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Hi,

The following articles are designed to help you prepare for your cycling adventures and to help you perform at your best:

- [Winter Riding Tips](#)
- [Breakfast of Champions](#)
- [Cycling Superfoods and Drinks](#)
- [Sticking to the Plan](#)
- [Mental Preparation](#)

For more tips and performance advice please feel free to visit my website or get in contact.

Happy cycling!

Jon Fearne



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## Winter Riding Tips

We have given some nutritional advice all ready, but when looking at winter riding we need to pay a little more attention to it. Our bodies require more fuel to help regulate the cold and so we can find ourselves feeling either low on energy or just unable to warm up.

Winter riding is normally done at a slower pace and so again we are not generating the warmth through muscular action. So more fuel will help not just with energy but also warmth. It can become too easy in the cold not to eat as we are wearing gloves and many layers, so you need to make sure nutrition is easy to access to maximise the amount you can eat/drink. You can try using hot water in drinks bottles to start so at least the first few sips will not be ice cold.

Warming up, try and avoid heading straight into touch demanding climbs, or that going flat out from start will help you get warm, yes it may but chances are you will pull a muscle and then that's ridding over for a while. To warm up avoid high hard gears slowly build up you cadence while in an easy gear, then start to progress the gears as well as cadence.

Layering of clothes, this can be personal to each individual and if I was to say do what I do that may bake some of you! I wear lots of layers and have to start my ride or run warm, I find it harder to get going from cold, people think I would then take layers off- nope I want to stay hot and so will rarely remove any layers.

The key is you at least make sure all skin is covered, and that you carry a couple of extra upper body layers. I will sometimes carry a spare base layer and if out for a long time will swap it out and have a nice fresh one next to my skin.

Hand warmers can also be used, slip in the top side of your glove (not the palm) as the blood supply is really rich on top and they will work quicker.

A buff is an amazing piece of kit for the winter and gives a great way to protecting drafts from going down your neck. Obviously a good water proof layer in case that inevitable happens.

Condition of bike and good tyres, you need to make sure your bike is in its best working order during the winter months as this is the time you don't want to be stuck at the side of a road fixing things, you will find punctures are more likely due to washed out grit on roads,

so a good set of winter tyres will help prevent this also going for a slightly wider road tyre will offer some more comfort to your ride.

Staying safe with lights! And bright clothing. Winter months equals a lot less day light, while we may not live in Alaska we still get caught out and also having lights that flash during the day time when the weather is grim can be a life saver.



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### **Breakfast of Champions - what to eat for breakfast during training, rest days & sportive days**

We've all had those days where you just can't seem to find the energy for training. But have you thought that maybe it's something to do with what you're eating? Or not eating?

#### Training breakfast

Nutrition can make a huge difference to your training and racing. You might think it's just a case of making sure you eat right on race day, but if you're not training well because you're not eating well, then you won't race well either. If you start your day properly fuelled you're sure to notice the difference in your training.

Your nutrition priority here is making sure you have enough energy. Carbohydrates are your main energy sources and are vitally important for endurance sports. Carbohydrates come in two main types. They can contain fast release energy, like sports drinks, gels and other sugary foods, and give you a quick hit of energy; or they can contain slow release energy, like pasta and cereals, which give you a steady supply of energy through the day. Start your day with a slow release carbohydrate like porridge, toast or bagels to make sure you have the energy to train.

And make use of those long training rides to practice your competition breakfast. You don't want to find out half way through the sportive that your breakfast doesn't agree with you!

Below are a few examples of a good training day breakfasts

#### Example 1

1 average bowl (60g) muesli – 220 Kcal- 40g carbs - 6g protein – 5g fat

2 tbsp (80g) low-fat yogurt – 34 Kcal – 5g carb – 6g protein

200ml skimmed milk – 66 Kcal – 10g carbs – 7g proten

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 54 kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

#### Example 2

2 slices wholegrain toast – 174 Kcal – 34g carbs – 7g protein – 2g fat

2 tsp (10g) olive oil spread – 57 Kcal – 6g fat

2 heaped tsp (30g) honey – 86 Kcal – 23g carbs

1 carton (150g) low-fat fruit yogurt – 135 kcal – 27g carbs – 6g protein – 1g fat

