

TIMBER TRAIL TRAINING PROGRAMME



This programme has been designed for the recreational rider with the goal of cycling the Timber Trail over two days. By the end of this programme you will have increased fitness and the confidence to help you to tackle your adventure.

BEFORE YOU START

Bike & helmet checks

A good working bike and a well-fitting helmet will make all the difference to your riding.

Is your bike comfortable to ride? You will be on the Timber Trail for several hours both days. Being comfortable will help make your experience a great one. Over the next few weeks, you will have the chance to adjust your bike if issues arise. Your local bike shop may offer a bike-fit check, or you could contact a local coach who offers this service.

Complete a bike check (see link below for guidance).

<https://www.bikeready.govt.nz/adults/tips-for-everyday-bike-riding-beginners-to-advanced/how-to-check-your-bike/>

Does your helmet fit you correctly? Check it for cracks and frayed straps.

Health check

If you have not participated in a training plan or regular exercise recently, it is recommended you visit your doctor for a health check.

Recording your rides

Download a cycling App onto your phone (e.g. Strava, Relive, MapMyRide) to record all your rides. It keeps you honest with your training, and is a great way to see how far you have come, and to record your Timber Trail experience.

This article rates the best cycling apps:

<https://www.bikeradar.com/advice/buyers-guides/best-cycling-apps/>

Bike skills

This programme presumes you can balance on a bike, ride forwards, around corners, up and down a hill, and brake with control. Having ridden on easy mountain bike trails or gravel roads is an advantage.

Getting the most out of your training plan

Make this plan work for you by adjusting the training days to suit your weekly routine. The last thing you want to do is schedule your training rides on days you are getting home late or are rushing about. Consider when you will be riding the trail and count back eight weeks. This way you know when to kick-start your training using this programme.

Booking your trip

If you haven't already, get online and book your Timber Trail trip. Consider riding the trail when operators are less busy such as midweek, Friday/Saturday or Sunday/Monday.

The Timber Trail's *Plan Your Trip* section on the New Zealand Cycle Trail website will help you organise your adventure: <https://nzcycletrail.com/find-your-ride/22-great-rides/timber-trail/>

Check out this link for a list of Timber Trail services too:

<https://www.timbertrail.co.nz/shop/>

Disclaimer & safety

This is a self-directed programme. Should injury occur as a direct result, you are to seek medical assistance immediately. You are 100% responsible for your own health and wellbeing.

Obey all road rules and make sure you can be seen by other road and trail users. Here's a short blog on *Biking Etiquette*: <https://nzcycletrail.com/need-to-know/biking-etiquette/>

And one on *Riding Safely*: <https://nzcycletrail.com/need-to-know/riding-safely/>

This is also a useful short clip on being visible on your bike: <https://youtu.be/6Z-CDydNHh0>

Most importantly don't forget to SMILE and enjoy yourself, this is meant to be FUN!

This programme has been created by Cycle Coach Janet Stark www.cyclecoach.co.nz. If you require extra assistance with coaching or have a question please contact me directly.

BIKE GEAR

Bike gloves

Gloves protect your hands from sun, cold and branches/bushes. It is highly recommended you have a pair for the Timber Trail. On a cold day your hands will cool down quickly especially when riding downhill. In the summer months your hands can get sweaty causing them to slip on the grips. Full-finger, fingerless and waterproof gloves are all acceptable.

Padded cycle pants

These come in three different styles – Lycra with padding (body hugging), shorts with attached padding, or shorts with separate padded liner. Find the style that works for you. I find shorts with attached padding can move forward while riding and aren't as cushioning.

Raincoat

A waterproof jacket that fits well is a must when riding the Timber Trail. If too long the jacket can get caught up on your bike seat when getting on or off the bike or catch on your back wheel.

Day bag

You will need to carry your day items for your trip. If your bag is not comfortable, i.e. straps digging in or moving around, it will start annoying you not many kilometres in. On your endurance training rides take your bag with you and adjust if needed. I like a bag with straps that clip around your chest and hips as it feels very secure on the back.

Shoes

Having the right combination of shoe and pedal can make all the difference in trusting your ability not to slip when the trail gets a little rough. Try out different shoes to see which combination works the best for you. If you are still having issues you may need to look at replacing your pedals with a wider platform or purchasing mountain bike shoes.

Water

Take sufficient water on your ride. Practise taking your drink bottle out of the holder while biking, having a drink and then putting it back in the bottle cage without stopping. If you have a hydration backpack, consider putting less water in your bladder and using it in conjunction with a bottle on the bike. This will make your bag lighter and more comfortable.

