

Listen Up!

Paul Wood, STdT Tour Director

I've been asked to pen something training-related and inspirational for this edition of the newsletter. I think about this subject a lot as an ex-competitive cyclist and as the leader of events that ask participants to push themselves further than they are accustomed to being pushed. Over the years I have published lots of specific training plans and offered many suggestions on strengthening the body and fine tuning your fitness, a few of which can be found on the [Rider Resource](#) page of the STIHL Tour des Trees website.



But today I'd like to relay a simpler version of what I consider to be the keys to a successful Tour.

- First, a 550+ mile bike ride must be taken seriously. This is a significant endeavor for anyone, regardless of experience or fitness level.
- You must be capable of riding your bike at least half the average daily distance (45 miles) for a minimum of two consecutive days. Ideally you'd stretch that into being able to ride that minimum distance for three or more days.
 - This will condition your legs, but just as importantly, it will condition all your supportive muscles that are too often overlooked - neck, back, triceps, etc.
 - And of course it will also condition all the important contact points that can make or break a ride - hands, feet and bum. :)
- When you can successfully complete these consecutive rides of 45+ miles with "relative" ease and minimal soreness and fatigue, you are ready for the Tour.
- Do not worry too much about your pace; the Tour is NOT a race. You will have ample time to complete the ride each day. For example, on Day 1 we are cycling 115 miles over moderately challenging terrain.
 - We will depart at 7:30 am and you must be off the road by 5:00 pm. So you have 9.5 hours to complete the course.
 - There will be three rest stops and a lunch along the way. If you stay at each rest stop for 15 minutes and at lunch for 30 minutes, then you still have 8 hours and 15 minutes to complete it.
 - If it takes you all of the 8 hours and 15 minutes, you would be averaging a little less than 14 mph, perfectly achievable since most of you will share the effort with your chosen group.
 - And remember what this format really does is break a daunting 115 mile ride into several much more manageable rides of 25-35 miles.
- Of course not all will want to or be capable of making it in on our long days, and that's ok! Please know that your support team is there to lend a hand and provide a shuttle when and where needed. Safety is our number one priority on the Tour, so we encourage you to listen to your body, take a break, and keep yourself and the others around you safe.
- And finally for those new to the Tour experience, you will be amazed at how you will be buoyed by the support of your fellow cyclists. Just how much strength this will provide is truly remarkable! The most important element in the successful completion of the Tour is your fortitude, and you'll have the whole TREE Family supporting you along the way on this magical journey!

Ride On!

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