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# LEADVILLE TRAIL100MTB<sup>SM</sup>

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## 2016 TRAINING PLAN



**100  
MILES  
12 HOURS**  
YOUR LEGEND  
STARTS HERE

## DAVE WIENS LT100 MTB TRAINING PLAN

*Welcome to my favorite aspect of the Leadville Trail 100 Mountain Bike Race: the planning and preparation: the training! By getting into the LT100 you have just punched your tickets to ride your bike.... a lot, in the months preceding this globally iconic test of endurance.*

### WHAT THIS PLAN IS AND IS NOT

This plan will guide you through building a training program for the LT100, but it will require you to put some thought and effort into the process. While it will be short on science, detail and substance when compared to what you would get from a professional coach, it will assist you in building a practical strategy to use to prepare for the LT100 and will serve as an introduction to the training process based on my experience as a bike racer.

While it will not tell you exactly what to do on the Tuesday two weeks before the race, it will give you a basic understanding of training and perhaps that is all many of you are looking for. It also may be the introduction to training that some of you need to decide that you are either interested in learning more about training and self-coaching or you may decide to hire a personal coach to help you with your training. Remember, working with a coach is also an educational experience and I know of many athletes that have worked with a coach for a while until they felt like they had enough knowledge to take over their own training. Likewise, there are also athletes that have been using the same coach for years and the partnership is rock solid, refined and improving every year.

### WINGING IT; HIRING A PRO; OR BEING SELF-COACHED

By its very nature, training plans such as this one cannot possibly satisfy the specific and varied needs of everyone that will possess it. That several thousand individuals with widely divergent levels of experience, different goals, varying time to devote to training, and more, are all purchasing the same training plan means that it cannot be tailored to any one rider. But that is the nature of training for endurance bike racing and it's why many riders have *personal coaches*. Other riders, like myself, prefer the path of self-coaching. Self-coached athletes research training as much as they want and determine their own training based on all that they know. There is also a third group and I fondly call these guys, *winging it*.

### Athletes that Enjoy Winging It

Training is not required to have success in, and/or to enjoy the LT100. If you are the kind of rider that just wants to ride your bike, as you want, when you want, and how you want, more power to you! You don't have to write anything down; you don't have to memorize workouts (or write them down in tiny script and tape them to your



stem!); you don't have to agonize about how long your longest ride needs to be and when you need to do it in relation to race day; you don't need to worry that your taper is too much or too little; etc.; none of this for you. And, I can guarantee this: you'll kick the butts of a bunch of riders that completed a ton of strategically designed workouts that were carefully sequenced and placed within a calendar of riding that took months to play out.

This is how I rode the LT100 from 2003 through 2006, although I did have a good few miles in my legs and lots of racing and training experience at that point in my life.

Winging It! *Shut up and ride, have fun and don't write anything down* could be the moniker for this group. If you are a card-carrying member of *winging it*, there is likely little or no information of interest in this training plan for you. Unless, of course, you are considering winging it just a little less and perhaps writing a few things down or doing a scripted workout or two (that you can make up or memorize.) In that case, read on.

### **Professionally Coached Athletes**

If you have a professional coach *and* are interested in training, you might find some parts of this plan interesting. However, your training is covered and you are on a solid track toward the LT100 in August. Enjoy your training journey and best of luck to you as you prepare and in the race.

### **Self-Coached Athletes – Strict Science-Based Focus**

These athletes are using science-based training methods or are interested in pursuing a detailed, science-based training strategy. This group has a keen interest in training and may be interested in reading about and examining some of the ideas that I present here. However, many of these riders aren't quick to abandon a training track, body of knowledge or expertise, or are looking for the detail of an advanced, science-based plan. If you are part of this group or aspire to be, you should have a heart rate monitor and/or a power meter, know how to use them and are or should be familiar with training principles such as *periodization*, *training zones*, *Lactate Threshold Heart Rate (LTHR)*, *Functional Threshold Power (FTPw)*, and more.

If this reads like Greek to you, spend some time googling these words and principles and following the numerous links to volumes of information. If you are new to training but your interest in the science of training is piqued, do some research, read the rest of this basic plan and determine to what extent you'd like to dive into the world of training.

### **Self-Coached Athletes - Loose Science-Based Focus**

This is my group so it stands to reason that this training plan will be less technical and much shorter on science. I do, however, buy into the science of training to a certain extent. I don't buy into the science lock, stock and barrel, though. I feel like there are simply too many variables and other factors at play and I get bogged down in the minutia, details and wonk that are central to pure science-based training. I know that training is a science but it certainly is in the inexact category at best.

I will use a heart rate monitor but I won't dwell on it. I have never used a power meter but I do use low cadence, big gear riding, as well as explosive accelerations and other efforts as a training tool to build power. For the most part, I use *perceived effort* to guide how hard I ride rather than established heart rate (HR) or power zones.

### **WHO THIS PLAN IS FOR**

This is a very simple plan but I feel as though it's perfect and a step up for many riders and perhaps the introduction and welcome many need into the fascinating and frustrating world of human performance training for endurance bike racing.