Layered clothing

Weather on the Timber Trail can change rapidly and it's important to have the right clothing. Layering works well under your raincoat especially if there is a cold wind or it's raining. Bulky clothes are harder to carry and less likely to fit well under a jacket.

Check out the *What to pack* blog on the NZCT website for some useful tips:

<https://nzcycletrail.com/need-to-know/what-to-pack/>.

WEEK ONE

Book your training rides into your calendar in advance so you do not get side-tracked and run out of time during the week. Missing the odd day is okay but the idea of this programme is to ride regularly.

Coaching Tip #1 – Stretching

Look after your body by setting aside time to stretch, especially if you spend a lot of time sitting at a desk or in front of a computer. This will add value to your training, increasing your comfort and performance on the bike. You can achieve this at yoga, pilates or a stretching class, with many free options available online that can be done at home.

This week's training

Explore your local neighbourhood finding the hills, pathways, trails, and quiet roads that you feel comfortable riding on.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>Ride 30 mins</i> Getting started Easy ride close to home		<i>Ride 45 mins</i> Ride to a hill that is achievable Ride up & down it; continue with your ride.		<i>Ride 60 mins</i> Undulating (small hills & flat) Try and ride without stopping	

Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride.

WEEK TWO

Routine is the key to improving your fitness and becoming used to regular exercise. You will find some days harder than others depending on if you have eaten enough, had a good sleep and how busy you have been.

Coaching Tip #2 – Looking

When riding your bike look where you want to go, not where you shouldn't go, i.e. off the edge of the path. Your bike will follow your eyes. Glancing at features along the way is okay, but don't let those eyes linger: bring your focus back to the direction you are heading.

This week's training

Find a Grade 2/Easy off-road trail as part of your weekend ride, and continue to use the local roads and pathways close to home for your weekday rides.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>Ride 30 mins</i> <i>Tempo</i> <i>Workout</i> 5 mins warmup Easy gear Spin the legs 3 mins Harder gear Push the legs 2 mins Repeat x 4 5 mins warm-down		<i>Ride 45 mins</i> <i>Hill Session</i> 5 mins warmup Ride to hill steady pace Up & down the same hill x 2 Continue ride at a steady pace 5 mins warm-down		Ride 75 mins Endurance Ride 5 mins warmup Include a grade 2 trail Ride it at an achievable steady pace Try and ride with no stopping 5 mins warm-down	

Allow yourself to be a beginner. No one starts off being excellent.

WEEK THREE

The Timber Trail has some long hill climbs that seem to take forever. Just think of the sense of achievement of completing them. Your training will help with these climbs.

Coaching Tip #3 – Breathing

When riding keep your airways open allowing your body to get sufficient oxygen. If you find your chin is pointed down lift it up, and if your chest is tucked inwards push your shoulder back and puffing your chest forward.

This week's training

For your endurance ride, pick somewhere you have never biked before. This helps with giving you new experiences and adds to your cycling skill base.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>30 mins Tempo Ride</i>		<i>Ride 45 mins Hill Session</i>		<i>Ride 90 mins Endurance Ride</i>	<i>Ride 30 mins Recovery</i>
	5 mins warmup		5 mins warmup		Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/ off-road	30 mins Flat and easy gearing
	Easy gear Spin the legs 2.5 mins		Ride to hill steady pace		Add in a hill	
	Harder gear Push the legs 2.5 mins Repeat x 4		Up & down the same hill x 3		Ride it at an achievable steady pace	
	5 mins warm-down		Continue to ride at a steady pace		One stop only	
			5 mins warm-down			

To bike, or not to bike: that is not a question.

WEEK FOUR

Active Rest. Do not skip this week as we want to keep the body moving, but not work as hard allowing it to recover and rest.

Coaching Tip #4 – Confidence

Spending time on the bike and gaining experience will help you with trusting your decisions while riding. Here are some tips: ride with people you feel comfortable with; ride behind someone who is more skilled than you following their lines; ride new places and try riding on different surfaces. To take it to the next level, have a coaching session.

Your bike

Think about how your bike has been sounding during your training rides. If you have any concerns that need extra attention head down to your local bike shop.

What to expect on the Timber Trail

Check out the New Zealand Cycle Trail website for details of the Timber Trail and what to expect over your awesome two-day experience. Note trail highlights you may want to stop at, such as the side-trip to Mt Pureora, and how long the ride might take you.

