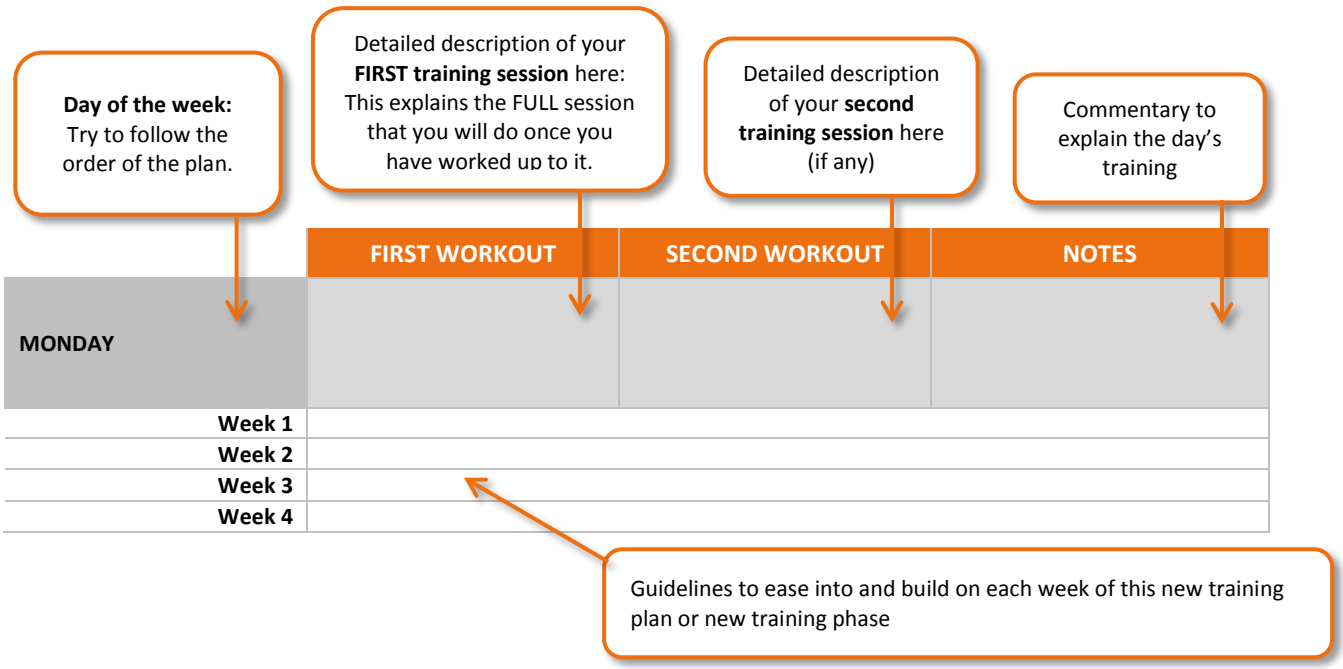
® 2011 ironguides

FAQ
TRAINING GUIDELINES

PLAN STRUCTURE



ABBREVIATION AND DEFINITIONS

Cadence:	number of pedal strokes per leg, per minute, while cycling
Stride Rate:	number of steps per leg, per minute, while running
Stationary	any form of cycling apparatus that is stationary, such as a spin bike
Bike:	or your own bicycle set up on a wind (turbo) trainer
pb:	pull buoy swimming tool.
TT:	Time Trial effort (all out against the clock!)
w/u:	Warm-up.
c/d:	Cool-down.
M:	Meters. as in 100m (one hundred meters).
Min:	Minutes.
seg:	Seconds.

TRAINING PROGRESSION

You'll see that your training plan adjusts moderately from one four-week period to the next, with guidelines for progressing during each four-week phase. This helps you build familiarity with your training structure and sessions and your responses to them, helping you to:

- **Improve motor skills:** By repeating certain specific sessions using widely available equipment, you program sport-specific motion into your muscle memory
- **Train concentration skills:** Repetition encourages you to develop greater levels of focus and concentration that will help you in racing and increase effectiveness of ensuing workouts
- **Develop intuitive understanding:** Develop your ability to literally feel how you are doing on any given day.
- **Better anticipate training:** A predictable, structured routine helps you organize and removes uncertainty from your program.
- **Track performance:** Your training sessions are your benchmarks – until you begin setting new ones at the races!
- **Accurately gauge fatigue:** By comparing your performance across familiar sessions, you can quickly determine if you are truly tired or perhaps fighting illness.
- **Build consistency:** By learning to accurately interpret your body's signals over time you can train more effectively and maintain your training consistency.

WEEKLY ORDER

Try to follow the order of the training sessions as they are set up in your plan. If you miss a workout consider it "lost" and carry on with the training as on your plan.

- Don't try to "plan ahead" and cram multiple days of training sessions into a few days because you know you won't have time later in the week.
- Avoid swapping sessions too often unless it can't be helped. If you're reasonably well rest or recovered and it means the difference between not training or training, then by all means swap the sessions. A rested body will benefit from training more than from not!

I - First Workout
Ideally this is your first workout of the day. If you cannot do this sport at this time of the day, then it's OK to flip the workouts. Remember: Work with what you have – this includes the daily routine available to you. The suggested order is optimal, but not mandatory!

II - Second Workout
Your second workout of the day – see comments above.

TRAINING ON TIRED DAYS

On days you are unsure of how you feel (ie. you wake up or head out the door to train feeling unduly tired) – head out anyway and just go through the motions of training VERY EASY for twenty minutes or so! Then make the decision to train or not using the following guidelines:

- If you feel better, try to do the scheduled session.
- If you feel the same (still tired, but not worse), do an easy session and adjust as indicated below.
- If you feel worse, pack in the session and head home.