### **FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING IN MY WORLD**

- Training has to be fun.
- Never let yourself get totally out of shape. For life, it's imperative that you maintain some sort of fitness all the time. Barring injury or illness, if you are able, you should always at least walk, swim, play a sport, lift weights, stretch or do yoga; something that offers some physical activity and the motivational energy in your mind and body that physical activity creates. Don't ever be a slug (for too long!)
- Mindset is Critical - Flexibility, Confidence and a Great Attitude set you up for Success (in life!) These are critical and interrelated; they feed each other.
  - Flexibility - Your plan, from top to bottom, must be flexible and you have to be able to deviate from what you have planned because life happens! Embrace it! From your training to your travel; from your bike setup to your nutrition. If you think everything has to be just so to be successful, you are leaving only a very narrow window for success. I prefer a wide-open window for success.
  - Confidence - This flexibility will give you confidence but you can also remind yourself to be confident when you start to question yourself or hear chatter, especially negative training chatter. This is not reckless,



cocky confidence; I describe it as more of a content, contemplative confidence. I hope this makes sense.

- A Great Attitude - This is one of the most front and center but elusive attributes a person can have. We've been told to have good attitudes since we were old enough to comprehend but how often can you honestly recall having a bad attitude? In preparing for anything that requires a journey and lots of hard work, having a great attitude is imperative. Training for and racing in the LT100 comes to mind.
- You don't have to ride your bike year round. In fact, more and more, I am reading articles where coaches are talking about better results being achieved by cyclists that don't ride all year long. But you can, and you might have to, if you live in a temperate place and it's the most accessible activity for you. If you put your bike away in the winter, you do need to do something, though.
- I'm a huge fan of cross training. But for me, if cycling fitness and competition are priorities, cross training is primarily something for October through March.
- *In season*, there is no substitute for riding your bicycle once you are "in season." You can do plyometrics, cross-fit, hoist medicine balls or jog in the swimming pool all you want, but none of that is going to get you up and over the Powerlines climb on your way back to Leadville. You have to ride your bike. A lot. I define *in season* as being April through summer.
- If I were going to add anything to the final 8 weeks of Leadville preparation, it would be weight lifting. I did this successfully for all of my LT100's since 2007. My main goals with weight training are to improve overall body strength and to avoid cramping during the race. More on this below.
- Training should be recorded in a training log or journal and I track hours more than mileage.
- When in doubt, do less *and* quality trumps quantity. These two ideas are central to my training philosophy. I think that many inexperienced riders have a tendency to do too much. Additionally, I have always done relatively few repetitions of intense riding (intervals, sprints, efforts) and also shorter rides and few rides with mountains of vertical feet of climbing. I think many riders, especially those with less experience, like to "pile on" the reps of intensity, the distance, the vertical feet of climbing. It does sound impressive when you talk about it while drinking Michelob Ultra with your buddies but I'll always advocate for less, with an emphasis on quality.

- Specific, high-intensity training, including intervals, are important...once you have a solid base of riding in your legs and body.
- I view the long day of the LT100 to be a stretch goal, meaning, I won't try to duplicate that duration or vertical in training. I think countless athletes have left what they needed on race day out on the trail by doing too many too long rides with too much climbing. By the time race day rolls around, they are cooked.
- Put down solid, quality rides without stopping. This makes social riding more difficult but I feel like stopping is counterproductive unless you're out on a planned social ride, or, of course, if you have to stop due to a mechanical or other contingency.

**DISCLAIMER FOR THIS PLAN:** The associated template offers a range of weekly hours, an estimate of training intensity, suggestions for specific workouts and recovery periods and more. The low numbers are going to be introductory and the high numbers are going to be for advanced levels. If you choose to use this plan, you are still going to have to make numerous decisions for yourself. Among other things, you will need to determine, one way or the other, how long you're going to ride; which workouts to incorporate and when; how hard to ride and how many reps of the specific workouts you're going to do, etc. In other words, you're still going to have to put thought and effort into building your training plan. I wouldn't recommend doing it any other way.

**GENERAL DISCLAIMER:** Consult your doctor before beginning this or any exercise program. Not all exercise is suitable for everyone. As with any exercise program, if at any point during your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy, or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately. Please be advised that by participating in any of the exercises presented herein, you are assuming all risks of injury that might result. Dave Wiens shall not be liable for any claims for injuries or damages resulting from use of the content on this training plan. The information presented herein is not a substitute for medical advice.

**ALTITUDE DISCLAIMER -** This plan will not attempt to address altitude. There are just too many variables and varying opinions about how to approach the elevation of the LT100. Here are my basics for dealing with the altitude:

- Don't let the altitude get in your head and defeat you. This will require confidence and a good attitude.
- The best way to time your arrival to Leadville is the way that works best for you and those traveling with you. If you can arrive weeks in advance and get acclimated, great. If you can only travel a few days before the race due to

work, family, etc. (aka, life!), then that's the best way to approach it. Again, confidence and attitude are critical assets that you should possess and master.

- Your best weapon against the high altitude in the race is cautious pacing.
- Research the topic and develop an altitude strategy or just ignore it, know the air is going to be thin and pace carefully.

### HOW DOES THIS PLAN WORK

This plan contains all kind of ideas, workouts and suggestions. It also includes a training plan template that offers an example of structure for the final two periods: April into June and June right up to the LT100.

As mentioned above, it's on you to build the plan. Please understand that this is the only way that something like this can be utilized by a large group of athletes. I'd like to establish a forum where I can answer the inevitable questions that will arise.

I have simplified the training concept called *periodization* by breaking up nearly 8 months into just three sections. However, you will notice that I have also scheduled numerous recovery weeks within each block.

