

IMPROVE YOUR FTP

TRAINING WEEK SAMPLE



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INTRODUCTION

Developing a solid FTP is as vital for crit-racers as it is for ultra-endurance racers. FTP is the highest power you can hold for an hour and it's used to assess a cyclist's current fitness level. Developing a good FTP is vital to riding hard for a long time.

In this small sample, I put together a whole FTP building training week that helped me to improve mine and which I believe can improve yours.

The training week includes nutrition guidelines that'll help you to execute the endurance rides and FTP-focused workouts as high-quality as possible.

The week is based on 10 hours a week. If you ride more, add more time for endurance miles. If you ride less, reduce the amount of training. You just need a power meter and you're ready to go.

If you're lazy at reading you'll find the training week as a recap on page 15.

I didn't come up with these ideas myself. Nor did I get them from anecdotes. But if you look hard enough into the scientific literature you're able to find the best available body of evidence.

This is just my take on transferring science and the way I apply it. I hope you get something out of the training week.

Best,

Roberto Vukovic

MONDAY - REST DAY

You're looking for a training week to improve your FTP and now for the start of it, I prescribed a rest day. For real?

The reality is you need rest to recover and recharge your batteries from the past training week. And with that in mind, rest and recover to be ready and fresh for the new training week.

Both physically and mentally.

The second day will be very taxing and will demand a lot from you. Therefore, you need to prepare yourself to finish the workout as high-quality as possible.

Only then do you signal proper adaptation and maximize your performance.

Your rest day task is not to touch your bike that day and just go for a short walk if you like. Sure, if you have family and kids to take care of, do so with sanity and the next hard workout in mind.

On a rest day, you should eat a bit less than on a typical training day. Nevertheless, include quality carb sources like rice, pasta, or potatoes, in your meals to fill up your glycogen stores for the next hard workout. Your glycogen stores stock carbs as energy in your muscles. And this energy is freed when you need it the most: During a difficult interval session.

Drink plenty of water and make sure that the majority of your plate is filled with vegetables. Snack on fruit to improve recovery and get additional carbs in. Don't forget the proteins for long-term adaptations.

With that said you're ready to tackle the next day.

DAY ONE

DAY TWO

TUESDAY - FTP INTERVALS

This is the hardest workout of the week but if you followed the rest day instruction you should be able to perform your best.

- The Workout:** 4x15 Minutes Threshold Intervals
- Warm-Up:** 20-30 minutes at 40-50% of FTP
- Mainset:** 4x15 minutes steady-state intervals at 98-103% of FTP, 5 min at 45-50% of FTP between intervals; Intermediate reduce sets to 3x15 minutes with 7 min at 40-50% of FTP between; Beginner reduce sets to 2x15 minutes with 7 minutes at 40-50% of FTP between intervals
- Cool Down:** 10-20 minutes at 40-50% of FTP
- Total Time:** 1h45min-2h05min
- Workout Nutrition:** At threshold intensity, you'll burn a lot of carbs. Therefore, it's essential to consume carbs before and during the interval workout.

DAY TWO

How many carbs you're able to handle is very individual. Find what works for you. These sessions are made to test your nutrition for race day.

However, try to consume 60-90 grams of carbs per hour of riding. 60 grams can be achieved with simple glucose. And it's also the limit for glucose ingestion per hour. For 90 grams you need to mix sugars like maltodextrin and fructose, for example. That's because fructose uses a different transport pathway than glucose. Hence more carbs can be consumed by using fructose. The optimal ratio is a 2:1 maltodextrin to fructose ratio so look out for these products.

If you ride the session in the morning make sure to eat carbohydrates before. If you ride the session post work make sure to eat carbs at least 1 hour before you plan to jump on the bike.

Session done and dusted. On to the next one.

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY - ENDURANCE MILES

Two days straight are just basic endurance miles. On the one hand, these days are dedicated to developing your aerobic energy system. On the other hand, these sessions are meant to let you recover from the previous FTP interval session.

You may find it a little bit dull to ride just 1-hour low-intensity per day for two days straight, however in a systematic review it is stated that two or on occasion three interval sessions per week are optimal to maximize performance. And it's further conducted that more interval sessions per week have no benefits and may lead to overtraining symptoms.

Two hard interval sessions are all you need per week to raise your functional threshold power. The rest of the rides should be endurance miles often referred to as Zone 2 training in a 6 Zone model.

It may be appealing to ride faster during these sessions but you may pay the price later in the week for the second interval session.

Don't get distracted by the late Wednesday or Thursday group ride carnage.

These days you want to ride easy. The prescription is 45-55% of your FTP. It may seem like underperforming but on a Team Sunweb (now DSM) retrospective analysis researchers noticed male riders trained on average 91.9km or 182 minutes at an average power of 191 watts or 2.64 watts per kg. You don't need to push too hard on low-intensity days, just ride at a somewhat comfortable pace you can hold for a very long time.