### Example 3

1 cup (60g) porridge oats – 241 Kcal – 44g carbs – 7g protein – 5g fat

300ml skimmed milk – 99 Kcal – 15g carbs – 10g protein

1 tbsp (30g) raisins – 82 Kcal – 21g carbs – 1g protein

1 glass (200ml) orange juice – 72 Kcal – 18g carbs – 1g protein

### Example 4

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 53 Kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

2 slices (80g) wholegrain toast – 174 Kcal – 34g carbs – 7g protein – 2g fat

2 tsp (10g) olive oil spread – 57 Kcal – 6g fat

2 scrambled or poached eggs – 160 Kcal – 14g protein – 12g fat

### Example 5

3 shredded wheat (70g) – 228 Kcal - 48g carbs – 7g protein – 2g fat

200ml skimmed milk – 66 Kcal – 10g carbs – 7g protein

2 tbsp (60g) raisins – 163 Kcal – 42g carbs – 1g protein

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 54 Kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

### Rest day breakfast

Essentially what you eat on rest days should help your recovery so you're ready for your next training day. You are likely to need a smaller portion and less carbohydrate for breakfast than you'd have on a training day, as you're using less energy. You should also add more protein to your breakfast - this will help repair your muscles from the damage they get during training, allowing them to grow back stronger. Good protein sources include eggs, fish, milk and yogurt.

### Example 1

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 53 Kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

2 scrambled or poached eggs – 160 Kcal – 14g protein – 12g fat

Mackerel, grilled 1 fillet – 359 Kcal – 31g protein

### Example 2

2 slices wholegrain toast – 174 Kcal – 34g carbs – 7g protein – 2g fat

2 tsp (10g) olive oil spread – 57 Kcal – 6g fat

Baked beans (205g) – 166 Kcal – 10g protein

2 scrambled or poached eggs – 160 Kcal – 14g protein – 12g fat

1 glass water (200ml)

## Sportive day breakfast

The aim of breakfast on a sportive day is to have slow-releasing energy foods or drinks, which you can top up during the race with fast-releasing energy sources. About 2 to 4 hours before the sportive have a breakfast packed with slow release carbohydrates. You might find low fibre foods work best for you if you're prone to gastrointestinal problems. In that case choose white bread or low fibre cereals such as cornflakes rather than porridge. If you find it difficult to eat on race day because of nerves, try drinking your breakfast instead of eating it and have a smoothie instead of food.

In the 2 to 4 hours before the sportive you also want to drink 5 to 10 ml of water per kilogram of your body weight. So, if you were 70kg and your sportive started at 10am, you'd need to drink 350 to 700ml between 6am and 8am. You're trying to make sure your urine is a pale yellow colour as this means you're well-hydrated. Although it may seem early to start hydrating, it means you have enough time to go to the toilet before the race starts.

Again, training days are perfect opportunities to practice your race day nutrition and find out what works well for you. You'll also feel more confident going into the sportive if you know you have tried and tested your race day breakfast.

Below are a few examples of a good Sportive day breakfasts

### Example 1

1 average bowl (60g) muesli – 220 Kcal- 40g carbs - 6g protein – 5g fat

2 tbsp (80g) low-fat yogurt – 34 Kcal – 5g carb – 6g protein

200ml skimmed milk – 66 Kcal – 10g carbs – 7g protein

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 54 kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

1 slice (40g) wholegrain toast – 87 Kcal – 17g carbs – 4g protein – 1g fat

1 heaped tsp (7g) olive oil spread – 40 Kcal – 4g Fat

### Example 2

4 slices wholegrain toast – 347 Kcal – 67g carbs – 14g protein – 4g fat

4 tsp (20g) Olive oil spread – 114 Kcal – 13g fat

4 heaped tsp (60g) honey – 173 Kcal – 46g carbs –

1 carton (150g) low-fat fruit yogurt – 135 Kcal – 27g carbs – 6g protein – 1g fat

