



Tourissimo

ACTIVE TRAVEL IN ITALY

Get Ready for a Bike Tour!

A Fun 6-Week Training Program for a Fitter and Leaner You

by Beppe Salerno

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So, you want to take a cycling vacation?

Perhaps a tour with Tourissimo?

But you're thinking, "Am I ready?!"

Here I give you some tips – more like a program – to help you be ready when you get there.

To help you stay focused and motivated I have kept it relatively short: 6 weeks. If you wish to do more you'll do week 1 and week 4 twice for a total of 8 weeks.



Some hints before we start

- Be realistic: if you haven't been on a bike for the past 10 years, don't fool yourself into a Dolomite venture with 5,000 feet of elevation per day. Have a decent aerobic base first and a few seasons down the road. Sometimes we ask people about their fitness level and they say something like, "I'm ok. I play tennis 12 hours a week." That's fantastic if you want to win the Davis Cup. But cycling's unique. Even running is not a substitute for a bike workout. Sorry, but you'll have to get on the bike for at least six weeks.
- Tourissimo tour consultants can guide you to the right type of bike tour based on your fitness level and the type of terrain you are used to. I often ask guests about their typical rides at home to gauge their experience on climbs.



- It's fun going on vacation! Don't worry. You won't spend time training for a cruel stage race such as the Giro d'Italia. You're going to have time to rest and recover. With Tourissimo, you'll get the support and coaching of guides as well as van assistance. Think of your training as a way to be fit while enjoying your vacation. Training improves blood circulation and enhances brain activity. You'll love your vacation while having happier and unforgettable memories.

- Assess your current health status.
- Sleeping well and eating right are going to be part of your training. If you're lucky, this could lead you to dump old, bad habits forever and enjoy many more seasons of biking.
- Get fit: riding a bike that is right for you is the only option. That doesn't mean an expensive or superlight bike. It's more like putting on your favorite pair of jeans or your best fitting running shoes. Have a competent friend or let your bike shop fit you on your bike. If you aren't taking your bike on tour, simply send us a copy of your bike's information. We'll provide you with a bike that's perfectly fitted to you (98% of the time).
- Cross training: I'm a fan of cross training. But these 6 weeks are going to be about riding and pedaling: the bread and butter of cycling. So, if you want to do some other type of exercise, it's going to have to be on top of the program, not instead of it. The same holds true for Yoga, Pilates and Weight lifting. If you have the time, do cross training after you've completed your workout on the bike.



Before we start: who am I?

I'm Beppe Salerno. I am a certified mountain bike coach with the Italian Cycling Federation. I'm an experienced endurance racer both on the road and on fat tires. I also run marathons and have competed in triathlons (but I sucked at those). **Of course, I love bike touring myself.**



Some of the lessons you'll learn come from my mountain bike stage race preparation. I hold the title of Finisher of such ultra-endurance events such as the: Cape Epic (South Africa), Transrockies (Canada) and Iron Bike (Italy). There is a lot of information out there: books, videos and so forth. Chances are you don't have the time to study them. Fortunately, I've done the dirty work for you.

I'm not inventing. I'm only adjusting and repackaging what I've learned and studied in this program.

No “aerobic capacity” nor “lactate threshold”

Build or improve fitness.

As Joel Friel says, “Intensity builds fitness.”

And if I may add, “It can be rough, but the rewards are worth it”.

Stronger and faster legs, improved cardiovascular capacity (those red blood cells carry oxygen where you need it), smoother pedal stroke, better recovery.

It’s a myth that after a certain age (55/60) intensity is not the way to train. Some people think, “I’m old, I can only ride at a steady pace.”

Not so.

It’s easy to get stuck in your mental and physical comfort zone. **Again, only 6 weeks and you’ll fly. Promise.**

You will also use your time efficiently.



What you'll be doing

You'll work on two intensity levels:

Medium/Hard: we will call this the sweet spot

Hardest: as hard as you can for a few seconds

While doing the work, you'll also practice pedaling drills, refining your seated & stand-up strokes and transitioning between the two.

For pedaling efficiency go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjdSJ-YrCcM>

Do you need cleats? No

Do they help? Yes

Don't buy clip-in pedals right before a bike vacation. Get comfortable with them first and go on at least five rides before using them on tour.

