

Group Health STP 2006 Training for One or Two-Day Riders

By Craig Udem, Dean of Cycle University www.CycleU.com

Your Group Health STP Training Plan – Got one?

Since riding a bike is something most of us learned as kids it seems reasonable that we can just jump on our bike a few times and be ready to tackle the STP, right? Wrong! Becoming a competent cyclist, like learning to snow ski or play tennis, takes practice, good skills and more practice. Because we have received so many questions from riders wanting more guidance preparing for the STP we've created two training plans. Below is our free **Basic** plan for both the one-day and two-day riders that gives rough guidelines for training. For those riders wanting more than the basics we have developed a **Deluxe** plan to give you a detailed day-by-day training, including the type of riding you need, along with how hard to ride, rest days, final preparation and skills work. It comes in a hardbound textbook edition and an online training diary you can follow along with every day. Read below for the free plan and contact us for information on the deluxe plan www.CycleU.com.

How to prepare for the Group Health STP

If you read no further in this article, these are the three simplest ways to insure a great time on the STP:

- #1.** Ride with others. Take a cycling skills class and join a club like Cascade Bicycle Club to learn the language of group cycling and get comfortable riding with other people.
- #2.** Don't ride as hard as you can on every training ride. This is the most common rookie mistake! Ride steady and aim to add more miles each week to go longer and longer. Start with rides you can finish feeling like you could have done a little bit more and gradually build your endurance until you can complete 75% of the mileage of your **longest day** at this year's STP. Make some days hard, but most of them easier. There are many reasons for this, please contact us to find out more.
- #3.** Use Chamois Butt'r or Bodyglide to reduce friction in groin area, and don't wear underwear (this is pretty basic but can make a huge difference!)

The most important part of any cycling training plan is the number of hours or miles you will ride on a daily and weekly basis in the months leading up to a big ride like the STP. These training rides are the building blocks that will prepare your body and mind to ride long and hard on the day of the event. There are many other factors that will influence your enjoyment on the big day, such as how your bike fits you, nutrition, hydration, clothing, equipment, mental preparation, skill level and general comfort with riding long distances with lots of other people.

Below is a rough training plan giving you a very basic sketch of an average person's riding mileage leading up to a successful STP. It has 3 rides per week. If you haven't ridden a bike in 10 years, start with a 5-mile ride to get the hang of it. Your goal may be simply to have fun and stop when you are tired. If you had a good summer of riding last year and haven't ridden since October, go out for a nice flat 20-miler and get back into it. From here build up your mileage gradually and challenge yourself a bit more every few weeks.

Every person is different and no single training program will work for everyone, the important thing to remember is that "this is fun!" Find ways to reward yourself as you make these milestones. Take your time and work at a level your body will allow. Depending on your conditioning and riding experience, you may need more or less miles than this program presents. Feel free to consult Cycle University to outline a program to fit your level of riding and athletic background, and be sure and get an OK from your doctor if you are over the age of 30 and new to cycling.

Special note for One-Day Riders

Most people think that they can just ride tons of miles and get fast enough to do the STP in one day, but what many find is that even though they get strong and increase their average speed they still can't meet their goal. Why not? They need the shelter of other people to help them achieve their finishing goal. The wind often blows from the South, which means that much of the ride from Seattle to Portland is into a head wind, and if you ride **BEHIND** a group or even a single rider, you can save 30% or more of your energy...and still go the same speed. It is like free money; you do **less work and go faster!** This skill is called **DRAFTING**, and it is something that takes practice and good coaching to do it **SAFELY**.

The best place to learn this is from other experienced riders or in one of the Cycle University Classes such as Road 101. In the Seattle area the Cascade Bicycle Club offers the "STP Training Series" to help you get in some good group rides. See www.cascade.org for details. If you are not in Seattle, check out www.bikeride.com and look under "regional links" to find a club near you and see if they offer peline instruction.