### Example 3

1 ½ cups (100g) porridge oats – 401 Kcal – 73g carbs – 12g protein – 9g fat

500ml skimmed milk 165 Kcal – 25g carbs – 16g protein – 1g fat

2 tbsp (60g) raisins – 163 Kcal – 42g carbs – 1g protein

1 glass (200ml) orange juice – 72 Kcal – 18g carbs – 1g protein

### Example 4

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 54 Kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

3 slices (120g) wholegrain toast – 260 Kcal – 50g carbs – 11g protein – 3g fat

3 tsp (15g) olive oil spread – 85 Kcal – 9g fat

2 scrambled or poached eggs – 160 Kcal – 14g protein – 12g fat

Example 5

4 shredded wheat (100g) – 325 Kcal – 68g carbs – 11g protein – 3g fat

300ml skimmed milk – 99Kcal – 15g carbs – 10g protein

2 tbsp (60g) raisins – 163 Kcal – 42g carbs – 1g protein

1 glass (150ml) orange juice – 54 Kcal – 13g carbs – 1g protein

These are just some general tips for helping you to perform, but we're all individual and will respond slightly differently to food and drink. If you want to be the best you can, it's worth having your diet analysed in a nutrition consultation to get a nutrition plan that's personalised to you, your race and food preferences, and to help you meet your individual goals.



## 10 Cycling Superfoods and Drinks

In this article we are not looking at performance branded foods but at foods we can buy from supermarkets that have hidden positive properties. There is a lot of spin at the moment about “do energy products really do what they say they do?” - Well for this article just forget about those products and get creative.

Research has been done into all these nutrition choices, we must remember though that we can all react differently to nutrition and so make sure you try these foods out and see if they work for you.

1) **Spinach** - most of us relate this food to Popeye but is it really any good? In a word; yes. Spinach is high in Iron which plays a central role in the functioning of red blood cells which help in transporting oxygen around the body. While we train, we increase the demand for energy in our muscles and so having efficient, working red blood cells means more energy which is also gained quicker when needed on those climbs. The great thing about **spinach** is you can easily add it to normal meals or blend it into smoothies.

2) **Peanut butter** – this is packed with muscle fuelling protein and healthy fats for slow release energy. A table spoon spread over some wholegrain bread is a great way to fuel a ride at short notice, allowing you to make the most of your ride. On event day people even use peanut butter sandwiches as a riding fuel! Give it a go, it’s cheaper than a gel.

3) **Chocolate Milkshake** - this is a great reward post-ride which will actually help your body recover from the stress of training. The balance between carbs and protein is spot on to work as a recovery fuel and tastes great so while out on your ride you have the thought of a yummy shake on your return. It’s a lot cheaper than sports specific recovery drinks and sometimes tastes better.

4) **Beetroot** - the power of this food is great, if you can deal with the taste! Many studies have been done into super foods and this one keeps coming out at the top. The nitrates allow your body to hold off exhaustion for longer so add this into your daily diet or take a drink for 5 days leading up to your event to get the gains.

5) **Salmon** - get some Omega-3 in the system. Salmon is a great source for these which help with protein synthesis, allowing to build good muscle strength and tone. Adding 2-3 servings of salmon a week will greatly improve recovery as the Omega-3 works as an anti-inflammatory helping joints and muscles recover.

6) **Chai seeds** - now this new energy source is still undergoing studies but early results are showing positive results in the endurance world. With the Omega-3 we can get similar gains as to eating fish, but the seed is so small and easy to add to any meal and also not overly expensive - small seed packing a big punch.

7) **Hard Boiled Eggs** - this is one of my favourites. The hardboiled egg offers us lots as they are full of amino acids and if we eat one or two before bed we help with our body's recovery as muscles recover from the source of protein. We can also get energy from these mighty fuel-packed eggs. Give them a try before bed and see if your legs feel better in the morning!

8) **Bananas** - these need to be on the list, packed full with energy but also potassium which helps reduce cramping in our muscles. Studies have been done extensively on the banana and results have shown that you can perform equally well on bananas as you can with sports products! It's perhaps just a little harder to carry a bunch of bananas around on the bike with you...

