

# THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY LEMMING TRAIL

Saturday 4th to Sunday 5th September 2010 . The South Downs Way



## Your 8-week training plan

The key to tackling the South Downs Way is power and pacing yourself, says Andy Wadsworth, head personal trainer with mylifep.com and elite cycling coach. "Unlike road cycling, you need a stronger core and upper body to hold the bike correctly – this avoids injuries as you get tired and also increases efficiency. The more tired you get, the more you'll rock the bike around and lose precious energy." So within the 8-week plan below – which should be done off-road as much as possible – is at least one circuits session each week, working on your intensity and upper-body strength. "You'll see immediately transferable benefits, and it'll give your usual cycling muscles a welcome break while maintaining your overall CV training," Andy says. "The pre-breakfast rides really help your body use fat reserves as well as more immediate fuel sources to power your ride, which will pay dividends in the long run, but if you can't squeeze it in, an evening ride before your meal should produce similar benefits."

For a whole range of build-up rides, ranging from 40km up, see the Trailbreak website, some of which even use sections of the South Downs Way so you'll get an even clearer idea of the challenge ahead. "Doing shorter races is great for motivation and sharing training tips," Wadsworth says. "You also realise how far you've come."

### WEEK 1:

Monday: Thoroughly check bike and all kit ahead of tomorrow's start  
Tuesday: 60 min pre-breakfast ride at zone 1 effort, indoors or on single track.  
Wednesday: Circuits – 30 mins alternating between 60-second intervals of press-ups, squats, burpees, dips, sit-ups, star-jumps, lunges, shuttle sprints and planks.  
Thursday: Two short sessions, 30 mins pre-breakfast and evening (8 sec fast efforts every 5 mins)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 30 minutes on moderate course. Stay in zone 1 for 75% of the time, with 100% effort 30-second bursts every 5 mins  
Sunday: 60 min ride concentrating on higher than normal cadence

### WEEK 2:

Monday: Recovery day, focus on stretching  
Tuesday: 60 min pre-breakfast ride at zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: Circuits – 20 mins  
Thursday: Core conditioning in the gym, focus on squats, planks, lunges.  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 60 mins on moderate course. Stay in zone 1 for more than 75% of the ride, with 100% effort 30-second bursts every 10 mins  
Sunday: 90 min ride in bigger than normal gear (50-60rpm cadence) pushing your effort on any inclines for the middle 20 mins

### WEEK 3:

Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 60 min pre-breakfast ride, at top of zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: 60 min evening ride on hilly terrain, working at your best zone 2 pace to stay smooth with controlled breathing  
Thursday: Circuits – 40 mins  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 90 mins on moderate course, staying in zone 1 more than 75% of the time, with 100% effort 30-second bursts every 5 mins  
Sunday: 120 min ride in bigger than normal gear (50-60rpm cadence) pushing your effort on any inclines for the middle 20 mins

### WEEK 4:

Monday: Total rest day, get bike mechanics sorted, kit organised, rides planned, nutritional schedule pinned down  
Tuesday: 45 min pre-breakfast ride at moderate zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: 60 min ride working on either climbing, descending, cornering or group riding – wherever you feel weakest  
Thursday: Circuits – 30 mins  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 90 mins on moderate or rolling course. Stay in zone 1 for more than 90% of the ride, with 100% effort 30-second bursts every 3 mins  
Sunday: 120 min light spin with 8-sec efforts every 6 mins.

### WEEK 5:

Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 45-60 min pre-breakfast ride at moderate zone 1 effort indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: 60 min evening ride on moderate terrain  
Thursday: Circuits – 30 mins  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 90 mins on hills. Stay in zone 1 on any flats and low to mid zone 2 on hills  
Sunday: 180 min ride in a bigger gear than normal, pushing on the inclines for the middle 40 mins

### WEEK 6:

Monday: Recovery day – stretching or light spin on stationary bike  
Tuesday: 60 min pre-breakfast ride at zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: 90 min evening ride, low zone 2, on the longest climbs you can find for a total of 30 mins controlled hard climbing work  
Thursday: Circuits – 45 mins  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 60 mins on a hilly course. Stay in zone 1 on the flat and low to mid-zone 2 on hills  
Sunday: 180 mins with speed practice on descents and 6 one-min zone 3 efforts with 2-3 mins spin recovery

### WEEK 7:

Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 60 min pre-breakfast ride at zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate terrain  
Wednesday: 90 min evening ride on hills at zone 2 effort, focusing on staying smooth with controlled breathings  
Thursday: Circuits – 45 mins  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 60 mins hilly course, or ride a single track course if there's one nearby. Stay in upper zone 1 on flats and zone 2 on hills  
Sunday: 240 min ride with speed practice on the descents for the middle 40 mins

### WEEK 8

Monday: Rest day, focus on getting all kit and nutritional plans sorted  
Tuesday: 45 min pre-breakfast ride at zone 1 effort, indoors or on moderate  
Wednesday: 60 min ride focusing on weaknesses, climbing, descending, eating in the saddle etc  
Thursday: 45 mins on the flat in low to mid zone 1  
Friday: 60 min light spin with 8 sec efforts every 6 mins  
**SATURDAY: CHALLENGE DAY!**  
**SUNDAY: CHALLENGE DAY!**



## ZONES:

**ZONE 1:** 60-80% of your maximum heart rate or a perceived rate of exertion (PRE) of 6-7/10 – conversation is easy and you don't need to breathe through your mouth

**ZONE 2:** 80-90% of your maximum heart rate or a perceived rate of exertion (PRE) of 8-9/10 – you can mutter short phrases, but need to breathe through your mouth to keep going. Controlled, but sustainable.

**ZONE 3:** 90% of your maximum heart rate or a perceived rate of exertion (PRE) of 9+10 – breathing's hard and laboured, your muscles are burning, you can hardly mutter words. Only for short bursts.

