

EXODUS FITNESS GUIDE

**EXERCISE AND NUTRITION
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
ALL LEVELS OF OUR CYCLING
ADVENTURES**

CYCLING ADVENTURES



exodus
ADVENTURE TRAVELS

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN EXODUS CYCLING ADVENTURE

For the majority of our adventures, simply getting out on your bike as much as possible should be sufficient. You don't need to follow a training plan before going on one of our cycling trips, but it will help give you confidence for those upcoming days in the saddle if you know your fitness level matches that of your chosen adventure.

We have plenty of suggestions that can help you prepare, as well as fitness plans based on our Activity Level gradings. That said, remember, there is no need to be overwhelmed or stressed if you cannot follow a training plan; just do what you can in the time you have available. We want you to make the most of your trip and, above all, feel excited about heading out and discovering a country by bike.



The Exodus Team

exodus
ADVENTURE TRAVELS

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a heart condition, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, joint or muscular issues, please seek professional medical and training advice before using this guide.

PREPARATION BASICS

OUR FITNESS PLANS

LEVEL A

Suitable for Activity Level grades 1, 2 or 3. See page 6



LEVEL B

Suitable for Activity Level grades 4 or 5. See page 8



LEVEL C

Suitable for Activity Level grades 6 or 7. See page 10



1. CARDIO

Some form of cardiovascular (cardio) or aerobic exercise is necessary to condition your heart and lungs and build-up stamina for long days on the route. If you already enjoy swimming, cycling, running, or rowing, then increasing your time or intensity in these activities will be worthwhile training. Nevertheless, the most appropriate cardio preparation is to head outdoors on your bike as often as possible, progressively extending the time and distance. It is important to vary your training rides as the terrain on your trip can also change, especially on adventures with high Activity Level gradings, so incorporate interval training (see Fitness Plans) and include some hills in your routes.

Use your trip kit. It is advisable to train in similar kit to that which you will use on your adventure. On our cycling trips, you can normally take your own pedals and saddle, so if you intend to ride in clip-in shoes then try to train in them. Use training rides to discover what enhances your comfort. If you prefer cycling on flat pedals we recommended shoes with a stiffer sole, but ensure you will be happy wearing them for several hours at a time. See if you like padded cycling shorts or not, likewise gloves. If your adventure takes place in a colder climate, try different layering: a wicking T-shirt and windproof top may be adequate for some, but others will require more. Essentially, spend time getting used to how you feel on a bike and what enhances your comfort, as this will make the overall experience more enjoyable.

BEFORE AND AFTER TRAINING

WARM UPS

Before your main training session remember to do a minimum 5-10 mins of light exertion cycling to raise your pulse slowly. This gets the blood flowing to your muscles so your body will not be shocked with too much work too soon.

COOL DOWN

At the end of your cardio session, slow down your heart by gradually decreasing the speed and intensity to the point where your breathing returns to normal. Then perform stretches.

STRETCHES

Stretches for muscles used in your cycling and exercise routines are important to reduce injuries and encourage flexibility for your cycling trip.

See *Basic Stretches* page 12

REST, RECOVERY & TAPERING

It is critical to get enough rest during your training so your muscles can recover and adapt. Rest days have been built into the plans, but if you are feeling particularly fatigued during any session or day then modify your plan to suit. Five to seven days before your adventure begins, taper your training by reducing the length and intensity of your exercise to minimum levels. This reduction and rest phase allows your body to recover and re-energise, ensuring you are in the best possible shape for your adventure.

2. STRENGTH EXERCISES

Strength exercises will help to prepare the main muscles used during cycling. On a bike, your core, legs and glutes (buttock muscles) work the hardest but with just a few, simple bodyweight exercises you can condition these muscle groups so they help you to maintain a better riding position, thereby keeping you comfortable on the ride for longer. Each Fitness Plan's strength exercises progress in difficulty, but if you find that your training plan's strength exercises are too challenging, try the options to make them easier (alternatively, try the progressions to make them harder) or simply follow the exercises on an easier plan.

