



## Final 4 weeks to the Cape Town Cycle Tour by Nic White

With the height of summer almost past us, we are gearing up for the final stages of our preparation for the Cape Town Cycle Tour. It is a chance to cram some riding into your schedule so that you can get used to the bike, but also to sharpen your form after a productive build period if you made use of the December holidays for some good base miles. Gearing into the final weeks, can help you to fine tune your legs and be ready for the big day in March!

In the past we have used the Borg rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale, below, as a gauge for how hard some rides are. So we will keep that in our rough draft of the final week's prep.

This is my suggestion for the final few weeks, but nothing is set in stone since everyone is in a different place in their cycling journey and at varying stages of preparation and so on. So if you feel unsure, have very sore legs or excessive tiredness, please err on the side of caution and rest or ride easy.

You must have some balance between the easy and the hard rides so that your body can make the best of the possible adaptations it needs on race day. But nutrition is key for an event that takes longer than 2 hours, so fuelling and hydration are important to keep the motor running optimally. The next weeks will give you a chance to explore how to use nutrition on intensive and longer duration rides, so that your adaptations develop in time for the big event.

If you are a more advanced rider, you can ride on more of the days as suggested. If you are a novice rider or time is an issue, try to do what you can. Consistency in riding will also help you to make some good improvements. Even if you can ride just 3 times a week, try to aim for that ride every other day so you get to the CTCT as well-practiced as possible!

## Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

The intensity of your training session is described according to the following rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale. Your RPE should reflect how heavy and strenuous the exercise feels to you, combining all sensations and feelings of physical stress, effort and fatigue.

Do not concern yourself with any one factor, such as leg pain or shortness of breath, but try to focus on your total feeling of exertion.

For each workout an RPE is given. Before your training session, refer to this scale so that you're reminded of the intensity of the training session and specific intervals. While training, assess your feeling of exertion as honestly as possible without thinking about what the actual physical load is. Your own feeling of effort and exertion is important, not how it compares to others'.

### Gunnar Borg's ten point category - Ratio scale of perceived exertion

| Perceived Exertion Score | Description      | Ride type |          |   |               |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|---|---------------|
| 0                        | Nothing at all   |           |          |   |               |
| 1                        | Easy             | RR        |          |   |               |
| 2                        | Easy             |           |          |   |               |
| 3                        | Easy to moderate |           |          |   |               |
| 4                        | Moderate         | ER        | GR FP SP |   |               |
| 5                        | Moderate         |           |          |   |               |
| 6                        | Top of moderate  |           |          | T | SS            |
| 7                        | Hard             |           |          |   | Tempo-C       |
| 8                        | Hard             |           |          |   | TC HA         |
| 9                        | Very hard        |           |          |   |               |
| 10                       | Extremely hard   |           |          |   | PI SI Sprints |
| *                        | Maximal          |           |          |   |               |

### Workout descriptions

- RR = Recovery ride
- ER = Endurance ride
- GR = Group ride
- SP = Slow pedal
- FP = Fast pedal
- T= Tempo
- Tempo-C= Tempo climb
- SS = Steady states
- TC = Threshold climb
- HA = Hill accelerations

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- PI = Power intervals
- SI = Speed intervals
- Sprints = Sprint intervals
- RBI: Rest between intervals
- RBS: Rest between sets

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## 4 Weeks to go!

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Day 1<br>Monday,<br>13 Feb | With 4 weeks to the CTCT, there is an opportunity to race the Dis-Chem Ride for Sight in Gauteng. This week can be used as a race week, otherwise getting in at least 1 good ride of distance over the next few weekends will be beneficial.  |
| Day 2                      | Moderate weekday ride. Up to 1h30. Try to include some 7 – 8/10 RPE efforts for up to 10 minutes each. Whether you are powering up a hill, blasting on the flats, you should vary your rides to include those harder sections and easier steady-pedaling rest periods. If racing on the weekend, this is your harder day. If you don't have a race weekend, you can ride similar style on the Thursday.   |
| Day 3                      | Easy ride. Up to 1h30 RPE 4 – 5/10 Talking pace.  |
| Day 4                      | Easy ride if racing in the Dis-Chem Ride for Sight – 1h30, or a moderate intensity ride for 1h30 as per Tuesday, trying to include some short power efforts of a shorter duration, but closer to 9 – 10/10 RPE for up to 1 minute. Making sure to recover between those efforts.  |
| Day 5                      | Rest day or short 1h00 easy ride.   |
| Day 6                      | Racers, easy ride of up to 1h30 with a few bursts to open the engine! Getting your heart rate up. Make sure equipment is working well and ready for race day. Non-racers can do one good moderate ride of up to 4 hours on undulating terrain, with a group or without, but with varying intensity. Slower for first half of the ride and concentrating on fueling and hydration so legs are good for some harder pushes in the second half. If one good ride is possible on the weekend, make it count. The second ride can be an easy day of 1h30 to 2 hours. |
| Day 7<br>Sunday,<br>19 Feb | Race the Dis-Chem Ride for Sight in Gauteng. This is a flat and fast 116 km event. Faster to begin with then rolling hills in the middle section and flatter to finish. Wind can be a factor in the final part. Get used to riding in a group and make use of the benefits of slipstreaming so you save energy for the final part. Nutrition is important for this distance, so these weeks are valuable practice to keep yourself hydrated and fueled for a race event.  |

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### 3 Weeks to go!