### The 3 Periods (Refer to the training plan template for periods 2 and 3)

**Period 1: January through March** - Goal: Cross training and general cycling fitness.

Stay or get in shape. Do a variety of things to stay in shape. There are no right or wrong answers here. I'll be doing some skiing, some riding (not on a schedule and only as I can), playing some pickleball (I am over 50 so I'm allowed), playing some hockey and perhaps lifting some weights and stretching. This is the time for general conditioning and having fun being physical.

For many of us, this block may start out cross training heavy and get more bike heavy toward the end. This is fine. Being physical and in good shape, without overdoing it (unless you're young, then overdoing it now and then is what will lead to old man and old woman fitness when you are old like me!) is the goal during this time.

I don't suggest just rolling off the couch and diving into hard training on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Hopefully, you're in pretty good shape to start. If you aren't, I'll suggest you map out your training with this in mind. Ease into the season and progress in a manner that will allow your body to adapt to higher training loads and not succumb to injury or illness.



I suggest breaking this period up with at least three or more blocks of rest or easier recovery weeks, the last one being toward the end of March. Since this block is pretty loose with lots of cross training for many of us, I'm not going to apply weekly hours to it. Your goal with this block is to design training that will increase and/or maintain your fitness and prepare you for more consistent riding beginning in April.

**Period 2: April through Mid June (12 weeks)** - Goal: Establishing a good base and building your fitness by focusing on solid riding.

The training plan template begins in late March and takes you right up to the LT100. I have set suggested weekly hourly totals, as well as a system of rating weekly intensity on a scale of 1 to 10. Both of these are provided as a range with a low number and a high number, the high number being pulled from my training plans from 2007 to 2010. My hourly totals are certainly not off the charts and numerous athletes train more weekly hours than this figure. Your weekly hours are easy to control and monitor. Intensity is a bit trickier and you just have to do this by feel.

During this period, bike riding begins in earnest! You have well over two months to get your pedaling legs under you so start conservatively. I usually don't dive right into a lot of mountain biking because our trails generally aren't open until later in the spring. But I prefer to ride the road in the spring anyway and I start out primarily riding the flats, working on reestablishing my leg speed, building my endurance and getting my body accustomed to consistent riding again.

I'm going out and putting down solid rides at a medium pace, gearing down and spinning when the going gets tough and riding easier than harder but with a trend toward picking up the duration, the intensity and the climbing as this period progresses. I'll begin riding my mountain bike more, too. Harder riding should include short, medium and longer efforts; some on the flats, others on a variety of climbs. As this period goes on, this limited but increasing harder riding will be preparing you for the hard training to come in the next period

In May, the harder riding means that I'm going to start hinting at the types of workouts that I'll be doing full-on in late June, July and early August. You may be using some or all of my workouts (PHOS, 20-40's, AC, END, etc.), other workouts, or a combination. In the description for each of my workouts, I have included ideas for how best to begin hinting at them during May and early June.

I suggest breaking this 12-week period into 3 blocks and taking 3-4 days off or an easy week after every 3 weeks of consistent training. This is purposefully cautious.

Look at your schedule and see if it makes more sense for you to shuffle things around.

**Period 3: Late June through the LT100** - 8 weeks. This is the block of training that hopefully will produce the fitness that you'll need to accomplish your LT100 goals.

The first thing you'll notice from the training plan template is that the hourly range doesn't step up like it has done earlier in the plan. This is my own thing and once my base is established and I'm in the final preparation for an event, I prefer to put in a few weeks of around the same duration and intensity. For me, this magic number has been 15-18 hours of training per week. This is set up, however, so that you can still step up the hours and/or the intensity.

Here are important aspects of this period:

- Determining your final recovery week or strategy to be well rested for the LT100 - A recovery block during the week of July 18<sup>th</sup> is merely an example of one option. You need to determine the best course of action given all of the details of your life leading up to the race.
- Determining if you will attempt a peaking cycle during the weeks leading up to the LT100. See my discussion about peaking and tapering.
- Determining what your final week leading up to the LT100 looks like. See my discussion about weekly structure.
- Determining your workouts for the period. According to this plan, the entire toolbox is now open to you and you need to put together a strategy of training week by week.
- Working around races or training camps that you plan to incorporate into your preparation, as well as your travel plans for the LT100 and any other life obligations that you have.

## **MAPPING OUT THE JOURNEY: YOUR TRAINING PLAN AND YOUR TRAINING LOG**

Your training plan is what is guiding you. Your training log is what you actually write down after your training is over for the day.

### **Your Training Plan**

Using a spreadsheet, electronic template or a simple paper calendar, map out the entire year from January 1<sup>st</sup> right up to the LT100 on August 13<sup>th</sup> using information from this plan, information from other sources and/or information and experience you already have. If you're writing it out on paper use pencil so you can easily and legibly make changes. NOTE: Expect to be constantly tweaking your training plan.

This is the flexibility that I feel every training plan needs. Just because your plan says you're going to go for a 3-hour endurance ride on a particular day, doesn't mean that is has to happen. Don't just blow it off because you're lazy but if weather, work, family, illness or other obligations or circumstances get in the way, don't fret. Shuffle things around the make it work.

You don't have to fill in every detail right up to the LT100 now, but get the skeleton laid out and begin filling in high points, knowing that they likely will get tweaked as you go. Remember, this is a fluid document and you should expect to be tweaking it as you go. I'll tweak my upcoming week and also will be tweaking daily rides to accommodate life, which doesn't often lend itself to long-term plans.