Slow and steady. Try to keep exercise movements controlled and steady, aiming to complete the recommended number of repetitions followed by a one to two-minute rest before moving onto the next set of repetitions of the same or different exercise. For all exercises, please take care not to flex the spine or round the shoulders. Maintain a good posture by focusing on the horizon, keeping shoulders back and chin and chest proud. Many of the exercises specifically work on strengthening core muscles; however, hold your core strong to help maintain your posture during other exercises.

3. LIFESTYLE FITNESS

Incorporate everyday activities into your training. Cycling to work is an excellent way of preparing, as it reduces the need to find extra time for training rides, as will using your bike to go shopping, carrying groceries in a pannier or backpack. Put more intensity into everyday activities that condition your legs, core and back such as taking the stairs, mowing the grass, weeding or general housekeeping work. Remember to always bend your knees and not flex your lower back too much.



4. HOW MUCH PREPARATION?

The level you work at and the effort you make will depend on both your existing cardio fitness and the Activity Level of your trip. Based on these, choose the most suitable of our three fitness plans. Each plan progresses in volume and intensity over the weeks to gradually build your fitness. Generally, easier rides need only a little effort and preparation, while the Challenging and Tough rides are likely to require you to push harder. The cardio exertion table shown below will help ensure you are putting the appropriate amount of effort into the training sessions as specified in your chosen plan.

CARDIO EXERTION LEVELS

EXERTION	FEELS LIKE	TYPICAL ACTIVITY BY FITNESS PLAN	
Little	You can easily carry on a conversation and breathing is normal.	All plans Level A	Stretching exercises for all levels (see page 12). Downhill sections of Steady and Long Rides.
Light	Comfortable with conversation and breathing and feel you can maintain the effort for hours.	Warm-up sessions for all Fitness Plan levels (see page 4) Level A Level B	Steady and Long Rides on flat sections. Steady and Long Rides on downhill sections.
Moderate	Deeper breathing, need pauses in conversation and will develop a light sweat.	Level A Level B Level C	Training Ride sessions and slight inclines. Steady and Long Rides on flat sections. Steady or Long Rides on flat. Interval low intensity (REST).
Vigorous	Breathing heavily with conversation very broken. Sweating noticeably.	Level A Level B Level C	Spinning classes or uphill sections. Interval sessions during high intensity (GO) phases. Interval high intensity (GO) or Interval Plus low intensity.
Full	Sweating heavily and short of breath, making speech difficult. Cannot maintain this intensity.	Level C	Interval Plus high intensity (GO) phases or on steep uphill sections.



EASY TO MODERATE

FOLLOW IF: You don't have a regular exercise routine but feel comfortable cycling for 60 minutes. Prepares you for 2-4hr rides at a comfortable pace.

STEADY RIDE: A relaxed ride on the flat which requires only a light level of exertion. It can include downhill sections.

TRAINING RIDE: Moderate exertion cycling which can be indoors if necessary. Add in a few uphill sections that require vigorous exertion.

LONG RIDE: An extended ride at a comfortable pace requiring only light exertion. Incorporate some slight gradients over the length of the route that require moderate exertion.

SPINNING CLASS: An instructor-led, indoor group cycling session held in a studio/gym equipped with stationary bikes. Varies in intensity throughout the workout but expect a vigorous level of exertion overall.

STRENGTH: Exercises for Level A sessions are shown on page 7.