ADJUSTING A WORKOUT

If you are feeling tired and have gone out the door to "test drive" your body and you don't feel better, but you don't feel worse – aim to lightly stimulate the System you are meant to train that day.

If for example the session calls for multiple repetitions of a longer duration at a high intensity, instead of stressing your aerobic system keep the intensity somewhat lower, and very short. You could opt to run multiple 20-second repeats instead of a session of 3-minute repeats, for example. This stimulates the fast twitch fibers and keeps that System engaged for the week, without unduly stressing your aerobic system that may be indicating a bit of overload to you.

REST DAYS

Initially your training plan will have scheduled rest days. As you progress into your program, however, you will notice that there are less and less scheduled Rest Days.

Unless otherwise indicated, your rest days are to be taken when you really need them, or if circumstances demand it (such as a travel day, if you or family members are ill, and other life events as they occur).

In this way you ensure more consistency and you rest when your body is really telling you to instead of when the plan says. No matter what anyone tells you, no training plan can predict the many factors in your life. If you really need a rest from training – **take it!**

Likewise, if the plan has a rest day scheduled and you feel good and want to head out for an easy training session – by all means do so! You're getting fitter – **enjoy it!**

IMPORTANT: In the final weeks of your program, however, make sure you follow the plan carefully and take the suggested Rest Days. This ensures you are optimally rested for your Key Race.

TRAINING INTENSITY LEVELS

Training by The Method means your training intensities are structured by how they feel on any given day. However, you need to ensure that you ease into your training plan and that you don't train too hard. Making use of appropriate tools such as heart rate monitors and power meters can be an effective way to confirm your exertion rates – but don't let them override your natural intuition. It takes time and many repetitions of a program to learn your training and recovery limits and requirements.

The Method is based on decades of experience with all calibers of athletes, at the highest level of sport. The Method defines training intensities by how you feel – go ahead and use tools to quantify exertion levels if you mind these helpful.

BUT REMEMBER: The best heart rate monitor or power meter you will ever find is you!

Most athletes take 4-6 weeks to tune into the signals and begin the process of interpreting and understanding their bodies and signals, and in this way avoid falling into the trap of a one-dimensional approach to their training.

The training intensity levels in The Method are simple to understand:

- Easy
- Moderate
- Comfortably / Uncomfortable
- Hard or Fast
- All Out!

EASY

EASY training means a comfortable, conversational pace. In the swim, strive to swim without strain, without tension and without regard for speed or pace. Simple "plunk…plunk…plunk" relaxed strokes. On the bike, keep the route flat, keep your resistance low and your cadence moderate, avoiding high muscle tension by grinding a very low gear or over-working the legs by over-spinning a high gear. On the run, a gentle jog, keeping stride rate up without reverting to a sluggish step. In general, a sustainable, "all day" pace.

MODERATE

A **MODERATE** pace means that you need to start pushing a bit. This is a pace that starts to harness some strength in your swim stroke, your pedal stroke or your stride, but it doesn't feel hard. "Light and snappy" comes to mind, or "an easy lope" when running.

The pace is sustainable for long efforts. In the swim, you swim without pushing your aerobic system to strain. Swim at a pace that is sustainable for what is to you a long effort (for a proficient swimmer this might be an hour, for a new swimmer it might be five minutes) and with attention towards pace, without racing it.

Your breathing should be light enough that you easily recover for another effort within 10 seconds. On the bike, light pedaling at a pace you can sustain for many hours. Muscle tension is moderate and cadence is comfortable - if in a big gear, you are lightly creating higher muscle tension without fighting the gear. In an easy gear, you are pushing some muscle tension at a cadence high enough to stimulate your breathing lightly. On the run, you are "feeling your oats" and stepping out of warm-up pace. You could comfortably run this for several hours.

COMFORTABLY / UNCOMFORTABLE

COMFORTABLY / UNCOMFORTABLE means what it says. The effort does not feel like something you could sustain for very long, and yet training “in the here and now” you can keep at it without seeing the end of the effort. This could be roughly construed as what feels like pace you would race for what you is a long race – regardless of pace.

At the same time, it’s not exactly pain free. You can sustain this pace for the foreseeable time, but your breathing is somewhat labored and conversation is definitely curtailed. You need to focus on the effort and on your form to maximize your pace. You are not pushing a pace where you need to notch it down – yet – nor do you feel like you would want to push it much faster, either.

It doesn't quite hurt, but you can handle it because it's going to end.

HARD OR FAST

This is definitely uncomfortable! Generally you never push this hard except for very short, specific efforts, or occasional longer efforts that are always shorter than race distance or more sustained efforts late in a session when you are too tired to work yourself too hard.

You are going to be breathing hard, and yet there is a little left in the tank so it’s not all out. In the swim, this might mean very short, very snappy efforts with lots of rest with your best possible form. On the bike, you are giving it all you have got under the circumstances: Generally, you'll see this description as "**HARD**" at the end of your long ride. In the run, this pace really hurts but is not all out. There is enough to complete all efforts in the session without "blowing up."

ALL OUT!

This is a "**give it all you got**" effort! Maximal aerobic and muscular effort – override the circuitry that is yelling at you to stop. At the end of an All Out effort you should have nothing left to give.

In the swim, **ALL OUT** means swim as fast as you can for the indicated duration. You pay less attention to form or technique. On the bike, you ride the effort as fast as you can for the duration.

This pace hurts – intentionally. Your legs are at maximum tension, pushing the hardest gear possible for the duration. On the run, you are at maximum effort and you do not want to perform this effort again

ENJOY YOUR TRAINING!

ANY QUESTION or COMMENT?

Drop us an email at info@ironguides.net - we'd love to hear about it!