Some of what you have mapped out is more important, like your race week structure or a peaking block if you will have one, but even with these, if circumstances force a change, confidence and attitude allow you to sway from your plan and still meet your goals. Don't let changes and contingencies defeat you because, when you think about it, the only changes are really in your mind.

Training is so inexact that you cannot possibly ever know what is optimal and just because you have planned to do something a certain way, the reality that you had to change it up doesn't automatically equate to sabotaging your season or your result in the LT100. I cannot stress this enough.

Being flexible, being confident regardless of circumstances, and having a great attitude are a large part of the foundation that a successful LT100 campaign are built upon. That, and riding your bike! There is still no substitute for riding your bike.

### **Your Training Log**

This is where you'll write down exactly what you ended up doing for training each day. Keeping a training log is critical and in season, you will be referring back and forth between your training log and your training plan constantly. Your training log is also invaluable in designing your training strategies in subsequent years, not to mention, really cool to read through when we're in assisted living! It can also help you spot warning sign and trends. You can look back and notice, for example, that



you haven't taken a day off for 6 weeks or something and be able to react to that information.

What to record in your training log - There are no right or wrong answers to this but most coaches will have you recording all kinds of information, including metrics that they can use to help them determine fatigue. This is likely very important and I don't knock it, it's just not for me. I don't record a ton of metrics in my training log and that's just the way I like it. Here's what I record:

- How long my ride was in hours
- Where I went
- What I did (END, INT's, 20-40's, etc)
- How many of whatever I did (2 sets of 4, 20-40's or 8 reps PHOS)
- What bike I rode (road, cross or mountain)
- Vertical feet of climbing (my favorite metric!)
- People I was with (irrelevant but fun years later!)
- Anything of note that happened that day (the Broncos won the Super Bowl, my dog died, etc.)

Here's an example of one of my typical training log entries. It's from June 30, 2008:

MTB (mountain bike) - WU (warm up) Climb Signal Peak 2 sets of 4, 20-40's, 175 bpm max HR; INTS: 1)Music Rocks trail, 5 minutes; 2)Almont Climb, 10 minutes, 400 vertical; 3)Flat Top climb, 10 minutes; 1,000 vertical; 4)Flats on Hwy 50, 15 minutes; HR's 165-175 throughout. 4,200 total vertical. 3.5 hours. Kind of blown at the end.

That was a hard day of intervals for me.

Again, there are no right or wrong answers about what you should include in your training log, this is purely up to you and/or your coach if you have one.

## **GENERAL TRAINING IDEAS TO CONSIDER**

### **Being a Well-Rounded Rider**

When I talk about working to be a well-rounded rider, I mean regularly hitting, as much as you can based on where you live, as many of the various types or riding that you can. I don't ever want to come across a type of riding that I'm not prepared for. Also, the LT100 throws just about every type of riding imaginable at you so you better be prepared and confident on it all. Anyone who thinks the LT100 is only about the big named climbs, like Columbine and Powerline, is missing the boat.

**Types of Riding** to work to hit regularly:\*

- Flats (road bike or mountain bike or road on your mountain bike)
- Extended climbs (road bike or mountain bike or road on your mountain bike)
- Short, punchy climbs (road or mountain or road on your mountain bike)
- Steep, technical climbs (mountain bike)
- Steep, non technical climbs (road or mountain bike)
- Mountain biking that is constantly demanding with lots of short climbs and descents.
- Demanding mountain biking with long climbs and long descents.
- Hiking with or pushing your bike up steep hills while mountain biking.
- Purposefully working on descending skills using shuttles or lift accessed riding at a bike park. Rack up the vertical. Get some instruction.

\* The exception to this, and this is my preference, is to focus on building a strong base in the early season (winter into May) by focusing mainly on road riding or less demanding mountain biking. For me, this period starts with lots of flat riding and I slowly but steadily increase my climbing. The intensity ramps up along the way, too. Also, I'll end up doing some racing in the early season but these are very much stretch goals and I don't do much to specifically prepare for them. I don't sweat the little anomalies that crop up on the schedule now and then. Once I get into May, I'm pretty much able to get after it and ride all kinds of terrain aggressively.

If you regularly hit on all of these areas, in the words of Phil Liggett, "He's (she's) a very good bike rider." If you have been working on all of these, nothing a racecourse or ride throws at you should be a surprise.

### **Ramping**

Ramping means avoiding drastic increases in anything that you do. Ease into everything, starting with less and gradually increasing what you do. This simply makes sense and it also addresses injury and illness prevention. Don't roll off the couch and ride 15 hours your first week. Don't try to build power by pushing big gears or begin doing intervals early in the season when you don't have the miles in your legs. Ramp up to harder, longer, more intense efforts over time. Carefully build these ramps into your training plan.

### **Leg Speed and Power**

As a cyclist, I'm striving to develop leg speed and power. The fastest riders are the ones with good leg speed and good power. Spinning a bigger gear is the goal. I work on leg speed and power separately but certainly they are combined much of the time.

