

Thirty Day Training Plan for a Grand Fondo

Week 1

Key rides: Four total

1 Long Endurance (RPE 4) Ride: 3:30 to 4 hours

1 Medium Endurance (RPE 4) Ride: 90 minutes to 2 hours

1 Micro Interval Ride: 60-minute Ride including 1 set Micro Intervals*

1 Long Interval Ride: 90-minute ride with 3 x 10 minute Steady State Intervals**

Preparation tip: Practice eating and drinking

Nothing derails your day like bonking, overheating, or otherwise blowing your fueling and hydration. Practice eating on your long rides so you're taking in about 200 calories an hour from food and bottled fluids.

Week 2

Key rides: Four total

1 Long Endurance (RPE 4) Ride: 4:30 to 5 hours

1 Medium Endurance Ride (RPE 4): 90 minutes

1 Micro Interval Interval Ride: 60 minute ride with 2 sets Micro Intervals

1 Long Interval Ride: 90-minute ride with 3 x 12 minute Steady State Intervals

Preparation tip: Practice pacing

A fondo is a timed event, so it's a fast mass start. If you want to test your speed and go for a personal best, practice pacing yourself the way you will for event day. If possible, find a group who rides your goal pace and get out with them for your long ride. On event day, avoid going out too hard and burning too many matches in the beginning; you'll flame out before the end. If you're not in it to race it, you should still practice steady, even pacing so you can finish as strongly as you begin.

Week 3

Key rides: Four total

1 Long Endurance (RPE 4) Rides: 3:30 hours

1 Medium Endurance Ride (RPE 4) 90 minutes to 2 hours

1 Micro Interval Ride: 60 minute ride with 2 sets Micro Intervals

1 Long Interval Ride: 90 minute ride with 3 x 15 Steady State Intervals

Preparation tip: Sort out the details

Chances are, there's a website (and numerous rider emails) with a lot of details that can feel overwhelming. Take a little time this night to sift through them for the pertinent information. When do you need to pick up your packet? Where are the feed zones? What does the course profile look like? Upload it to your GPS. Get your gear list together. Advance preparation means peace of mind and less wasted energy on event day.

Week 4

Key rides: Three total (taper week!)

1 Easy Ride: 60 minutes (Easy to endurance-paced / RPE 2 to 4)

1 Easy Ride with 5 Micro Intervals

FONDO!

Preparation tip: Get off to a good start

There will be a sea of humanity at the start line. If you're gunning for a top slot, rolling out with the leaders is clutch. If you're in it to enjoy the scene and just have a good ride, hang back to avoid the early chaos. In general, seed yourself where you feel you're surrounded with similarly paced, intentioned riders.

Micro and Steady-State Intervals

*Micro Intervals

These micro-intervals build power and train your body to recover quickly between hard pushes, like cresting a monster climb or charging to bridge a gap to your group.

Do it: In a medium to large gear, push as hard as you can (RPE 9 to 10) for 40 seconds. Recover for 20 seconds. Repeat 10 times. Rest five minutes. Repeat as directed.

**Steady State Intervals

Increasing your power at threshold allows you to ride faster without fatiguing. One of the most effective ways to increase it is to perform long, steady intervals where you hover just below your current threshold. They're relatively easy to do, but require concentration because it can be easy to let your mind (and your effort) drift.

Do It: After a good warmup, ride at RPE 5 to 6 intensity at a steady effort. Recover for half the interval time (i.e. if the interval is 10 minutes, recover for five minutes). Repeat as directed.