<https://nzcycletrail.com/find-your-ride/22-great-rides/timber-trail/>

This week's training

Stay close to home this week, making everything easy and therefore fitting in around your schedule.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<i>Bike check & clean</i>	<i>30mins Recovery</i> Easy flat ride		<i>30 mins Recovery</i> Undulating Easy ride		<i>45 mins Active Recovery</i> Undulating Just enjoy	

I just need to ride my bike.

WEEK FIVE

You should be starting to notice a difference in your riding ability, confidence and fitness. Pat yourself on the back for doing so well.

Coaching Tip #5 – Braking

Practise braking in different situations. Try squeezing both brakes to stop. When riding down hills use your body to help you stop more effectively by shifting your weight back and pushing your feet into the pedals.

This week's training

Find a hill that you struggle to ride up, i.e. you can only just get up it. Not a short sharp steep one but a longer one that seems to go on forever.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>30 mins Tempo Ride</i>		<i>Ride 45 mins Hill Session</i>		<i>Ride 120 mins Endurance Ride</i>	<i>45 mins Undulating ride (at an easy pace)</i>
	5 mins warmup		5 mins warmup		Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/off road plus 2 hills	
	5 mins Fast pace 5 mins Easy pace Repeat 2 times		Longer hill Up & down the same hill x 1		Ride it at a steady pace	
	5 mins warm-down		Continue to ride at a steady pace		One rest stop only	
			5 mins warm-down			

Life is like riding a bicycle, to stay balanced you must keep moving.

WEEK SIX

This is your biggest training week. Remember it is about spending time on your bike. Congratulate yourself for all your effort so far.

Coaching Tip #6 – Light hands, heavy feet

When riding, practise getting off your seat and pressing your feet into the pedals with your hands in a neutral position, i.e. wrists not bent and no death grip. Change your position by bending your knees, elbows and hips, keeping in mind the ‘light hands, heavy feet’ saying. Practice on different surfaces and see how your bike handles.

This week’s training

Find a place that interests you and finish your ride next to a cafe to reward your efforts.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>30 mins Tempo Ride</i>		<i>Ride 45 mins Hill Session</i>		<i>Ride 140 mins Endurance Ride</i>	<i>60 mins</i>
	5 mins warmup		5 mins warmup		Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/off road plus 2 hills	Include one hill
	7 mins Fast pace		Longer hill Up & down the same hill x 2		Ride it at a steady pace	
	3 mins Easy pace Repeat 2 times		Continue to ride at a steady pace		Two rest stops	
	5 mins warm-down		5 mins warm-down			

Life’s a climb, but the view is great.

WEEK SEVEN

Your training for the Timber Trail Trip is almost complete. Start turning your focus to making sure you have all the necessary gear. It is not too late for a trip to the shops or borrowing items from a friend.

Coaching Tip #7 – Hill climbing

When riding up a hill and you have run out of gears or hit a steep section of trail or your front wheel does not feel very connected to the ground, try shifting your body (bum) slightly forward on the bike seat – it is not a big movement. This will move your legs more directly over the pedals, allowing you to put extra effort into your pedalling. Keep looking ahead and focus on what you are doing.

This week's training

Ride in your favourite locations to keep you motivated this week. You are almost there!

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>30 mins Fast pace or spin class</i>		<i>45 mins Hill</i> Ride your favourite hill that has a great downhill section		<i>60 mins Trails or off road</i> Include hills	<i>30 mins Easy ride</i>

I'm doing this for me.

WEEK EIGHT

Congratulations, it's now time to pack and do your last-minute bits and pieces before heading on your Timber Trail experience. There is so much to love about the trail, which will more than make up for the effort required to complete both days.

Coaching Tip #8 – Getting off your seat

Staying seated for the whole trip and in the same position will make your body tire and become uncomfortable. Make a conscious effort to change your position throughout your ride on the Timber Trail. On slight downward slopes give your body a rest by standing on the pedals in a level position and wiggling your body to ease any stiffness.

Trip task

This week's task is to go through all your gear and clothing making sure you haven't forgotten anything. Taking a few minutes out of your week to check things over will allow you to arrive at the start of the trail relaxed and prepared for your adventure ahead.

Check out the New Zealand Cycle Trail website for more information.