**Leg Speed** can be simply defined as higher RPM's while pedaling. To know your RPM's you either need a cadence monitor or you need to count and time your pedal revolutions. Count them for 15 seconds and multiply by 4. Solid leg speed to me is between 90 and 100 RPM's, To achieve good leg speed, you'll need to be in an easier gear and focus on being smooth and not bouncing in the saddle or being jerky. For that reason, if you're new to this, I suggest you start your leg speed work around 85 RPM's and slowly work up toward 95 RPM's. 100 RPM's is pretty fast and pedaling there (or at any leg speed, really) with poor technique or for too long could result in injury. If you are doing short, intense efforts, you will likely get close to or pass 100 RPM's but only briefly and there is great training benefit in these efforts.

I work on leg speed as soon as I begin riding in the spring. I believe that leg speed is the foundation that solid fitness is built on.

**Power** is the ability to effectively turn over a big gear resulting in more forward movement per pedal stroke. I work on increasing my power by mashing big gears riding while seated at a low cadence: 50 to 70 RPM's. I'll do this on flats and on hills. As with leg speed, you have to be careful training with this kind of pedaling. Ease into (ramping) this and know that it puts a lot of stress on your joints, muscles, everything.

I don't begin working on power riding at all until I have a very solid base of riding and good leg speed and I'll start by working on power riding sparingly, building up over time to more duration. This is important: I'll almost always ride with good leg speed. I train sparingly by mashing big gears at a low cadence.

### **Taking Breaks**

Take at least one day per week totally off or easy. Take a break of 3-4 days in a row off or easy, or have an easy week, every four to six weeks to ensure that you don't spiral into a black hole of overtraining. This applies to the entire season. Also, there will be occasional blocks of 3-4 days in a row of inactivity due to work, travel, illness, something. You cannot control these so don't worry about them. Get back to training as you can. Life usually throws us curveballs. It's when things are going really smoothly that we should start to get concerned!

### **Race Week Structure**

I suggest having a race week structure that you develop and stick to for your main events, like the LT100. This structure isn't critical for races that aren't as important to you or that you might be training through, but you can use smaller races to test what you intend to do for Leadville. My typical race week structure looks like this



(assuming a Saturday race like the LT100):

**Monday:** Off or easy

**Tuesday:** Intensity. 20-40's, intervals.

**Wednesday:** An endurance ride. Longish but nothing really hard.

**Thursday:** Easy or off

**Friday:** Bringing it back on. I'll do a solid ride with a few efforts to open up my body. I need to get after it some the day before a race to open up my body. Everyone needs to find their ideal formula.

**Saturday:** Race!

### **Flexibility in Your Plan**

There is no one workout that has to be accomplished on a specific day or in a specific sequence. Any workout can be shortened, lengthened, changed, dropped, moved to a different day or week, etc. What does have to happen, however, is the bike riding. If you planned to ride 80 hours in the 8-weeks leading up to the LT100 (an average of 10 hours a week), but you actually only rode 40, that's not what we're after. Within the planned 80 hours, though, I don't worry about circumstances that force you to switch workouts, durations, rest days, etc., around. If you accomplished, one way or another, most of the elements you set out to, regardless of the sequence (life happens all the time, right?), you should start the LT100 with confidence. What this speaks to more than anything is attitude, confidence and effort. Have a good attitude regardless of what is happening in your world, especially circumstances beyond your control. Be confident and give 100% to your training, meaning: get your butt out the door and ride! Get your time in on the bike. even if it means getting up early.

### **Peaking and Tapering**

This is tricky terrain and there are a variety of opinions out there about peaking and tapering. All I can offer you here is my experience. But I do recommend googling: *peaking and tapering for mountain biking*. This is a complex topic and there's a ton of information out there on it.

I did a peaking cycle for the LT100 from 2007 to 2010 and it was basically the same each time. I do not taper for the LT100 or any race for that matter. I'm not saying it's wrong to taper, I just have never done it. I have always had my best races when I was training fairly hard the week of the race as well as the weeks leading up to the race.

Here's a composite look at what my final two weeks of training before the LT100, including my peaking cycle, looked like from 2007 to 2010:

**Sunday:** Easy/off

**Monday:** Easy/off

**Tuesday:** 3 hours of easy, mostly flat mountain biking.

#### **Peaking Cycle - 4 days**

**Wednesday:** Peak Day 1: 1 set of 4, 20-40's to start and then a long MTB ride with lots of climbing. Riding all of the climbs hard with low cadence focusing on power. This is a hard ride. 5,000 to 7,000 vertical.

**Thursday:** Peak Day 2: Long road or mountain bike ride with hard efforts on the hills: 1 rep 2.5 minutes spinning 95rpm's. 2 reps 5 minutes, one spinning at 95rpm's the next mashing with low cadence focusing on power. 1 rep 8 minutes hard, default cadence. 3-4 hours, 4,000 to 5,000 vertical.

**Friday:** Peak Day 3: Short low cadence power efforts and some pushing up steep hills (off the bike.) Hard. Mountain bike. 1.5 to 2 hours.

**Saturday:** Peak Day 4 (last day): Endurance pace road ride. Road bike or MTB with slicks. 4,000 to 6,000 vertical. Typical cadence: 90-95 rpm's. 3.5 to 5 hours.

**Sunday:** Easy/off

**Monday:** Easy/off

**Tuesday:** 2 sets of 4, 20-40's. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, I did the exact same ride, climbing the Crested Butte ski area to do these. The ride climbs over 2,000 vertical and takes an hour and a half.

**Wednesday:** An endurance ride. Longish but nothing really hard. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, this ride was off-road (testing my race bike), was four hours plus and climbed 5000-6000 vertical.