You should mainly exercise at a light level of exertion (see table page 5) other than for Training Rides and Spinning Classes.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Training Ride 40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 90 mins	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
2 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Training Ride 45 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 2 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
3 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Training Ride 40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 2.5 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
4 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60-80 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Medium Ride 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 3 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
5 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60-80 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Medium Ride 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 3.5 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
6 WEEK	Strength Exercises Level A	Steady Ride 60-80 mins or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Medium Ride 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 4 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins



<p>3-WAY CALF RAISES</p>		<p>Standing with feet hip-width apart and toes pointing out, lift your heels up as high as they will go then lower yourself down with control and do set of reps. Change your feet to pointing forward and complete another set of reps, then point the toes in for the final set. Same number of repetitions each.</p>	<p>Options Start with fewer reps and work up.</p> <p>Progressions Carry weight or increase the number of reps to 20.</p>	<p>15 REPS</p>
<p>PLANK WITH ARM LEG LIFTS</p>		<p>Hold plank for 30 seconds, lifting either an arm or leg off the floor for 5 seconds each; alternate arms/legs. Hold the plank straight throughout and do not let hips sag.</p>	<p>Options Drop knees for a half plank or just hold the plank.</p> <p>Progressions Hold for 45 secs or lift opp arm and leg at same time.</p>	<p>15 REPS</p>
<p>SKIPPING</p>		<p>With feet close together, jump on the midsoles of your feet and land softly. Ideally, lift just a couple of inches above the ground with knees slightly bent. Maintain a neutral spine with head and chest up looking forward. Ideally, use a proper skipping rope and keep wrists close to hips as you rotate.</p>	<p>Options If you find skipping difficult, try doing jumping jacks (star jumps) instead.</p> <p>Progressions Increase the speed of skipping or keep going for longer.</p>	<p>2 MINS</p>
<p>PUSH-UPS</p>		<p>On all fours, place your hands slightly wider than shoulders with straight arms. Extend legs back, lifting onto toes. With body and legs in a straight line, bend elbows to lower your chest towards the ground until they are nearly at right angles. Straighten arms, pushing yourself back up. Repeat.</p>	<p>Options If you find full push-ups too difficult, try with your knees on the ground.</p> <p>Progressions Increase the number of repetitions.</p>	<p>30 REPS</p>
<p>SQUAT AND OVERHEAD PRESS</p>		<p>With feet slightly wider than hips, sit back, lowering your hips towards the floor, keeping heels to the floor and a straight back setting arms forward to balance. When hips drop below your knees, push back up through the whole foot to stand tall as you can at the same time as extending arms vertical.</p>	<p>Options If difficult, do not drop as low.</p> <p>Progressions Hold weights, a medicine ball or your backpack while completing.</p>	<p>20 REPS</p>
<p>SPLIT SQUATS</p>		<p>Stand placing one foot in front of the other – keep posture straight and strong (try not to crumple in the middle). Lower yourself down, keeping most of your weight over your front leg, push up through the front foot back to standing. Complete repetitions then change legs and repeat.</p>	<p>Options Reduce the number of repetitions.</p> <p>Progressions Carry weights or increase the number of repetitions for each leg.</p>	<p>15 REPS</p>
<p>RUSSIAN TWIST</p>		<p>Sit on the ground with your hips facing forward and knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Keep feet flat to the ground and your back straight. Using your core muscles, rotate shoulders and body to one side placing both hands on the ground. Return to the first position and then rotate to the opposite side.</p>	<p>Options If difficult, reduce the number of reps.</p> <p>Progressions Lift your feet off the ground, keeping posture strong.</p>	<p>20 REPS</p>

B



CHALLENGING RIDES

FOLLOW IF: You are comfortable on your bike for 1½-2hours, enjoy being active and exercise 2-3 times a week. Prepares you for back to back day rides.

STEADY RIDE: At Level B this involves a ride of moderate exertion on the flat which can include some downhill sections of light exertion.

INTERVALS: This is a ride mainly of moderate exertion that includes short bursts of high-intensity, vigorous exertion (**GO**) at an increased pace and cadence before you drop back down to moderate to recover (**REST**) for a while and repeat. Timings and repeats are specified.

INTERVAL PLUS: As above, except now a vigorous ride punctuated by bursts of full exertion (**GO**) before dropping back to vigorous (**REST**).

LONG RIDE: A comfortable but extended ride of moderate exertion overall. Try to vary the route by incorporating a few downhill sections together with one or two steep inclines that require full exertion.

