



**STANDING
together**
against domestic violence

Completing the 112 **Guidance to the novice rider from a nearly novice rider**

Dear 112 rider,

I am writing to thank you for taking part in the 112 and to offer you the opportunity to learn from my experiences over the last few years. I learnt the hard way and I hope this may save you some discomfort!

In 2009, as a complete novice, I rode 60 miles and in 2010 I completed the full (old) distance of 112 miles. The 112km (70 miles) may seem a long way but I can assure you it is achievable as evidenced by so many riders who completed the distance in 2011. The following is guidance, not direction, and can be freely ignored. It has worked for me as I have tried to become more competent as a cyclist and I will be following my own advice in the certain knowledge that this will allow me to complete the 70 miles as if I were entering this event for the first time.

This guidance is not intended for those impressive athletes who are already confident and fit cyclists.

Cycling

- Your bike should have been recently serviced (especially brakes, gears, chain) with well pumped up tyres
- You do not need an expensive model but it does make it easier especially if a little lighter.....
- Carry a pump, 2 x spare inner tubes (in 2011 there were more punctures than could be believed), puncture repair kit and tyre levers to allow a change of tube
- If you fall off a helmet will protect your head – it really must be better to wear one
- Wear padded shorts – for reasons that are too painful to explain
- The saddle you use is crucial. If the pain does not get better after a good few long distance rides it may be best to invest in a new one.
- **Whilst 112km sounds a long way it is doable**
- The trick is to pace yourself and not try to beat any estimated time
- Don't start off too fast; build up speed as the miles unfold (or stay slow) but:
 - Do not ride at a pace which makes you constantly breathless (I exclude hills from this)
 - Pedal faster rather than harder – it is easier to pedal for longer in a lower gear than use enormous effort just to turn the pedals. (For the techies a cadence rate of about 80 is considered about right. This will seem fast at first...)
 - When riding up hills just get in the lowest gear and go slowly until you know you can go faster in a higher gear
 - Or walk up them if this is the only way – there is no shame in that. There are hills on the 112 route that certainly justify walking.

Training

- I suspect that a reasonably fit person could ride this distance without too much training. This is a risk though and would lead to much discomfort (muscles/bottom etc.) over the following days. It is definitely much better to train.
- One blog reckoned that if a novice cyclist rode 70 miles during each week over a number of different journeys for 6 weeks they could then do the whole distance in one day easily.

- The trick may be initially to select a short, flat route of about 10-15 miles and then see how easy it is!
- Then try to ride some distance at least twice a week. I normally ride to work (30 miles round trip) and a ride over the weekend also of 30 miles.
- Do not be daunted by these distances. If approached correctly they will seem easier and you should build up to the 30+ rides.
- A ride with a tea/cake stop at two thirds distance is one of life's pleasures; no guilt because of the exercise and a good break works wonders for the muscles.
- Last year one expert suggested that a good test for a long ride was to cycle without stopping for as long as possible (i.e. over two hours) and this would help the preparation

Nutrition

- Taking on nutrition before and during the ride is **CRUCIAL**.
- I suggest you look at websites and blogs that discuss these issues and take your choice. Googling "cycling and best nutrition" will give you enough info.
- Unfortunately it is not uncommon for riders to suffer from gastric distress so getting one's stomach used to specific foods and drinks is very important.
- Often riders do not feel hungry on a ride but it is important to take on food/liquid regularly
- For this ride I will be:
 - Eating pasta the evening before the ride
 - Having muesli/porridge and water the morning of the ride
 - Drinking an energy gel (a sachet which you get from cycle shops) every 15 miles
 - Or have a fruit bar instead
 - Trying to drink a litre of water every 20 miles (preferably with some form of powder which replaces the nutrients you have lost through sweating – also from bike shops)
 - (Two water carriers on your bike allows you to carry two containers of water)
 - (But this does lead to pee stops on a regular basis so bear this in mind when getting dressed)
 - Taking on the appropriate refreshments at the 2 check points (some of either fruit/pasta/cake/water will be made available at these)
- Also it may sound obvious but you will sweat and this may not be noticeable because of the wind drying it off. Sweating leads to dehydration – hence the need to drink!
- There appears to be some disagreement about carb loading. Personally I find this works for me and a cycling magazine reckoned an average of 60g of carbs per hour. You need to experiment but on one long ride I did (50 miles) my limited intake of nutrition led to a bit of light headedness.

So to summarise:


- Cycle – regularly and enjoy it
- Train – without panicking and enjoy it
- Eat – enough to provide the energy which allows you to enjoy it.

So basically – enjoy it.

Very best wishes

Anthony Wills
Standing Together

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