**Thursday:** Easy or off

**Friday:** Bringing it back on. I would always ride the course, St Kevins through the Powerlines descent, with my brother, shortcutting back to our start (the large parking lot by the railroad tracks near the start of the St Kevin's dirt road) via the golf course and paved county roads. We would ride this very easy and it usually took about 2.5 hours.

**Saturday:** LT100 Race!

If you have a coach, he or she can help you with peaking and tapering. If you are self-coached, you can read as much as you can and come up with a plan based on all

that you have read. I like the idea of a block or hard training that ends a week before the race. It would be easy enough to then taper from that point as opposed to picking up hard training again. Also, you could position the hard block of training further out from the LT100, shorten it, make it one day on, one day off, etc.

## MY WORKOUTS

Get 10 different sets of workouts from 10 different trainers and, chances are, you'll have ten different sets of workouts! I have my staples and these are all I have to offer you. These have been accumulated over the years and originate from a variety of sources. I often modify them and even come up with variations or completely new ones. I suggest creativity and flexibility for you, too. Again, training is not an exact science and you, too, can easily create effective workouts that speak to your training philosophy, riding style, location, etc.

I use these primarily during the 8-week cycle. However, if you know what they will entail, you can be hinting at them in your training during the final weeks of the 12-week period.

**Just Ride (JR)** - To be concise and fit into training logs, many workouts end up being denoted by acronyms. A JR ride in my world means I'm not out to do anything specific: "Just Ride." I don't hammer the whole thing; I'm not going easy, I'm just riding at whatever my default pace of the day happens to be, sometimes easier, sometimes harder but no specific workouts or efforts. Not much science to it but some days you just want to ride. The main difference between JR and END is that JR can be short (or long) and also END rides always feel like you have a cap on riding hard that I don't have with JR. I can just relax and ride at whatever pace feels good. It is what it is.

**When to use JR:** I use this type of ride more than any other. I use it on the road or off-road and focus on mixing it up so that I'm hitting on as many of the **Types of Riding** to work to hit regularly as mentioned above. This is the critical aspect of your riding especially as the season progresses. I don't track HR on these rides but almost always track and record vertical feet of climbing. I use JR year round.

**Endurance (END)** - Endurance rides are typically long, JR rides where you're looking to go easier rather than harder. However, this is easier said than done on a mountain bike or on steep hills on a road bike. For that reason, I don't get overly concerned by some portions of endurance rides being more taxing. How can they not be? Think about riding Columbine or Powerlines on the LT100 course. How are you going to get up that and keep your HR down. It's not going to happen. Just ride it. I peg endurance rides at 3 hours and longer. As you may have noticed by some of



the other workouts, endurance rides are not the only way to build endurance.

**When to use END:** Obviously, the lines between JR and END are somewhat blurred and you could make an argument that in many situation they are the same. I won't argue with that but I still use the different descriptions. I will do END rides most of the year. Short ones in the first part of the year, perhaps.

**Pushing Your Bike** - This is a staple workout or perhaps more accurately, an *element* of my training for years. Races often have sections that are more quickly and efficiently covered on foot and the LT100 has this in spades for most riders. To be good at Leadville, I highly recommend being practiced at pushing your bike up steep, nasty hills. This is easily accomplished in training by.....pushing your bike up steep, nasty hills. You might feel silly doing this but I'll guarantee it will pay big dividends in the race. Make sure you are hitting on this at least once a week and even a bit more won't hurt. Pushing your bike up steep, nasty hills makes you strong like bull.

**When to use Pushing Your Bike** - You can use this anytime as it's no more than hiking, really. In season, I like to do it at least once or twice a week and it's as simple as finding that steep hill and pushing your bike up it. There is a fitness benefit to this for sure.

**Phosphate Sprints (PHOS)** - Phosphate sprints are 10 seconds as hard as you can go with three minutes of rest in between. I generally do them on a road bike on the flats but you can do them on any bike. I use this workout as a cursory fitness/fatigue gauge. What I hope to see out of my heart rate is a good spike and quick return to a lower level. If I'm not well recovered, my heart rate won't go as high and also won't come back down as quickly. I'll work up to where I'm doing 8 reps but likely never more than that. I'll do them once a week. They are good for race day warm-ups, too, as they get you going but at just ten seconds, they're not too taxing. This workout is from one of my past trainers, Dave Smith, from the UK. If you haven't done these or something similar before, I suggest starting with four reps and working up to as many as 8 or perhaps 10 if you have a tendency to like to overdo things. Also, I alternate between seated and standing for these.

**When to use PHOS** - I'll start to hint at these in April and do my first full-blown set of 6 or 8 in early June. In 2008, I worked these into my training 7 out of 10 weeks leading up to the LT100. I will never do PHOS more than once a week. I like to combine PHOS with other workouts, too, see below.

**Aerobic Capacity (AC)** - This is a workout from my year training under Dave Smith

from the UK. I believe most trainers consider this a zone 3 workout: not overly hard but certainly not easy either. Your challenge here will be to find your target heart rate zone as this workout lends itself really well to using a heart rate monitor. For me, AC is around 150. Again, the line between AC, END and JR can become blurred. I like to use AC almost exclusively for riding the flats (or it's a great if not mind-numbing ride on a stationary trainer) and will do durations of between 30 minutes and 3 hours, the latter, which is absolute torture. I also have developed a variation of this workout that I used consistently but sparingly (3 or 4 times max) for LT100 training. If you're interested, you can find a link to it [HERE](#). Caution: It's kind of weird.