SPINNING CLASS: An instructor-led, indoor group cycling session held in a studio/gym equipped with stationary bikes. Varies in intensity throughout the workout but expect vigorous levels of exertion overall.

STRENGTH: Exercises for Level B sessions are shown on page 9.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1-2 WEEK	Intervals 60 min GO 5 min REST 10 min Repeat 3-4 times	Warm-up 15-30 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Steady Ride or Spinning Class 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 90 min Week 1 2 hrs Week 2	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
3-4 WEEK	Intervals 60 min GO 5 min REST 10 min Repeat 4-6 times	Warm-up 20-40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Steady Ride or Spinning Class 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 2.5 hrs Week 3 3 hrs Week 4	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
5-6 WEEK	Interval Plus 60 min GO 5 min REST 10 min Repeat 3-4 times	Warm-up 20-40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Steady Ride or Spinning Class 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 3.5 hrs Week 5 4 hrs Week 6	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
7 WEEK	Interval Plus 60 min GO 3 min REST 5 min Repeat 6 times	Warm-up 30-40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Steady Ride or Spinning Class 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 4.5 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins
8 WEEK	Interval Plus 60 min GO 5 min REST 10 min Repeat 3 times	Warm-up 30-40 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Steady Ride or Spinning Class 60 mins Strength Exercises	Rest Day	Long Ride 5 hrs	Cross training option: Walk 90 mins Swim 40 mins Run 30 mins



<p>OFFSET PUSH-UPS</p>		<p>Similar to a normal push-up, which is described in the Level A Strength Exercises, but changing your hand position. Variations include: point the hands to the left or the right, put one in front of the other, one out wide etc. Repeat the number of repetitions taking a 1-2 minute rest between each set.</p>	<p>Options Try with your knees on the ground.</p> <p>Progressions Find more challenging hand position combinations. Increase repetitions.</p>
<p>SIDWAYS STEP-UP</p>		<p>Stand sideways to a park bench and step onto it using the closest leg. Keeping your back straight and trying not to push off the back foot, bring the trailing leg up, lifting the knee before lowering it back slowly with control so as to land as softly as possible. Complete reps on same leg and switch.</p>	<p>Options Use lower bench or less repetitions.</p> <p>Progressions Hold light dumbbells, a medicine ball or wear a filled backpack.</p>
<p>ROTATIONAL CRUNCH</p>		<p>Lie on your back, feet in the air with hip and knee at right angles. With hands by ears, sit up and rotate your elbow towards the opposite knee, forcing your upper body to twist. Return to middle before lowering to the start position. Repeat on opposite side. Complete repetitions for each side.</p>	<p>Options Do fewer repetitions, don't sit up as far, or keep your feet on the ground.</p> <p>Progressions Increase the number of repetitions.</p>
<p>REVERSE LUNGE AND REACH</p>		<p>Begin by standing with feet hip-width apart then step back with one foot, lowering into a reverse lunge. Now reach as far forward as you can, looking to touch the floor with your hands. Push with your front leg back to the start position and change legs. Complete repetitions for each leg.</p>	<p>Options If difficult, just do the reverse lunge.</p> <p>Progressions Stretch further forward or reach forward to alternative sides.</p>
<p>PLANK DOLPHINS</p>		<p>Begin in the traditional plank position with your forearms on the ground, elbows directly below shoulders and hands together in front. Keeping your body in a straight line, shift forward to position your chin in front of your hands and return to the start position. Complete repetitions.</p>	<p>Options Just hold a normal plank position or attempt with your knees on the floor.</p> <p>Progressions Increase the number of repetitions.</p>
<p>BACK EXTENSIONS</p>		<p>Lying face down on your stomach, place your hands at the side of your head by your ears. Keep your feet placed on the ground and begin lifting your upper body off the floor until you reach your maximum. Now lower smoothly under control, with no sudden movements. Complete repetitions.</p>	<p>Options Keep your arms by your side.</p> <p>Progressions Move your arms straight out in front of you while lifting off the ground.</p>
<p>MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS/HIGH KNEE COMBO</p>		<p>Starting in a hand plank position, pull one knee up as far towards your chest as you can. As you return your leg, pull the opposite knee up, switching between legs as fast as you can. Complete reps, stand up and do high knees, lifting alternative knees to your chest also as fast as you can. Complete sets.</p>	<p>Options Fewer repetitions, choose to do just one exercise at a time or go slower.</p> <p>Progressions Increase repetitions or go faster.</p>