Training for One and Two-Day Riders

Start your training with easy miles and add an occasional hard day once every week or two where you push the hills. For your normal days, when you start breathing hard and can't say a 10-word sentence at a normal tone, slow down. After the first half of the training, start looking at your average speeds during your midweek and Saturday rides. Increase the midweek rides to move toward your target average miles per hour pace. (i.e. to complete the 204-mile STP in one day under 12 hours you will need to average 17.5mph and only take one 30-minute break. Two-day riders will need to average 10mph to finish each 103-mile day under 11 hours, with 55 minutes of breaks each day.) Aim to get your average speed near your target ride level or higher as the event approaches. Learn to ride in a peline to further stretch your endurance and speed and maintain a high average mph.

June will be the hardest month. Plan to take good care of yourself between rides. Eat right, stay hydrated and get consistent sleep. Use Flying Wheels as your final rehearsal. Test out the energy foods, equipment and clothing you will use on the STP (be ready for a very steep hill in the first 10 miles!) After your last big ride two weeks before the event, focus on recovery. During these final two weeks you will rest more because the mileage is much less, but keep your cadence high and effort at or above event speeds to increase your speed.

Craig Udem has been a full time professional cycling coach since 1997. He completed the STP in one day in 1985, and went on to race at the elite level internationally for 10 years. He started Cycle University to help riders like you achieve your dreams of better health and safer riding. He and his team of coaches offer indoor classes in the winter and outdoor classes April through October: www.CycleU.com (206) 938-1091.

TWO - DAY RIDERS

WEEK OF:	Weekly Goal	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	Weekly Total
Feb. 20 - 26	53			10			10	*33	
March 6 - 12	80			20			30	30	
March 13 - 19	100			20			40	40	
March 20 - 26	80			20			30	30	
March 27 - Apr. 2	100			20			40	40	
April 3 - 9	120			20			50	50	
April 10 - 16	130			30			50	50	
April 17 - 23	120			20			50	50	
April 24 - 30	130			30			50	50	
May 1 - 7	140			20			60	60	
May 8 - 14	170			30			70	70	
May 15 - 21	150			30			60	60	
May 22 - 28	170			30			70	70	
May 29 - June 4	180			20			80	80	
June 5 - 11	170			20			70	80	
June 12 - 18	180			40			**70	70	
June 19 - 25	120			30			50	40	
June 26 - July 2	140			30			90	20	
July 3 - 9	100			20			50	30	
July 10 - 16	224			20			102	102	

* Chilly Hilly ride and ** Flying Wheels Summer Century

ONE - DAY RIDERS

WEEK OF:	Weekly Goal	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	Weekly Total
Feb. 20 - 26	63			20			10	*33	
March 6 - 12	80			20			40	20	
March 13 - 19	70			20			30	20	
March 20 - 26	90			30			50	10	
March 27 - Apr. 2	110			20			70	20	
April 3 - 9	110			30			50	30	
April 10 - 16	130			40			70	20	
April 17 - 23	120			20			80	20	
April 24 - 30	140			40			70	30	
May 1 - 7	190			50			80	60	
May 8 - 14	160			50			90	20	
May 15 - 21	150			30			80	40	
May 22 - 28	180			40			90	50	
May 29 - June 4	190			50			110	30	
June 5 - 11	200			30		10	140	20	
June 12 - 18	210			40		20	**100	50	
June 19 - 25	180			40			90	50	
June 26 - July 2	150			30			80	40	
July 3 - 9	120			40			60	20	
July 10 - 16	234			20		10	204	0	

* Chilly Hilly ride and ** Flying Wheels Summer Century

Flying Wheels offers the STP rider a chance to test your equipment, skills and train on a fantastic course at the perfect time to peak for the STP. The hilly and scenic 25, 50, 70 and 100 mile routes begin and end in Redmond. Information on-line at: www.cascade.org or call (206) 522-BIKE. Training related question please contact us at www.CycleU.com or 206-938-1091.

Consult your doctor before beginning any kind of endurance training program.