**When to use AC** - AC can be used as soon as you feel like your legs are pretty solid. You can also adjust the HR that you ride AC at earlier in the season to make it a bit easier. Then as the season wears on, you can bring it up those few beats that you may have dropped it.

**20-40's** - 20-40's have been a staple workout of mine since 1990 when I lifted them out of a magazine from an article called "Ned Overend's Training Tips." They're easy, hard, short and an extremely effective workout. Here's how I do them:

Find a consistent climb of at least 4 minutes. I like it much longer if possible but you really only need about 4 minutes of climbing to complete a set of 4. Start your watch and sprint your guts out as hard as you can for 20 seconds. Recover for 40 seconds. Yes, you are still climbing.

Repeat at one minute on your watch, two minutes and at three minutes. Bam! One set of four done. I start standing and stay standing, until about 15 seconds on the first and third, while the second and fourth are done entirely in the saddle. I'll do them on my road bike or my mountain bike and I like to do two sets of four, no more and if I do more an additional set, I'll recover for at least 10 minutes before the second set.

My favorite place to do these is on a hill that is long enough so that I can get two sets in. That means I need some lower hill to warm up on; about 4 minutes for set number 1; 10-minutes of recovery (Kind of. You're still climbing the hill); another 4-minutes for set number 2; and hopefully some more hill yet for recovery climbing.

You can do these on the flats although I would only do that if I didn't have a hill. I think the benefit of 20-40's is that they teach your body to recover while you are climbing. Ease into these. I'll do 15-45's early in the season and/or do them at 85% instead of 100%. Our goal is to ramp up to really getting after these during the middle to later weeks of the final 8-week cycle.

I will never do 20-40's more than once a week. See below about combining workouts. 20-40's lend themselves well to this.

**Intervals (INTS)** - I learned to do intervals from an old book, Greg Lemond's Complete Book of Cycling. The basics I still follow today are that I go as hard as I can, given the duration of the interval that I set out to do. For example, I can and will go a lot harder for 1 minute than I will if I'm doing an 8, 10, or 15-minute interval. In my opinion, this is the simplest way to do intervals and a good introduction. For simplicity, I'm calling all efforts, from 1 minute up to 20 minutes or more, intervals or INT. Trainers, however, will break these down, using different names for efforts of varying duration, as different durations work different physiological systems. This level of detail is beyond the scope of this plan but if this interests you, do some research. There's a ton of information out there these days.

The INT effort is much harder than I'll ever go in a race like the Leadville 100. Also, I'll focus on the quality of these efforts rather than quantity. Additionally, as a rule of thumb, I'll recover for at least three times the duration of the previous effort before beginning the next one. As an in season pro, my total interval time during a workout rarely exceeded 40 minutes, and often was in the 10 to 20 minute range. Short intervals are hard and don't add up quickly but are very effective. Here are examples of various interval days pulled from my training logs (each bullet point is a separate day of training):

- 2 reps of 3 minutes and 1 rep of 5 minutes
- 2 reps of 3 minutes; 2 reps of 5 minutes; and 1 rep of 8 minutes.
- 1 rep of 1 minute; 2 reps of 2 minutes; and 1 rep of 4 minutes.
- 1 rep of 5 minutes; 2 reps of 10 minutes; and 1 rep of 15 minutes.

So you can see that these can be done in all kinds of ways. Since I ride pretty hard by feel a lot anyway, I don't do a ton of these workouts each season and never more than one session per week. I would only do 4 or 5 total workouts like these during the course of a season and they all took place in June, July and Early August, with an eye on Leadville fitness.

I'm an advocate of being cautious with these kinds of efforts. When in doubt, do less!

**Hard (HARD)** - This is a simple but effective workout and I got it from one of the original Euro mountain bikers, Gerhard Zadrobilek, back in the early '90s. Gerhard rode for 7-11 on the road back in the day and was a Red Bull rider as he finished his career back then in the dirt. In 1991, Red Bull was, ironically, an obscure energizing

drink out of Austria.

We'd ask Gerhard what he did for training that day and he would always reply, "Four hours hard." And, it's just what it sounds like: riding for four hours hard. Road, mountain, both, it doesn't matter.

However, to be practical, the duration needs to be fluid. So, you can do 30 minutes hard, 1.5 hours hard, 3 hours hard, whatever. This could depend on where you are in your season or how much time you have for a workout. You could be fit and primed in July and go out and do "1.5 hours hard on the mountain bike" and it can be a very effective workout.

Some trainers might call this workout a race simulation and certainly it can be. But you can also ride even harder than race pace and just see what happens. I think there is great training benefit in riding at a pace you might never attempt to hold in a race.

**Power (POWER)** - This might be my most inexact but powerful (no pun intended!) workout. I stumbled across it in 1993 and have been using it ever since as an important part of my peaking cycle.

As I mentioned above, I have never used a power meter so I can't speak to how that would assist with this workout. What I realized over 20 years ago was that if I rode in a ridiculous gear at 50-70 RPM's (primarily up hills but this works great for riding the flats, too) during training, a week or so later I was often very strong. Of course, this is speculation and certainly there are and were other factors at work but I still have used this sort of training as part of what has produced some pretty good fitness for me over the years.