REPETITIONS 10

NUMBER OF SETS 3



TOUGH ADVENTURES

FOLLOW IF: You are already a keen cyclist or cycle club member with a good level of fitness that wants to be challenged. Prepares you for tough rides.

STEADY RIDE: Mostly paced at moderate exertion with a portion at vigorous exertion, ideally uphill (or increase pace). Timings specified.

INTERVALS: This is a ride of mainly moderate exertion that includes short bursts of high-intensity, vigorous exertion (**GO**) at an increased pace and cadence before you drop back down to moderate to recover (**REST**) for a while and repeat. Timings and repeats are specified.

INTERVAL PLUS: As above, except now a vigorous ride with short bursts at full exertion (**GO**) before dropping back to vigorous (**REST**).

LONG RIDE: This is a comfortably paced, moderate exertion ride overall. Vary the route by incorporating some downhill sections and including a few hills of 10% gradient or more to push up at full exertion.

SPINNING CLASS: An instructor-led, indoor group cycling session held in a studio/gym equipped with stationary bikes. Varies in intensity throughout the workout but expect vigorous levels of exertion overall.

STRENGTH/CIRCUITS: The strength exercises for this level and circuit training details are shown overleaf on page 11.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 WEEK	Interval Plus 60 min GO 5 min REST 15 min Repeat 2 times	Strength Exercises or Circuit training	Rest Day	Steady Ride 60 min (Hills 30 min) or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Long Ride 2 hrs	Long Ride 3 hrs
2-3 WEEK	Intervals 60 min GO 10 min REST 20 min Repeat 2 times	Strength Exercises or Circuit training	Rest Day	Steady Ride 60 mins Hills 20 min Week 2 Hills 20 min Week 3 or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Long Ride 2.5 hrs Week 2 3 hrs Week 3	Long Ride 3.5 hrs Week 2 3.5 hrs Week 3
4 WEEK	Intervals 60 min GO 10 min REST 20 min Repeat 3-4 times	Strength Exercises or Circuit training	Rest Day	Steady Ride 60 min (Hills 30 min) or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Long Ride 3.5 hrs	Long Ride 4 hrs
5-6 WEEK	Intervals 60 min GO 10 min REST 5 min Repeat 3 times	Strength Exercises or Circuit training	Rest Day	Steady Ride 60 mins Hills 40 min Week 5 Hills 30 min Week 6 or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Long Ride 3 hrs Week 5 3 hrs Week 6	Long Ride 4 hrs Week 5 4.5 hrs Week 6
7-8 WEEK	Interval Plus 60 min GO 5 min REST 5 min Repeat 6 times	Strength Exercises or Circuit training	Rest Day	Steady Ride 60 mins Hills 45 min Week 7 Hills 40 min Week 8 or Spinning Class	Rest Day	Long Ride 3.5 hrs Week 7 3 hrs Week 8	Long Ride 4 hrs Week 7 4 hrs Week 8