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Day 1<br>Monday,<br>20 Feb | Rest day – This week in the Western Cape – The Tour de PPA (Pedal Power Association) takes place as a race event if you have selected it. A hard hilly race day that's great CTCT race practice. Non-racers to make use of one good endurance training day.   |
| Day 2                      | Moderate hills ride of 1h30 to 2 hours. Try to include up to 4 hills of up to 10 minutes. If race week then RPE at 7/10. For non-racers RPE can be 8 – 9/10. Cadence on the climbs between 65-75 RPM. Concentrating on steady rhythm and pedal stroke, lifting the heels on upstroke and smooth breathing, A burst towards the top for the non-racers.  |
| Day 3                      | Easy Ride 1h30 RPE 4-5/10   |
| Day 4                      | Flat Moderate ride 1h30 with Tempo (7 – 8/10) Stretches of up to 10min of continual efforts, cadence 85-95 RPM, rest in between these for up to 5 mins of easy pedaling. Select a few 3 min sections for some fast pedaling. 95 – 105 RPM. On a flat section or downhill RPE 4/10   |
| Day 5                      | Rest day or coffee ride easy for 1h00   |
| Day 6                      | Easy ride of up to 1h30 for racers. Checking the equipment, easy on the legs. A few short bursts in high cadence to get the HR up.<br>Non-racers to select a hilly to undulating route. Moderate group ride of up to 4 hours. Start off harder for the first hour. Then easier through the middle hours. Final part – if you have energy, give it a little bit more of a push. Practice good nutrition again – consistent energy intake throughout the longer ride. |
| Day 7<br>Sunday,<br>26 Feb | Race day in the Cape – Tour de PPA, Durbanville with the climbs of Tiekie Draai and the infamous gradients of Vissershok. This is a day to test your mettle, survive the climb and have gas to ride the remaining undulating route with a consistent effort. In Gauteng the Berge en Dale is a hilly race to match the one in the Cape.   |

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## 2 Weeks to go!

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Day 1<br>Monday,<br>27 Feb | Rest day – no road race events set for this week. (Unless advanced riders are racing the Tour du Cap)   |
| Day 2                      | Moderate ride, with Tempo level (7/10 RPE) stretches of up to 12 minutes but include some 9/10 RPE bursts of 30 seconds every 2 minutes or so of the Tempo stretch. Recover for 5 to 6 minutes between these tempo efforts. Can be done on flatter stretches of road.   |
| Day 3                      | Easy ride on flatter route – 1h30 RPE 4 – 5/10  |
| Day 4                      | Moderate hills ride of 1h30. Select a hilly route and aim for a steady pace on the climbs, ride a bit below your limit of comfort. As it is a little easier, you will be able to aim for a fast finish of the hill. When in sight of the top, maybe 30 – 45 seconds from the top. Make an acceleration to power over the top of the hill. It's your choice on how hard to keep the pace on the hills but keep it steady enough so you can manage the bursts over the top. |
| Day 5                      | Rest or easy ride for 1 hour  |
| Day 6                      | Easy to moderate group ride, up to 3 hours. A day to ensure that nutritional practices are good for the upcoming event. If you can, ride an undulating route. That is preferential.   |
| Day 7                      | Easy ride on flatter route – 1h30 to 2h30   |

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## Final week to go!

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Day 1<br>Monday,<br>6 March  | Rest day   |
| Day 2                        | Last moderate ride up to 1h30 with some mid-length efforts (5 minutes) at Tempo level (6/10 RPE), as well as a few 30 sec bursts at 9/10RPE. This should be a comfortable ride. You'll want to end off having a few good pushes, not to hurt the legs but to get your heart rate up nicely. Feeling good!  |
| Day 3                        | Rest day or easy ride up to 1h30   |
| Day 4                        | Easy ride up to 1h30   |
| Day 5                        | Rest/Travel  |
| Day 6                        | Easy ride of up to 1h30 if you are more advanced. A little closer to an hour if you are newer to riding. An important day to ride and make sure that your equipment is working correctly, and bike is setup and ready for the race day. This is also a chance to do a few fast pedal efforts and get the heart rate back up for short periods.   |
| Day 7<br>Sunday,<br>12 March | Cape Town Cycle Tour! Make sure that you get to the start area with enough time so you do not need to rush. Ensure that you have all your spares, nutrition, etc. ready and with you. No need for panic but just calm excitement if you start later. Take a disposable bottle to sip on some energy drink before the event, so you can start with two full bottles. A short warm-up of at least 10 minutes to the start point is also advisable. Otherwise, the first few kilometers would need to be your warm-up as you don't want the early kilometers to hurt more than they do. Steady on! Take care. Stay in safe groups and enjoy the ride. |

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