

THE E2E CHALLENGE, LONG DISTANCE BASICS

Part 1: General Training Tips & Riding Skills

Successful preparation entails riding regularly, gradually increasing the time you spend in the saddle, initially mastering the basic riding skills (cornering, emergency braking, descending, riding in a straight line whilst changing gears, getting your water bottle out whilst riding) before moving on to the more advanced skills of riding in groups, close formation riding, slipstreaming and pacelines.

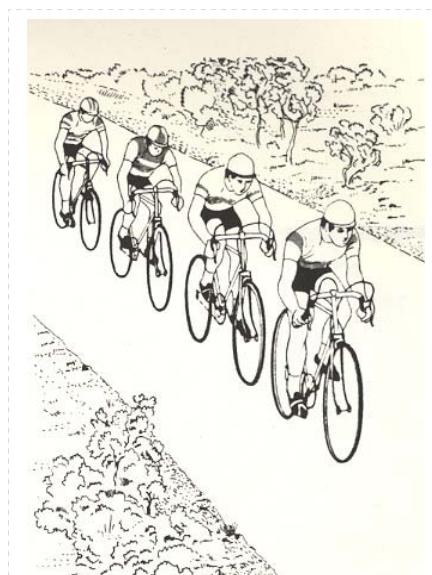
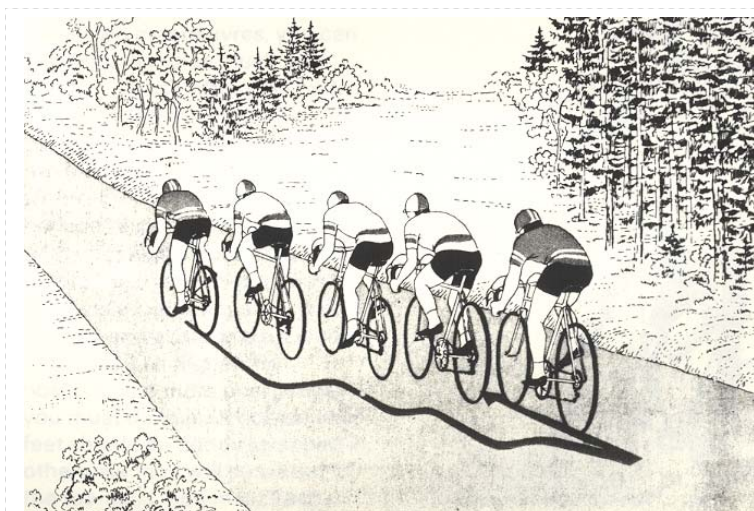
Consistent riding of medium distances (50 to 60 kms) is preferable to occasionally doing long rides. Be sure to increase the amount of effort you put into your training rides, but do this with a structured approach, following a plan as outlined in previous articles. Remember that resting your muscles – allowing them to recover – is as important as the physical training.

Always warm-up and cool down. The warm-up/cool down may include aerobics, gentle stretching, and spinning in an easy gear. Five minutes warming-up ensures that muscles are able to contract and relax more easily and faster, and, after a strenuous ride, spinning for the last five or ten minutes in an easy gear will help prevent “heavy legs” that develop after a hard ride – a problem caused by lactic acid pooling.

For the e2e challenge, training with others is necessary and has numerous advantages. Aside from being motivational and more fun, it offers many practical learning experiences. Learning can be gained from the observation of others and from others observing you, practising group skills, and constructive dialogue.

Practice group riding skills – slipstreaming, riding side by side, rotating lead cyclists to the rear, and communicating, e.g., “passing on your left/right”, “pothole”, “stopping”, etc.

Pacelines are the key to maximising group performance. Pacelines can be single or double; they can rotate quickly or slowly, but riders always keep to a consistent pace.



Slipstreaming into a headwind

Traffic permitting, an echelon can be formed to improve group performance or to provide weaker riders with shelter from the wind. With the wind coming from the front left, the lead rider slips to the rear and the next rider assumes the role of keeping the pace, establishing a pedalling rhythm before reaching the front, and maintaining it until just after pulling off. The rider at the rear, being a weaker or tired rider, allows the stronger rider to slip in front of him.

Attacks, jumps, short-hard pulls and other race-like riding have no place in group rides.

If you're feeling especially strong, take a longer pull at the front but, if you do increase the pace, do it gradually. On hills and hard sections you will find that it is difficult for the group as a whole to maintain a consistent pace and therefore be prepared to regroup.

Weaker or tired riders will benefit from lower wind drag by closely following a stronger rider's wheel, expending up to 30% less effort than – but close wheel-following needs practice.

Everyone in the paceline must pay attention to the traffic and the road. The frontmost riders should point out unusual hazards and steer the group around glass, potholes, etc, but don't assume that you can leave it up to the other riders to watch the road ahead.

The lead riders are the most responsible for the group's behaviour, especially at stop signs and traffic lights. If you're at the back please don't run the intersection just to maintain contact unless it is clear that traffic is waiting for the entire group to pass.

Experienced riders should point out mistakes diplomatically – it is important to make riders aware of unsafe riding such as cutting blind corners, hard braking (a no no in group riding), obstructing traffic, etc.



Related articles and plans composed for the e2e Team from 01/09/2005 to 27/12/2005:

1. Basic Principles of Cycle Training (12/10/2005)

Description of training concepts and the basics of lifting your performance levels

2. Custom Training Plan (19/10/2005)

- Support Document to Custom Training Plan Spreadsheet
- Custom Training Plan V2 (Spreadsheet for developing your own training plan)
- Training Log

3. Pulse Rate and Lactate Threshold (23/10/2005)

Explanation of pulse rate and lactate threshold, Conconi's principle, the influence of endurance training on pulse rate, and the influence of age on the deflection pulse rate

4. Organisation (18/11/2005)

Personal performance enablers (dedication, mental preparation, nutrition, management around outside influences, recovery, self-assessment), your training plan, a bit about training zones, outline of weekly exercise routines

5. Training Levels Defined (27/12/2005)

Training levels expressed quantitatively and qualitatively