<p>SINGLE LEG SQUATS</p>		<p>Standing on one leg, lower yourself onto a bench and then push back up again through the heel. Try not to collapse onto the bench; touch down lightly and then push up. Keep your heel pushed into the ground and your core muscles engaged. Complete repetitions on the same leg and switch.</p>	<p>Options Lower yourself down on one leg but then stand up on two.</p> <p>Progressions Do the squats without a bench.</p>
<p>V-SITS</p>		<p>Begin by lying down flat on the ground on your back. With arms above your head and legs extended, lift your arms and legs towards each other at the same time, bending into a V shape at the waist while keeping limbs as straight as you can before slowly lowering back down.</p>	<p>Options Hold on to your legs at the V position.</p> <p>Progressions Hold at the V position for 1-2 seconds before lowering.</p>
<p>PUSH-UP TO SIDE PLANK</p>		<p>Begin by completing a full push-up and as you push back to the top, rotate into a side plank extending an arm skywards. Hold for a short time before dropping back into a push up and then a side plank to the opposite side making it one complete repetition. Complete repetitions.</p>	<p>Options Just attempt the push-ups.</p> <p>Progressions The stronger and faster you push up, the harder your core has to work.</p>
<p>SQUAT HOLD AND JUMP</p>		<p>Drop into a squat and hold with parallel thighs with strong posture for 5 seconds then jump up out of the squat, landing with bent knees and dropping straight back into squat, repeat 3 times for 1 minute.</p>	<p>Options Do 15 seconds of squat jumps, 15 seconds hold, and repeat.</p> <p>Progressions Hold the squat for 10 seconds.</p>
<p>PLANK SUPERMAN</p>		<p>Drop into a plank position on your forearms, then slowly extend and lift an opposite hand and leg off the ground, ensuring you maintain a strong straight core and keep your hips down. Steady yourself in the extended position before returning to the plank and alternating sides. Repeat 3 times.</p>	<p>Options Lift one limb at a time ie arm then leg rather than both together.</p> <p>Progressions Hold for 10 seconds in each position.</p>
<p>LATERAL BURPEE (SQUAT THRUST)</p>		<p>From standing, drop into a squat with hands on the ground. Jump your feet back into a plank then back into a squat in a continual movement before jumping to a stand. Jump sideways to your left for the next burpee, then right. Alternate sides doing as many as possible for 45 secs. Complete sets.</p>	<p>Options Just do straight burpees.</p> <p>Progressions Add a push-up to the burpee from the plank position .</p>
<p>CIRCUIT TRAINING</p>		<p>Circuit training combines cardiovascular with strength training by performing a series of exercise sets moving from one to the next with minimal or no rest between, thereby keeping the heart rate elevated. A typical circuit consists of several exercises, each targeting a specific muscle group (like those above).</p>	<p>Options Reduce the exercises in the circuit and/or increase the rest times.</p> <p>Progressions Reduce rest time between exercises or increase the repetitions.</p>

REPETITIONS 10

NUMBER OF SETS 3

POST-EXERCISE STRETCHES

Stretching after exercise while muscles are still warm reduces the risk of injury and helps increase flexibility. It also feels good, so don't be shy about stretching after a day in the saddle when on your adventure!

LYING SPINAL ROTATION



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Stretch both arms outwards along the floor and slowly drop knees to one side, turning your head the opposite direction. Breathe into the stretch to release all tension from the back and neck, and only take your knees as far as you can before the shoulders start pulling off the ground. Rotate slowly to the opposite side and repeat. Do 8-10 rotations.

DOWNWARD DOG



This is an all-in-one stretch for the whole back line of the body. Push through the shoulders so your bottom is pushed back, creating an inverted 'V' shape and the stretch can be felt all the way through the back and hamstrings. Keep your hips high and your heels pushed down into the ground and hold for 5-10 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times.

KNEELING QUAD HIP FLEX OR STRETCH



On one knee, drop forward towards the front knee. The idea is to stretch the quad and hip flexor: relax the hips as much as possible to allow this to happen. It may also help to reach the arm of the leg you're stretching up and over your head. Hold for 15-20 seconds and switch sides.

Repeat 2-3 times.

CALF STRETCH



Slowly lean forward over your front leg, but keep your back knee straight and your heel flat on the floor. You should feel this stretch in the big muscle of your calf (gastrocnemius). If you then bend your back knee slightly (keeping the foot flat on the floor) the stretch should be felt lower down your calf (soleus). Hold for 5-10 seconds.

