



NEDBANK TOUR DE TULI TRAINING PREPARATION ESSENTIALS

By: Ryan Hodierne

3 To 2 Months Out

The Right Set-Up

It is essential that your bike is set up correctly for you. Whether you've had the savvy to fine tune it yourself or have gone for the advice of a professional, this process is a crucial one prior to spending long hours in the saddle. There are a few bicycle retailers that offer this service, however there aren't many that are certified fitters. Look out for the following names when it comes to bike fit specialists:

- Ergofit; BG Fit or Retül

Do understand that bike fitting is a process and that alterations made during the fitting are a starting point for the rider to which minor tweaks may be necessary over the weeks that follow. The changes made will require some adaptation, thus patience and an understanding of the process is vital. However the benefits thereafter truly are worth it. With this all in mind, I do feel that if you are already comfortable with your current set-up and have no discomfort or niggles over long durations – don't fix it if it isn't broken.

2 To 1 Months Out

Saddle Time

During multi-stage events or tours such as Tour De Zambezi, it's not necessarily the long days in the saddle that the riders find tough to deal with, but rather the requirement of having to wake up the following morning and after a long day having to do it all over again.

With only a few weeks to go, you should be easing off on the high mileage now. Cramming in higher mileage at this stage will in turn be more detrimental than of benefit. If your body isn't use to long hours in the saddle, you risk the scenario that for every long day you spend in the saddle, you take 4 days to recover - this isn't regarded as constructive training.

Keeping in mind that stage riding involves consecutive days in the saddle, it is a good idea to plan your training, or make longer single rides, into multiple rides. For example, if you are planning a 5 hour ride this coming weekend, aim to get 2 hours in on Saturday afternoon and then back it up with 3 hours on Sunday morning. Or an alternative could be, 3 hours Saturday morning and 2 hours that same afternoon. By breaking the distance or duration into smaller portions, you are giving the body time to rest and recover, as well as get in vital nutrients in preparation for the next bout. This method of training will still yield the benefits required for stage riding.

1 Month Out

Be in your Best Shape on Ride Day

Having taken part in events of all kinds, I always find it shocking to hear of the amount of people who pull out of the event before they even get to the start line. Although the reasons may be a plenty and some unavoidable, I believe there are ways we can better ensure we make it to that start line:

- **Avoid too much too soon/last minute mileage:** The trick here is to consider the timeframe you have for training and plan accordingly. Set small and manageable targets in training and go about them in time.
- **Stick to “tried and tested”:** We often get caught up in conversation or debate with our biker buddies regarding something new they have tried that worked wonders for them... a new training plan, different diet, the “best” energy drink. Being human, curiosity is ingrained in us and we always feel it is worth a try. If we were to consider this a few months out then so be it, however we always feel the urgency to try such things within weeks to go to event day one. Please avoid this at all costs.
- **Be Confident in your Build-Up:** as the big day approaches, so the cold feet set in; we ask ourselves – have I done enough? / is my set-up right? / should I improve my descending skills? We are all guilty of this. These last minute changes or decisions to do more, are most often the cause of injury or render us over trained.




By taking the above mentioned points into account, you could better ensure you line up on the start line come event day feeling prepared and raring to go.

A Few Weeks Out/Just Prior To the Event/During the Event

The Right Spares

Although there are bike mechanics at each camp, I would recommend you try be as self-sufficient with spares as possible. The primary reason for this is that most of us ride different bikes and have varied preferences, thus the spares one carries are often not compatible for the next.

Below are the top spares I suggest you carry with you on route, each day:

ITEM	COMMENT	IMAGE
Tubes x2	Carry at least one with you, can tape it to your seat post	
Multi-Tool with Chain Break	Choose one with the Following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allen key (specific to your bikes components)• Hex Key (Most brake & gear lever components)• Spoke Key	
Tyre Levers	Tubeless tyres aren't easy to lever out so suggest you don't go for the cheap ones	

Tyre Plugs and Patches	Although you have tubeless slime inside your wheel, you may require a plug or two for the bigger cuts; patches can come in handy if the tube goes or if a tyre cut is too big	
Pump/Gas Canister x2	Choose a small pump with double action, although it may cost slightly more, it saves a lot of time; 2 canisters as 1 is never enough and often goes to waste	
Chain Lube	Stick to the same one you have used all along, as mixing lubes often clogs the chain and jockey wheels up	
Chain Quick-Link	Get the right quick-link for the chain you have (9 / 10 speed)	
Rear Drop-Out/Hanger	Without a spare one of these for the best case scenario you will be riding home in a single gear or worst case...pushing – these are also specific to each bike	

Riding Nutrition

Before:

- There is no need to eat more than you usually do, or eat more of one food type in lead up to the day you start.
- Continue as you have done to date. With the increased training load your nutritional intake has certainly increased in any case. When you feel hungry, it is generally an indication to eat.
- Try as best you can to eat well and in moderation.
- The intake of a treat once in a while is not a bad thing at all, however too much of a good thing.

During:

- The nutrition you choose for the time you are on the bike, should be a personal preference and something that you have tried and know works for you.
- Hydration is of utmost importance during stage events. It is a good idea to carry both water and a sports drink for electrolyte replacement in one bottle, and plain water in the other or in the bladder. When you are truly thirsty, all you want is water.
- The tea stops en route are amazing. There is provision made for whatever your hunger requests. The trick is to not over consume on the good stuff on hand.

After:

- Following a bout of exercise or day in the saddle through the rugged bush veld, there is a crucial window period for food intake to maximize recovery. Scientific studies have confirmed that the first window of recovery begins within 30 minutes following prolonged exercise.
- The best nutrients to consume during this 30 minute window period, immediately following prolonged exercise, is a mix of carbohydrates and protein. Within this period one should aim to consume between 100-300 calories. This combination of carbohydrates to protein helps the body re-synthesis muscle glycogen more efficiently than carbohydrates alone.
- **Proper nutrition during the first 30 minute window immediately following exercise is your first step to having a better ride the next day.**

Best of luck for your 2018 Tour De Zambezi preparations. It is the Tour of a lifetime and one that will remain etched in your memory bank as the one to remember. Get fit, keep fit, eat well, stay healthy, RAISE FUNDS for Children in the Wilderness and Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust.

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