9) **Flat Coke** - the 'food of champions' as it's known in the cycling world. This red can, can be the difference between finishing a long sportive or not! Coke has an incredible mix of vital ingredients, that our bodies call out for when fatigued. Caffeine, sugars and electrolytes all come in this little can; the caffeine gives a mental lift and it also allows more energy to be absorbed whilst the electrolytes help with hydration. Check the back seat in any grand tour team car and you will find Coke cans ready for the pro riders when they hit that point of fatigue.

10) **Water** - we will finish on this very simple and obvious drink which is often forgotten about. We are approximately 50-65% water and when we exercise, we lose water. Our body's ability to perform is significantly lower when we are dehydrated and this does not just relate to while we are training but also during the day. If you start your evening session already low on water, your body will not be performing as well as it could be. Carry a small bottle around with you all day, perhaps 500ml, and top it up twice as this will make a big difference.





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## Stick to the Plan

One of the hardest things for a rider to do is stick to the plan, we are not professionals and we have full lives to live as well as do our training. So what can we do to help make sure we stick to our plan? After all I promise you if you follow your plan you will be ready mentally and physically for your Sportive challenge. Below we have 10 points that can help to keep you on plan.

1. Look at what time you have before setting training goals, this will stop you trying to do more than can realistically be achieved and so avoid disappointment further down the line.
2. Keep some fun in your rides, or social rides.
3. Find a training partner, knowing someone else is out in the rain or cold as well helps keep you honest.
4. Set bench mark goals, these help to keep you focused short term. If you just have the Marmotte as your goal then it's very big and a long way off, maybe use some local Sportives to help.
5. Set up for morning sessions the night before, be it turbo or out on the road get all your kit out, including breakfast. This is called removing barriers.
6. Think how good you feel after a session/ride, trick your mind into making you feel that you are really missing out if you don't train. Do this over and over and it can have a positive impact of your motivation.
7. Measure improvements - use Strava and watch your times improve, use goals set by Strava, like climbing challenge or monthly distance goals.
8. YouTube cycling video clips before you go to bed, you know the ones. It's highly motivating to watch Cav win the sprint or Froome taking the climb and these leave a subconscious imprints that can give you that nudge to get out and ride.
9. Include family and friends with your plan, let them know what you are doing and they can add that pressure of you not wanting to be seen not to do your training.
10. Your Sportive is a big deal and by following the right plan you will get so much more from your big day.

Some of the above you will already do and some will be new... Look at how you approach your training and try and use a few of these techniques to keep you on your bike, heading to being in great shape for your Sportive.

Obviously if you are choosing one of Sportive Breaks/E3Coach.com training plans you will be sure to find fun, bench marking and specific sessions to make sure you stay focused.



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## Mental Preparation

Psychology is more important and also easier to use positively than you may think! We focus on training our bodies with hill repetitions, riding on the drops, tempo and threshold power and heart rate but what about the grey matter that is telling us what to do?

Yes of course by simply following one of our training plans, we are building your confidence on the bike which helps the mental approach to the event. Nutrition on and off the bike has been practiced too perhaps which again is helping us feel better about going into the event. Doing some research will give you information about your event such as how steep or long climbs are and thus how to tackle them. This advice helps to empower you with knowledge of your event, so you are helping yourself to have all the information to hand.

With all this helping your mental preparation, what else can you do?

Well there is one thing and it's very simple and even fun to do and that's 'visualisation.' This is a psychological term used to describe the application of one's goal mentally during training and even during everyday activities such as washing up!

How do we go about this?

When you have all the information on your route/event, take a tough section of that you feel will be tough and next time you're on your bike, visualise this section, imagine how it is going to feel and try to put yourself in the moment. The more times you do this, the easier the actual section will be in your challenge, because you have been going over it in your mind for the previous few months of training and therefore have convinced your mind that you have already done the section with no trouble. Believe it or not, if our mind says we can do it then the body will follow. To reinforce this, we can sit at our desks, or place of work, and take a few minutes to shut our eyes and see ourselves riding this section, going through how our legs feel, what your position may be and what the surroundings are like, making sure we are being really positive in all of our thoughts.

This is psychology at its most basic level and this is a method used by professional sportsmen and women all around the world. It also costs nothing.