
9	Rest	60 minutes steady	60 minutes steady	Rest	60 minutes steady	Rest	3 hours steady
10	Rest	60 minutes easy	Cross Training	Rest	60 minutes easy	Rest	Event Day

Weather

Check the weather before the day as this should have a big bearing on what you pack.

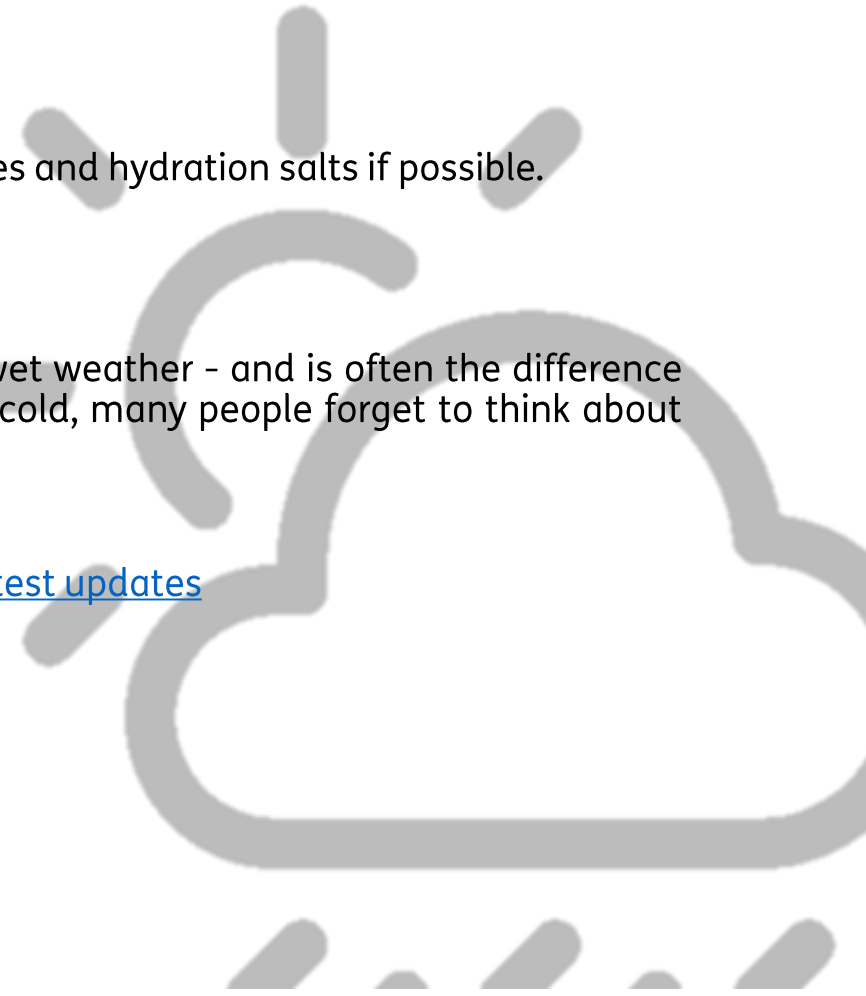
Hot and Sunny

You'll need sun cream and be in a position to take on fluids regularly so bring extra bottles and hydration salts if possible.

Cool and Wet

Pack clothes and layers that will keep you warm. A good light rain coat is essential in wet weather - and is often the difference between a stylish looking finisher and a freezing cold dishevelled one. If it is set to be cold, many people forget to think about nutrition and hydration. Ensure you keep up your fluid and food intake.

[The met office is the best place to get all your weather news, click here to find out the latest updates](#)



Event Day!

The big day is here and its time to get yourself prepped and ready for your challenge!

Know your optimum pace and stay with it. It's all too easy to push yourself too hard in the excitement of the event day, or trying to stay with a stronger rider, which will probably just ruin your day (or night) in the end. Be consistent and conserve your energy.

Have a good sized breakfast with plenty of carbohydrate, such as cereal, porridge and yoghurt, around two hours before the start, so you can digest it before you start riding. Aim to consume around 60g of carbs every hour (the body can't absorb more than this) in the form of cereal bars, dried fruit, energy drinks & bars or gels, etc which are easily digested and absorbed.

Avoid high fat items like cake, biscuits, crisps – they take longer to digest, so make you feel uncomfortable.

After the ride eat more carbohydrates, but with a high GI this time, such as white rice, pasta, chicken, tuna, vegetables, eggs, milk etc. to replenish your body stores and include protein for the repair and rebuilding of your muscles.

Good Luck and Thank you!

By taking part in a cycling event for Mencap and raising funds you truly have made a difference to those living with learning disabilities. It is because of individuals like you that Mencap can continue its work in making positive changes for people like Albi.

