

Maintaining a pre-event routine is crucial to being physically and mentally prepared. Over the years, we have determined various ways to fine tune our lead-in to a big ride that have made huge differences when it comes to the day of the event. You may have all heard of these tips before, but it's about how we put them all together with the right mindset that really makes the difference. Try to stick to these simple guidelines as strictly as you can for the week leading into the ride and reap the (sometimes remarkable) rewards.

## ONE WEEK BEFORE

Most of your preparation should be done before the day of the event. You should NEVER tune up or dial your bike in the night before a big event. All of the running around, planning, bike maintenance, and finding lost articles of clothing should be done the week before. You should...

**GOOD SLEEP:** Make sure you start getting good sleep the week of the event. You want to strive to get around 8 hours of sleep per night for at least 3-5 days before the night of your event. The evening of races can be short on sleep due to travel, and for some people, their nerves can keep them up. It will not matter if the night before is rough if you've had good sleep and recovery for the week ahead of time.

**MONITOR YOUR WEIGHT:** Weigh yourself when you wake up every morning and make sure you are staying hydrated with a light electrolyte solution constantly throughout the week. Hydrating only the night before the ride (or day of) may not give your body enough time to absorb and distribute fluids all the way down to the cellular level.

**ELECTROLYTE LOAD:** If you are prone to cramping, consider taking an electrolyte supplement the week before the event. It is best to take these supplements when NOT exercising and with a light snack. Some electrolytes cannot be absorbed during exercise (especially during race efforts), so do your best to stock up on electrolytes during the entire week before.

**CUT THE CAFFEINE:** Avoid all forms of caffeine for the week before your event. As you will see when you read further, caffeine can be a crucial part of your race day performance boost.

## ONE OR TWO DAYS BEFORE

**WEATHER:** Know what the weather is planned to be on event day, and pack appropriately. You do not need to bring every piece of cycling gear you have 'just to be safe'. If you are truly prepared, you should have the clothes you need for warm-up, your racing, and post-ride casual clothes to get into immediately afterwards. You do not need to have nine jerseys that clutter up your car and bag. Having a cluttered bag makes you have to pull everything out to find a sock or arm warmer and ruins any organization you may have had.



**FUELING:** Have your pre-ride meal or breakfast made or at least planned out. Try having your breakfast and a drink cold in the refrigerator so you can just warm it up and eat it in the morning. This is key so that you make sure you can wake up relaxed and with enough time to get a good meal in before your ride.

Have water bottles and race food in a cooler or the fridge filled up and ready to go. This includes a post-race recovery drink.

## RIDE DAY

Pack everything in the car and drive to the ride... That is it! Since you're so prepared from getting ready the night and week before, you should not have to be running around and doing much on the day of the event. Aim to arrive 1.5 hours early so that you can register, dress, and warm up before staging.

**WARM UP:** The key to warming up well is doing it SLOWLY and THOROUGHLY. Take care to not rush your warm up. Many people are nervous and are eager to see how their legs feel during some harder efforts. Don't get into the hard efforts too quickly.

### **Suggested Warm Up: 25-30 min Warm up Protocol:**

(2-3 min rest between all efforts)

1 x 10 min easy/endurance

Then 1 x 5 min tempo interval

Then 1 x 3 min LT interval

Then 2 x 90 second VO2 paced efforts

Then 1 x 5 min tempo interval again.

Then 5-10 min endurance as you roll up to the line.

**Consider Bringing a Powermeter.** Whether you ride with a powermeter or not, it may be good to bring one for the warmup. This helps make sure that you are warming up at the right intensity. Nervous riders often overshoot their initial endurance and tempo efforts and find themselves wondering why they may not feel well. Use a powermeter to accurately gauge your efforts and take your nerves out of the picture.



**Bring a Trainer, but Ideally Warm Up on the Road.** It is always a good idea to bring a trainer to make sure you can warm up properly but try to get out on the road if you can. Trainers tend to make regular efforts feel harder than they should for a variety of reasons, and it is also easier to overheat on a trainer.

**Keep your Core Temperature Down.** You want to keep your core cool while warming up your extremities. There are quite a few proven studies that show increased cardiac efficiency when having a cool core temperature. We suggest wearing arm warmers and leg warmers, but keep the core lightly covered. (Ask CCNS about other core cooling techniques if the temperature is particularly hot out)

**CAFFEINE:** Caffeine is one of a few ergogenic aids that is 100% proven to increase performance. Most people are not aware of the proper dosage to maximize performance benefits. The best dosage is about 3.5 mg per kilogram of body weight. This is a significant amount, but it is important not to go over. Too much caffeine can result in irritability, nervousness, and a fluttering heart sensation. You can determine this dosage yourself with different sources of caffeine. Aim to have your accurate serving of caffeine about 30-45 minutes before your event begins.

## Good luck!

These are the basics. Eventually, this preparation should become second nature to you. If you have any questions or ideas about things you think you should do before your ride, please don't hesitate to call and ask CCNS.

