

We all want to feel our best come the big day of the sportive, whether is 24 or 100 mile route. Everything is relative (and that's a point for everything that carries on from here!)



Peaking for a single day sportive means you are rocking up on the day as mentally and physically prepared as possible. This is going to allow you to deliver a time you feel great about, enjoy the ride more, reduce stress with good prep or make sure you are recovered enough to get around your latest challenge.

The art of “tapering” as we call it (basically getting athletes ready for race day) requires thought, some planning and for future events some experimentation.

As you look beyond cycle Sportives and into specific cycle races then the art gets more complex and more involving when you start to look at specific performance objectives. But the principles are exactly the same 😊

The most common mistakes when getting ready for the big day:

- Too much volume
- Not enough recovery
- Too much or too little (relevant) intensity

Other factors leading into the day that have a negative impact but we often forget about include the quality of rest/sleep, levels of life stress, travel and kit logistics and diet.

There is no perfect plan and for most of us no perfect week when it comes to “life” away from cycling (yes such a thing exists ;) ) But adjust with training and rest to get to race day with everything needed to succeed (and as we like to say .... Stress is stress, whether that's training stress, life stress or work stress all need factoring in)

Reducing volume:

To feel awesome a reduction in training volume is needed to reduce fatigue and make sure our muscles have repaired from training. A focus on intensity is also needed to maintain fitness.

Reducing volume can start as early as three to four weeks from the race and, at the latest, two weeks from race day.

A great tip is keep your frequency but drop volume 25% 3 weeks, another 25% 2 weeks out and another 25% 1 week out.

Don't let your body forget what you want it to do!

Event specific intensity (ie how fast / hard you plan to pedal) is important during your taper, but look at shortened reps of relevant effort.

There is NOTHING to gain two weeks out from the race in terms of your fitness!, so it is more important to focus on recovery than any hard blocks of training.

One final piece to the puzzle

In the final week (ideally 7 days from event) do one final effort at targeted pace/effort, by now you should be recovering and this should feel good. Ie: if your doing 100 miles, do a 50 miler at the effort/speed you want to do. If it feels good after ... great things are to plan, if it doesn't then you're probably not recovered enough so the ONLY thing you should do during event week is recover/rest and some very light work...

Ignore the blues!

Without going full geek, your brain through training is used to getting a certain level of feel good chemicals... remove the training and you will be grumpy/snappy/on edge (be aware of this as partners often face the brunt of it... we know this!) ... Your instinct will be to replace this with things that have the same effect... chocolate/alcohol/special cuddles!

These all have a place in moderation but the one other thing that your body will tell you to do is "train" and go out and blast a bike session ... DON'T!

Tips done 😊 have a great taper and don't get too grumpy 😊