<https://nzcycletrail.com/need-to-know/>

The Mountain Safety Councils *Backcountry Mountain Biking* guide is also a really useful resource for people heading out for two-wheeled wilderness adventures like the Timber Trail:

<https://issuu.com/nzmountainsafetycouncil/docs/170703.msc.com.mountainbike.guide?e=2922887/50795310>

This week's training

You have two very easy sessions on the bike plus two days on the trail. The best week of your training programme is about to begin and end on a total high. Shout out a 'wahoo!' for me on your final descent.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<i>Bike Check</i>	<i>30 mins Easy spin</i>	<i>Pack</i>	<i>30 mins Easy spin</i>	<i>Travel</i>	<i>Timber Trail</i>	<i>Timber Trail</i>

May you have a totally awesome trip soaking up the Timber Trail's goodness. You can share your trail stories & photos here at <https://nzcycletrail.com/your-stories/>.

Why not head back to <https://nzcycletrail.com/find-your-ride/22-great-rides/> and start planning your next cycling holiday? For more wilderness head to the West Coast (<https://nzcycletrail.com/find-your-ride/22-great-rides/west-coast-wilderness-trail/>), or for more gradient aim for the Mountains to Sea (<https://nzcycletrail.com/find-your-ride/22-great-rides/mountains-to-sea/>).

WEEK-BY-WEEK TRAINING SUMMARY

Week 1

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>Ride 30 mins</i> Getting started Easy ride close to home		<i>Ride 45 mins</i> Ride to a hill that is achievable Ride up & down it continue with your ride		<i>Ride 60 mins</i> Undulating (small hills & flat) Try and ride without stopping	

Week 2

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>Ride 30 mins</i> <i>Tempo Workout</i> 5 mins warmup Easy gear Spin the legs 3 mins Harder gear Push the legs 2 mins Repeat x 4 5 mins warm-down		<i>Ride 45 mins</i> <i>Hill Session</i> 5 mins warmup Ride to hill steady pace Up & down the same hill x 2 Continue ride at a steady pace 5 mins warm-down		<i>Ride 75 mins</i> <i>Endurance Ride</i> 5 mins warmup Include a grade 2 trail Ride it at an achievable steady pace Try and ride with no stopping 5 mins warm-down	

Week 3

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<p>30 mins <i>Tempo Ride</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>Easy gear Spin the legs 2.5 mins</p> <p>Harder gear Push the legs 2.5 mins Repeat x 4</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p>Ride 45 mins <i>Hill Session</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>Ride to hill steady pace</p> <p>Up & down the same hill x 3</p> <p>Continue to ride at a steady pace</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p>Ride 90 mins <i>Endurance Ride</i></p> <p>Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/off road</p> <p>Add a hill</p> <p>Ride it at an achievable steady pace</p> <p>One stop only</p>	<p>Ride 30 mins <i>Recovery</i></p> <p>30 mins Flat and easy gearing</p>

Week 4

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<p><i>Bike check & clean</i></p>	<p>30mins <i>Recovery</i></p> <p>Easy flat ride</p>		<p>30 mins <i>Recovery</i></p> <p>Undulating easy ride</p>		<p>45 mins <i>Active Recovery</i></p> <p>Undulating Just enjoy</p>	

Week 5

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<p><i>30 mins Tempo Ride</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>5 mins Fast pace 5 mins</p> <p>Easy pace Repeat 2 times</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p><i>Ride 45 mins Hill Session</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>Longer hill Up & down the same hill x 1</p> <p>Continue to ride at a steady pace</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p><i>Ride 120 mins Endurance Ride</i></p> <p>Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/off road plus 2 hills</p> <p>Ride it at a steady pace</p> <p>One rest stop only</p>	<p><i>45 mins Undulating Ride (at an easy pace)</i></p>

Week 6

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<p><i>30 mins Tempo Ride</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>7 mins Fast pace</p> <p>3 mins Easy pace Repeat X 2</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p><i>Ride 45 mins Hill Session</i></p> <p>5 mins warmup</p> <p>Longer hill Up & down the same hill x 2</p> <p>Continue to ride at a steady pace</p> <p>5 mins warm-down</p>		<p><i>Ride 140 mins Endurance Ride</i></p> <p>Include a grade 2 trail or gravel/off road plus 2 hills</p> <p>Ride it at a steady pace</p> <p>Two rest stops</p>	<p><i>60 mins (include one hill)</i></p>

Week 7

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	<i>30 mins Fast pace or spin class</i>		<i>45 mins Hill</i> Ride your favourite hill that has a great downhill section		<i>60 mins Trails or off- road</i> (Include hills)	<i>30 mins Easy ride</i>

Week 8

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<i>Bike Check</i>	<i>30 mins Easy spin</i>	<i>Pack</i>	<i>30 mins Easy spin</i>	<i>Travel</i>	<i>Timber Trail</i>	<i>Timber Trail</i>

WAHOO!