



VeloSano Training Guide

“The Weekend Warrior”

By Dr. Michael Schaefer

This guide includes suggestions for training for the VeloSano Bike to cure event of your chosen distance. If you are new to bicycling, I suggest reading the following article for background information, safety tips, and injury prevention:

<http://health.clevelandclinic.org/2013/08/how-to-get-back-to-bicycling/>

This plan will get you ready for your VeloSano ride with minimal time and energy commitment. The Weekend Warrior schedule is not really the “Right” way to do it, but hey, I realize everyone has busy lives with limited time and this plan will help get you ready mentally and physically to enjoy your VeloSano experience. With just two workouts per week, you can be ready for all but maybe the longest VeloSano Two-Day route.

The Details

Your rides will basically include one long, slow ride per week and one ride with hills or “intervals”. Intervals are short periods of higher intensity exercise, usually 2 to 5 minutes in length that are separated by rest periods. You should continue riding throughout these sessions, but reduce your pace significantly during the rest periods. Try doing intervals of varying lengths and intensities. A good way to add intensity is to ride into a headwind or up a small hill. You will also notice that one (additional) day per week is designated as a cross-training day. Cross-training is important to prevent injury and burnout. If you’re a true “weekend warrior” you can even do this on the same day as one of the rides. The best cross-training activities are weightlifting, yoga, Pilates, jogging, swimming, or walking.

Commonly Asked Questions

What if I miss a day? Or even a week?

You do NOT have to do extra training. Just simply pick up where you left off on the list of training sessions, OR just restart at today's date on the calendar. Maybe add in one extra session per week if you're ambitious. But you will notice that the one of the weeks in June is designated as an "Easy/Off" week. This time is set-aside to help with recovery but can be used to make up some missed training, or just take a vacation! The beach looks pretty nice that time of year!

How fast should I be going on my slow rides? How about my fast rides?

This depends on your chosen pace. A beginner might go 8 or 10 miles per hour (mph) on their slow rides, and 12 or 14 mph on their fast rides. Advanced riders will be well over 20 mph. Keep in mind that "Easy" rides should feel very EASY – you should be able to talk comfortably and not notice heavy breathing.

To measure time, speed, distance as well as revolutions per minute (rpm) or cadence, consider getting a bike computer. The information this tool provides helps track progress and builds confidence throughout your training. You can also download one of the many popular fitness tracking apps to your smartphone.

Am I allowed to "draft" off of other cyclists?

Drafting is permitted during the VeloSano events, but this can be a dangerous activity. Only practice drafting after you are very comfortable on your bicycle, with experienced cyclists, and only under good conditions. Keep in mind that while you are drafting, you are riding with 20-30% less effort, so you will probably not be gaining as much fitness during this activity as you would if you were riding alone. But if you choose to draft during the event, be sure to practice before-hand. Work on maintaining a smooth steady pedal-stroke, a very straight line, and always looking ahead of your group to anticipate changes in pace. Avoid looking only at the person right in front of you, and avoid slamming on your brakes suddenly!

Do I really need to ride on hills? How steep or long should the hills be?

This depends upon how hilly your event route will be and on what you have available for hills. Check out velosano.org/the-ride to view your route using Ride with GPS for turn-by-turn and elevation details. When in doubt, start with smaller hills and ride up them more slowly. If you do not have hills nearby, try using a freeway overpass, or the road through a small river valley. You may also use a stationary trainer with increased resistance setting, or just ride on a flat road but use a higher gear for a short time. However, if you are preparing for one of the more hilly VeloSano routes, you should drive to a place with large hills at least once during the month of June. There is really no good substitute for the real thing! Also practice going downhill safely, and practice turning and stopping on downhills.

What about nutrition and hydration?

The VeloSano Rest Stops will be well-stocked and well supported, but during your longer training rides, you should carry water or sports drink. For your longer rides (anything over one hour) you should bring a small snack such as an energy bar or some fruit. Be sure to consume familiar food and drinks on the event day, to avoid GI upset.

Which should I do if it is raining?

Riding in the rain can be dangerous, and it is usually not very pleasurable, but it certainly may happen! If you are new to cycling, I suggest that you take a rest day if it is raining, or substitute a walk or jog. Don't try riding in the rain until you are very comfortable handling your bicycle. However, consider (eventually) doing at least one or two rides on rainy days so you can practice how to handle your bike on slippery roads. Be very cautious on turns, especially on painted surfaces such as crosswalks as they get slippery when wet. Leave extra time for stopping, and have your brakes adjusted so they can be applied very firmly. Dress with an extra layer of clothing or light rain jacket. Don't ride with dangling clothing items that may become tangled in the wheels or chain. AVOID car traffic on rainy days. They often can't see you.

Conclusion

We hope you enjoy your VeloSano ride, but also enjoy the process of training for the event. Please ride safely, and always try to have fun. Once you've finished this event, we encourage you to pick another athletic goal for the fall or winter, and we hope to see you again next year at VeloSano!