I will caution you to ease into this sort of riding, ramping up slowly how much time you spend riding this way. While I've never had an issue, I think this could easily cause joint irritation and injury. NOTE: I have never attempted this type of workout until I had a very solid base of riding in my legs. And even then, I will just sprinkle short but increasing efforts of POWER riding into my training beginning in mid to late May. During a peaking cycle ride, however, I would approach all of the climbs using this pedaling technique, which equated to rides of 4,000 to 6,000 vertical and climbing times of 3-4 hours.

Again, please be cautious with this type of training.

### Combining Workouts

I'm a big fan of combining these workout elements. I like to start workouts with a set of 20-40's sometimes and I might even throw another set in at the end. Sometimes, I'll drop some AC within a ride or in combination with another workout. It's a great way to ride the flat approaches to some great mountain biking. Some AC as an approach to some trails, bust out some singletrack and more of the same on your way home. Combining workouts leads to more interesting training and I've always been happy with the results. Be creative.

### Weight Training

This is very simple and, like the rest of the elements in this plan, you'll need to make the weight training call yourself. Here's my take: I regularly lifted weights for all of my LT100's beginning in 2007. I did this to combat cramping and, unless there was something else at work, it worked. I didn't cramp at all during those years but did have some issues with cramping in 2006 and prior.

Many weight training plans for cycling use weightlifting as an out of season strength builder. I don't dispute this but I do feel like you begin losing the benefits once you stop. Right or wrong, I only lifted for about 4-6 weeks prior to the race, my last day in the weight room being early the week of the race. I tried to get into the weight room 3 times per week but it never really worked out consistently. My average was 2.5 days per week.

My routine was always the same and I used my *ramping* principle and started really easy and even then, never got to where I was being at all impressive in the amount of weight I was lifting. I also never changed up my routine and stopped lifting as soon as the LT100 was behind me for the year. Here's my routine:

3 sets of 15 reps with no rest between. I just walk from an upper body station to a lower body station. Abs and back extensions were in the mix, too. The routine took exactly one hour and I was never sitting around so there was a bit of an additional element there. I would do the following exercises:

- Squats
- Bench Press
- Lunges
- Ab work (higher reps)
- Back and side extensions (higher reps)
- Bent over rowing
- Military press
- Leg extensions
- Lats



Ham curls  
Triceps extensions  
Cable pulls (arms)  
Abductors and adductors on the hip machine  
Leg press  
Calves (higher reps)

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Hopefully, you're beginning to see that this whole training game is fairly inexact and training can be sequenced and assembled in infinitely different ways. But instead of being overwhelmed by it, I suggest educating yourself enough so that you can pick workout and place them into a calendar and execute what you have laid out, all the while not being afraid to make adjustments as you go.

Enjoy and good luck in the LT100!

*Dave Wiens*



### Sample Weekly Hours, Intensity and Focus for the Period - April into June

Week Of	Weekly Hours	Intensity (1 to 10)	Elements/Focus	Events You May Consider
28-Mar	4 to 8 easy	1 to 3	Recovery	
4-Apr	4 to 8	2 to 4	Establish solid and varied riding base focusing on leg speed.	Austin Rattler 100k Austin, Texas
11-Apr	5 to 10	3 to 5		
18-Apr	6 to 12	4 to 6		
25-Apr	4 to 8 easy	1 to 3		
2-May	5 to 10	3 to 5	Establish solid and varied riding base and begin to gently add workout elements: PHOS, 20-40's, AC, INTS, END and POWER	
9-May	6 to 12	4 to 6		
16-May	8 to 14	5 to 7		
23-May	4 to 8 easy	1 to 3		
30-May	6 to 12	4 to 6	Establish solid and varied riding base and continue and increase workout elements: PHOS, 20-40's, AC, INTS, END and POWER.	Wilmington Whiteface 100k Lake Placid, New York
6-Jun	8 to 14	5 to 7		
13-Jun	10 to 16	6 to 8		

### Sample Weekly Hours, Intensity and Focus for the Period - Late June to LT100

20-Jun	4 to 8 easy	1 to 3	Recovery	
27-Jun	8 to 15	6 to 8	No holds barred riding. PHOS, 20-40's, AC, INTS, END and POWER once per week. Remember, quality over quantity.	Leadville Camp of Champions #1
4-Jul	10 to 15	7 to 9		Leadville Camp of Champions #2 and/or the Silver Rush 50
11-Jul	10 to 15	7 to 9		Tahoe Trail 100k Lake Tahoe, California
18-Jul	4 to 8 easy	1 to 3		
25-Jul	10 to 17	7 to 9	Use everything you have learned to design your training for this final run to the LT100. This is where you could choose to use a peaking cycle and a taper. You certainly don't have to.	Leadville Stage Race
1-Aug	10 to 17	6 to 10**		
8-Aug	4 to 10*	4 to 9		

\* Doesn't include the LT100      \*\* My peaking week

NOTE: The **Weekly Hours** and **Intensity** that I would put in are the figures on the right or higher figures. Certainly, there are riders who will put in more hours. These numbers are similar to what I put in for preparation from 2007 to 2010.

NOTE: The **Intensity** figure is an average that is applied to the week's training. It's obviously a subjective estimate, but generally describes how hard you do some, but not all, of your rides.

NOTE: I have been purposefully cautious with the **Recovery** weeks in this outline. You need to determine how often and where you will insert a **Recovery** week into your training plan.

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