LYING LEG RAISES



To stretch out the hamstring you can use either gym straps, a towel or your hands to hold the leg in position – under stretch but not so tight that it's shaking. Your upper body should remain flat to the ground while keeping your head and chest relaxed.

Hold for 15-20 seconds.

LYING QUAD STRETCH



Lying on your front, grab hold of one ankle and squeeze the hip into the ground, lifting the knee off if you want to add more stretch. If you can't reach your foot, use a towel looped around to hold onto it. Hold for 15-20 seconds and switch sides.

Repeat 2-3 times.

SIDE BEND



With arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of the other. Keeping the knees slightly bent, gently pull your elbow behind your head as you bend from your hips to the side. Hold for 15-20 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times.

SHOULDER BLADE



Lay on your back with legs bent and start to pull your shoulder blades together creating a tension in the upper back area. As you do this, your chest should move upward. Hold this controlled tension for 4-5 seconds and release.

WHAT TO EAT AND WHEN

BEFORE EXERCISE

Eat well-balanced meals 2-4 hrs prior to training, these include: chicken, fish, cheese, egg or peanut butter sandwiches; jacket potato with beans, cheese or tuna; chunky soup with bread or brown rice; pasta with tomato sauce and veg; chicken with rice; chicken and veg casserole with potatoes; salmon with veg. For breakfast, eggs on toast or porridge with milk are good. Eat snacks including fresh fruit; dried apricots, dates or raisins; smoothies; oatcakes or nutrition bars 1-2 hours prior to exercise.

DURING EXERCISE

Moderate to high intensity exercise that lasts over an hour can cause fatigue and glycogen depletion. Temporary hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) can occur after 2-3 hours of moderate exercise, making you light-headed and sluggish. To prevent this, during exercise eat easily absorbable carbohydrates such as dilute fruit juice, bananas, raisins, energy bars, gels or sports drinks.

AFTER EXERCISE

Eat and rehydrate quickly within the two-hour window where glycogen storage is faster. Exercise burns glycogen and also breaks down muscle protein, so while replenishing glucose with fast-releasing carbohydrates, aim to increase your protein intake too. Try fresh fruit with milk; sports bars; tuna or cheese sandwiches; nuts with dried fruit.

NUTRITION FOR TRAINING

EXERCISE DIET

For endurance activities, it is advised you should consume a diet relatively high in carbohydrates (carbs). The body turns carbs into glycogen and stores it in the muscles and liver, where it can be called upon as energy during exercise. Your normal diet may be sufficient to support low intensity exercise; however, as you progress onto longer periods of training you will need to supplement your diet with carbohydrates. There are different kinds of carbohydrates: sugary carbs offer an instant, short-term kick of energy – useful for bursts of intense activity such as during interval training or on hills. However, for endurance exercises including many of the rides on our adventures, you need complex carbohydrates to provide a slow release of energy over longer periods. Protein, good fats and a nutrient-rich diet are also essential to keep hunger at bay and sustain you on rides. Specific nutritional needs will vary depending on gender, metabolism, health, as well as the pace, gradient and length of a ride. The panel (left) offers general food guidance based on an average individual.

HYDRATION

Drinking about 70 floz (2 litres) of water a day will help prevent dehydration and keep energy levels up. When you exercise, increase your fluid consumption by an additional 15-30 floz (0.5-1 litre) for every hour of exercise. Alcohol does not count toward your fluid consumption and any more than a modest amount of coffee can have a negative effect on hydration.

EXODUS FITNESS GUIDE

WARNING: DISCLAIMER The exercises and plans described in this document may not be appropriate for everyone. All individuals, especially those with health concerns or are recovering from any injury, should consult their doctor/physician before undertaking any of the activities suggested in this document. The author has taken great care in developing these plans. However, they are neither responsible nor liable for any harm or injury resulting from these plans or the use of the exercises or exercise and cycling and gym equipment described herein.