Reminder

When taking the pedals off your bike, remember that the left pedal is threaded backwards. Turn your pedal wrench clockwise to take it off.

What is the sweet spot?

First, it's a range of training intensity. It's where pedaling gives you the greatest increase in sustained power with the least amount of fatigue. It's the most bang for your buck.

How do you know when you're in the sweet spot? If you wear an HR monitor you want to be at 75%-85% of max heart rate. You can also figure out if you are in sweet spot using your sensations and your voice.

You can tell you're in your sweet spot when you can ride and talk while under a certain amount of fatigue. You're going too easy if you find yourself singing your favorite tune out loud. And, you're going too hard if you're barely breathing (can't say anything other than a syllable).

As I have said, you want to be within that range (75%-85% of max heart rate). If tired, stay on the lower end of the spectrum and leave the hardest day later.

For how long?

Start with 3 minutes and build up to 20 minutes several times towards the end of the program.



Why sprints?

Because nerdy coaches will say they are programming your neuromuscular system. That means gaining a smoother, more powerful pedal stroke. Plus, more watts (power) when you need it.

What do I need?

You'll need a trainer or rollers, your bike and a road with little traffic. You'll also need your usual biking gear and water to stay hydrated. Keep a towel handy if you are on the trainer – you'll sweat a lot. And lastly, bring a stopwatch (or use your smart-phone timer clock) and ride with your favorite music!

It's 6 weeks, so do your best!

What and when?

You will do two workouts a week. They are relatively short workouts that focus on quality and form (engage your core).

Do the program once you have signed up for a tour (that gives you focus and prospective) but no closer than 6 weeks to the departure.

Every workout will obviously have a warm-up (up to the sweet spot) and a cooldown – about 10 to 15 minutes each.



Workout A

Warm-up, do the repetitions (fancy coaches call them intervals), then cool off.

Sweet spot: Medium hard. Choose a gear or resistance to pedal at a minimum of 70 rpms but no more than 100 rpms.

Sprint: Accelerate to your max rpms (rotations per minute). 10 to 15 secs. HARD to your max rpms

Off minutes: just spin (downshift if you have to) but maintain good form

Workout B

Warm-up, do the repetitions (intervals), then cool off.

For Workout B you will do one less repetition. But for every other repetition, try to jump on the pedals:

Rep 1/3/5 seated (same as work out A)

Rep 2/4: 3 min (you might have to up-shift 1 or 2 gears or add resistance and lower cadence) in sweet spot standing / Sprint standing

2 min off seated

Practice good transition seated-standing-seated. Practice good form, and if you are outdoors, balance.

Week	Workout A	Workout B	Total Work	Total Time
1	6 Repetitions: 3 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 2 off minutes easy	5 Repetitions: 3 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 2 off minutes easy	A: 18 min B: 15 min	A: 30 min B: 25 min
2	5 Repetitions: 4 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	4 Repetitions: 4 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	A: 20 min B: 16 min	A: 35 min B: 21 min
3	5 Repetitions: 5 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	4 Repetitions: 5 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	A: 25 min B: 20 min	A: 40 min B: 32 min
4	5 Repetitions: 6 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	4 Repetitions: 6 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	A: 30 min B: 24 min	A: 45 min B: 36 min
5	4 Repetitions: 8 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 4 off minutes easy	3 Repetitions: 8 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 4 off minutes easy	A: 32 min B: 24 min	A: 48 min B: 36 min
6	3 Repetitions: 10 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	2 Repetitions: 10 minutes sweet spot / Sprint 3 off minutes easy	A: 30 min B: 20 min	A: 39 min B: 26 min

Remember to cool off and stretch!

Now that you've successfully completed your training program, it's time to visit us.

Book your active vacation with Tourissimo. We've got surprises to make your Italian holiday trip memorable.

See you there.



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Thanks!

Thank you for reading “6 Week Training Plan.” Enjoy your ride!

About Tourissimo

Tourissimo creates soft adventure holidays that are full of intense meaningful experiences on and off the bike. Our tours are designed (or modified) to suit the ability level of the group. Sometimes we offer two partially different rides in a day (for riders of different levels), and rest days mid way through the tour.

It takes passion, drive and attention to detail to deliver a superior experience for guests. We are experts in many Italian destinations and we have several decades of combined experience in all facets of the adventure travel industry.

You can learn more at our website:

www.tourissimo.travel