

ADV-Rider Fitness Advice

Exclusively created for RawHyde Adventures

by Anton Griessner, former BB champion turned Manager & Adventure Rider, February 2009



The following is basic fitness advice for Adventure Riders. Those of you who want to go beyond these general ideas can download a complete 12-week routine that is available as a PDF file.

Adventure Rider Fitness Skill #1: Leg Strength and Endurance

Strength and endurance in your legs (in particular in your thighs) is key to enjoying adventure riding. If you are riding off-road for a day, you can count on standing and not sitting on your bike for substantial periods of the day. This position becomes particularly exhausting during long downhill stretches that never allow you to rest (and no spot to stop and relax safely ☺).

I always recommend working out with exercises that mimic as close as possible the movement that you will be doing in the sport for what you prepare for. In the case of Adventure Riding nothing comes closer than bicycle riding. In order of effectiveness, I recommend mountain biking, spinning or a stationary (gym) bike (best is a combination of all three).

Mountain biking is truly a beautiful activity and the greatest preparation activity for an Adventurer Rider. Not only will you get a great workout and develop exactly the strength and endurance where you need it (in your thighs) but also your off-road riding skills will be honed at the same time. Breaking, steering, balancing, everything is very close to what you will be doing on your big Enduro bike. Mountain biking will not only make you a more enduring rider it will also make you a better rider.

Most gyms offer “Spinning” classes. Spinning, though it is performed on a stationary bike, will help you develop extraordinary strength and endurance in your legs. Additionally spinning has the advantage that it is done in a group. This will help you stay motivated, while pushing your limits and having lots of fun doing it.

A stationary bike is another option. Two to three workouts for 20-40 minutes a week would be optimal to improve your general endurance fitness level. Use the programs that come with most bikes. These programs will keep you interested in doing it and will give you feedback about your progress.

A combination of three options might be best: try to get on the mountain bike once a week and add 1-3 gym workouts (spinning and/or stationary bike) to this and you will be, literally, in great shape. Furthermore you could also perform strength exercises for your legs (see extended program for more details).

Adventure Rider Fitness Skill #2: Lower Back and Abs Strength

This is another Adventure Rider reality: lifting up the lbs. 500 plus bike after a fall. It is just the nature of the beast that all Adventure Riders become very skilled in (just watch the Long Way Round/Down series ☺).

One part of the equation of doing this right is the right technique; something Jim and his team at Rawhyde will take care about. The other part is basic strength in your middle section – this is your lower back AND your abs (ever wondered why a weight lifter uses a belt? It is not for the lower back but for supporting the abdominal muscles, which in turn support the back!).

Work on your lower back with a mixture of gymnastic and weight exercises (all those can be done at home or in a gym). One example of a gymnastic exercise would be laying down on your back; bend your knees till your ankles touch your bud; now lift off your pelvis till your thighs and upper body are one straight line; now lift one leg and straighten it till it is in the same level with your upper body; after 10 seconds change to the other leg; repeat 5 times before you pause. An example for a strength exercise with weights would be hyperextensions or “dead-lifts” with a barbell. For both of these exercises perfect technique is required in order not to do more harm than good (after all our lower back is a very sensitive area!).

There is an endless supply of abdominal exercises. The classic exercise is crunches. Do as many crunches as you can at least 3 times a week: lay on your back; put your heels on a chair or similar object; now lift/roll your upper body up as far as you can; repeat in slow motion as many times as you can. Gyms provide all sorts of equipment for abs training that provide variety and keep your interest level up.

Adventure Rider Skill #3: Watch What You Eat – Manage Your Bodyweight (on and off the bike ☺)

Nothing impacts performance more negatively than too much weight. Nutrition/dieting is a broad field but sticking to some basic principles is all you need as an Adventure Rider:

- a. Eat 4 to 6 small meals a day instead of 3 large ones (this way your energy supply is more even and your body will absorb all the nutrition)
- b. Eat a portion of protein and carbohydrates with each meal. A portion is equivalent to the size of your palm of your hand (as an orientation)
- c. Eat as much vegetables as you like/can! Fiber is essential for your digestive system and will help control hunger
- d. Drink at least 10 cups of water a day
- e. Plan your meals ahead!!!

Enjoy your ride!

Yours,

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