And if you wanna shed some pounds, then these are the days to do so. You ride easy and for fewer hours with a reduced training load.

Try to get in quality protein and decrease the energy density of your foods. That means you want to have few calories for a high volume of food. The majority of your plate should be vegetables. Eat fruits throughout the day and get in quality carbs and fibers from whole grains.

DAY FIVE

FRIDAY - REST DAY

You made it to the second rest day. Stay strong and don't touch your bike. Appreciate the comfort of not working out.

Now go read that rest day instruction again and meet me back on day six.

SATURDAY - SWEET SPOT BLOCKS

Sweet spot intervals are on the menu today. If you've done the rest day properly, you should feel fresh and ready to conquer these intervals.

DAY SIX

The Workout: 4x20 Minutes Sweet Spot Intervals

Warm-Up: 20-30 minutes at 40-50% of FTP

Mainset: 4x20 minutes steady-state intervals at 88-94% of FTP with 5 minutes at 40-50% of FTP between intervals; **Intermediate** reduce sets to 3x20 minutes with 7 minutes at 40-50% of FTP between intervals; **Beginner** reduce sets to 2x20 minutes with 10 minutes at 40-50% of FTP between intervals

Cool Down: 10-20 minutes at 40-50% of FTP

Total Time: 2h05min-2h25min

Workout Nutrition: Again try to consume 60-90 grams of carbs per hour of riding. Use your hard interval days as "gut training" to be prepared for fuelling in racing.

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Without fuel, a car can't drive at all. With little fuel, a car can drive fast but soon has to stop due to an empty tank. We cyclists are no different. You need to be fuelled with carbs before your workout and you need to consume carbs during your workout to keep the power in the desired power range and reap the desired stimulus.

Sweet spot intervals raise your functional threshold power from below. This happens through the recruitment of your fast-twitch muscle fibers.

At the sweet spot, intensity is high enough to recruit fast-twitch 2a fibers. However, the intensity is still aerobic because we're riding sub-threshold. By doing consecutive sweet spot blocks our fast-twitch 2a fibers become fatigued. Through training adaptation, these fast twitch muscle fibers act more like slow twitch fibers.

Put simply, 2a fibers improve their endurance by enhanced capillarization in muscles and an increase in mitochondrial density. Consequently, less anaerobic capacity in fast-twitch 2a fibers transfers to a higher FTP.

DAY SEVEN

SUNDAY - FATTY SUNDAY

This is the last day of the training week to increase your FTP. The task for the day is a four-hour endurance ride done at 45-55% of FTP.

Long rides have benefits that other sessions don't yield. This is also what a review on high-volume vs high-intensity training indicated. The review stated that adaptations that occur with low-intensity training were not observed with high-intensity training.

This is because muscle fatigue causes a similar effect on muscle fiber recruitment as work intensity does. Albeit, at a lot less intensity. Going long, glycogen depletion teaches your body to use fat as a fuel source. Additionally, the anaerobic fast-twitch fibers need to do aerobic work and improve their endurance.

So, get a long ride in at least once a week, even if you're tight on time, it's worth it. Because high-intensity training should always be built on a solid base of endurance training.

During your long rides try to consume 30 grams of carbs per hour. Don't make the mistake of training on water. The carbs will improve your training adaptations even during a long ride. You want to avoid bonking at all costs.

Down below you find the training week to improve your FTP as an applicable example.

MONDAY	Rest Day
TUESDAY	2h with 4x15 minutes intervals at 95-100% of FTP with 5 minutes at 40-50% of FTP between intervals. Try to consume at least 60 grams of carbs per hour though fuelling is individual.
WEDNESDAY	1h endurance miles at 45-55% of FTP
THURSDAY	1h endurance miles at 45-55% of FTP
FRIDAY	Rest Day
SATURDAY	2h with 4x20 minutes tempo intervals at 85-90% of FTP with 5 minutes at 40-60% of FTP between intervals. Try to consume at least 60grams of carbs per hour though fuelling is individual.
SUNDAY	4h Fatty Sunday long ride. Intensity 45-55% of FTP. Consume at least 30grams of carbs per hour. The carbs improve training adaptation.

*We've chosen Monday as the starting day for the week. However, you can pick any day, just tailor the training week toward your schedule.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ærrange

DESIGN

@mprynska 

@aerrange 

aerrange.com 

aerrange 

Words can't articulate how grateful I feel about having such a creative master next to me. Thank you so much for the passion and value you provided through this eBook. Every time I look at it I get goosebumps and can't believe what we already created. Without you, this wouldn't be possible at all.

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