## One-off hits

When you have extra energy reserves – or to really kick-start your campaign to nail the South Downs Way – throw this little tease into your training program.

"This is essentially weight-training on a bike," says Shane Sutton, Welsh national cycling coach.

A Commonwealth Games gold and silver medalist, two-time Olympian, and Milk Race winner, Sutton has forgotten more than we'll ever know about building muscle and fitness through cycling. In addition to strengthening and developing the quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, glutes and hip flexors, hill riding offers unbeatable aerobic training for events like The Lemming Trail. This workout can be done on a road, mountain or stationary bike.

If you're cycling outdoors, find a moderately steep, quarter-of-a-mile-long hill (slightly shorter if you're riding off-road). Clip or strap your feet to the pedals – and don't cycle in running shoes. To better protect your knees, says Sutton, wear stiff-soled cycling shoes. The workout consists of four high-effort climbing intervals. Recover between the intervals by pedalling back down the slope to your starting place and circling there for 30 seconds.

## The Warm-up

Begin with 10 minutes of pedalling on flat or slightly graded terrain. Pick a gear in which you can spin at a cadence of 90 to 100 revolutions per minute (rpm). An easy way to keep track of this is to periodically count the times your right leg comes up in 10 seconds, then multiply by six. If you're using a stationary bike, choose a resistance that allows you to spin at this rate.

## The Workout

**FIRST INTERVAL:** Shift to a slightly harder gear – one that lets you take your first trip up the hill at a rate of 60 to 70 rpm. Don't stand or get out of the saddle. You should arrive at the turnaround point winded but not exhausted. Recover by pedalling back down the hill in an easy gear at a cadence of 95 to 110 rpm. Again, if you're using a stationary bike, choose resistance settings that allow you to maintain these same cadences.

**SPEED INTERVAL:** On your next climb, use the same gear or resistance as in the first interval, but increase the pace to 70 to 80 rpm. Your breathing should be heavy but controlled, and you should feel a burn in your thighs as you approach the top of the hill. Get out of the saddle if necessary. Recover by pedalling back down in an easy gear, spinning at 95 to 110 rpm.

**POWER INTERVAL:** Perform your third interval in the hardest gear or at the greatest resistance you can manage, pedalling at 30 to 40 rpm. However, do not get out of the saddle. If you're really struggling, shift to an easier gear that you can sustain right to the top. Recover as you did for the speed interval. (If you have knee problems or pain, steer clear of this interval, or at least ease up on the gear.)

**SPINNING INTERVAL:** For your final climb, shift to your easiest gear or resistance and try to maximise your rate of turnover. (In other words, pedal fast up the hill at 75 to 85 rpm.) When you reach

the turnaround point, start descending immediately in the same gear.

**THE COOL-DOWN:** Ten minutes of pedalling in an easy gear or at low resistance on level ground at 90 rpm.

## Roll with it

If you can ride a bike, you can mountain bike. Rolling over rocks and roots adds a bone-crunching twist to this traditionally tame sport. Soak in these fundamentals to save face—literally.

### TRAIL TRICK # 1: FEEL THE PRESSURE

Make sure your tyres are primed to handle off-road terrain. While softer tyres with a psi of around 30 might work for softer, more muddy conditions, the South Downs Way is hard and has big flints which can cut tyres or cause pinch punctures. With a good suspension set-up – which most half-decent bikes should have – your bike should be able to cushion any blows, so up your pressure to around 45psi to let the wheel roll more efficiently, saving your energy for the challenge itself. Note: a lot of the SDW is chalk which can become like ice when wet, so prepare yourself and don't elbow and knee guards if you don't feel 100 percent confident.

### TRAIL TRICK #2: DON'T STEER

Your bike has shocks, so use them. Cautiously picking your way between obstacles will only slow you down and mess with your center of gravity. The straightest line is the fastest and the easiest. Practise scaling smaller roots and rocks first, keeping your eyes at least a dozen feet ahead on the trail. Then move on to larger obstacles, such as sticks or fallen trees placed mid-trail as speed bumps.

### TRAIL TRICK #3: USE WHEEL POWER

Cranking hard over slick rocks and roots can cause you to spin out, cutting your speed, traction, and forward momentum. If you can't make it up a hill on oomph alone, put the pedal down when it counts – on dirt. Power the pedals

before the root or rock, then let up as your rear wheel rolls over. Then start pedaling hard again. Use your head before you lose your head of steam: If you see a steep ascent looming on the horizon, kick in some extra legwork. You'll need it on the way up.

### TRAIL TRICK #4: FLEX YOUR ABS

Descending a steep hill can be risky business, as aggressive braking can cause the front wheel to lock up and skid, especially on slick trails. The front brake is where you'll find 80 percent of your stopping power, so you can't ignore your right hand altogether. But turn your hands into a makeshift antilock brake system and you'll keep control of your descent. Start to brake with your rear pads, then add in as much front as you can. Feather the brakes immediately if the front wheel begins to slide or, worse, lock up. And don't forget to shift your weight backward to keep yourself on the right side of the handlebar. Practice braking on flat, dry ground first, and you'll get a feel for it without having to pick through grass for your missing teeth.

### TRAIL TRICK #5: GO LONG

Hard riding is sort of like alcohol: A little can be very pleasant, but too much and you'll find yourself on the rocks. You shouldn't do it more than two times each week. Even if you're riding only twice a week, make sure one of those days is a long ride at a comfortable pace. Long rides, such as the Sunday ones in our 8-week schedule – build endurance, the secret weapon of pro riders. It ensures that they always have a burst of speed left in reserve, even after a full day of riding, for attacking that last runoff chute, slippery boulder, or race to the finish.