



Ride Joburg Training Programme by Nic White

Falling jacaranda flowers will soon be seen in Johannesburg, and this always signals that it's time for Ride Joburg!

With summer hot on our heels, now's the perfect season to fine-tune your fitness levels and get to a good point so you complete the race comfortably.

We have created a structure, that if followed will allow you to be as ready as possible in the final months before the event. These workouts should be easy to follow or adapt to your needs. Whether you are riding on an indoor trainer or out on the road, these principles will help give you the variation you need for a great race day!

Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

The intensity of your training session is described according to the following Borg rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale. Your rate of perceived exertion should reflect how heavy and strenuous the exercise feels to you, combining all sensations and feelings of physical stress, effort and fatigue.

Do not focus on any one factor, such as leg pain or shortness of breath, but rather on your total feeling of exertion. For each workout, a rate of perceived exertion is given. Before your training session, refer to this scale so that you're reminded of the intensity or the training session and specific intervals.

While training, assess your feeling of exertion as honestly as possible without thinking about what the actual physical load is. Your own feeling of effort and exertion is important, not how it compares to other people.

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Gunnar Borg's ten point category – Ratio scale of perceived exertion

Perceived Exertion Score	Description	Ride type			
0	Nothing at all				
1	Easy	RR			
2	Easy				
3	Easy to moderate				
4	Moderate	ER	GR FP SP		
5	Moderate				
6	Top of moderate		T	SS	
7	Hard			Tempo-C	
8	Hard				TC HA
9	Very hard				
10	Extremely hard				PI SI
*	Maximal				Sprints

Workout descriptions

- RR = Recovery ride
- ER = Endurance ride
- GR = Group ride
- SP = Slow pedal
- FP = Fast pedal
- T= Tempo
- Tempo-C= Tempo climb

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- SS = Steady states
- TC = Threshold climb
- HA = Hill accelerations
- PI = Power intervals
- SI = Speed intervals
- Sprints = Sprint intervals
- RBI: Rest between intervals
- RBS: Rest between sets

Training sessions

We talk about total time rather than distance when describing workouts (RR, or ER or GR). Example: ER 1h30, Tempo – 3 × 12 min w/5 min RBI, which means 3 × 12 min Tempo intervals with 5 min in between and the remaining time just easy riding as endurance ride. It's important to spend 5 to 10 min warming up, and at least 5 to 10 min cooling down. This all fits into the total training time of the session of 1h30.

Recovery ride (RR)

Duration: 45 min to 1 hour
Terrain: Flat to undulating
Effort: Very easy – 1 to 2 RPE
Cadence: 75 to 95 rpm easy pedalling in light gear

Endurance ride (ER)

Duration: 1 to 4 hrs
Terrain: Flat to Rolling
Effort: Easy to moderate – 4 to 5 RPE
Cadence: 80 to 100 rpm on flats, 70 to 85 rpm on climbs

Group ride (GR)

Duration: 1 to 4 hrs
Terrain: Flat to rolling
Effort: Easy to hard – 4 to 6 RPE
Cadence: 80 to 100 rpm on flats, 70 to 85 rpm on climbs

Intervals

Completed within the time frame given. Example: ER 1h30, Tempo of 3 × 12 min w/5 min RBI, which means 3 × 12 min Tempo intervals with 5 min in between and the remaining time just easy riding as endurance ride.

Fast pedal (FP)

Terrain: Flat to slightly downhill

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Description: In light gear, spin at a high cadence with a lower heart rate, concentrating on sitting comfortably on the saddle.

Effort: Moderate – 5 to 6 RPE

Cadence 100 rpm +

Slow pedals (SP)

Terrain: Long gradual hill – 4 to 6% gradient.

Description: In a heavy gear and a low cadence (50 to 60 rpm) maintaining a moderate heart rate, focus on pedalling a smooth pedal stroke, as if pedalling through peanut butter.

Heel drops as you push down, wiping your foot on the mat through the bottom of the stroke, to lifting your heel as you gain height in the upstroke. Concentrate on as much pressure through the pedal stroke as you can get. This assists in strength but also promotes efficiency in the pedal stroke.

Effort: Moderate – 5 to 6 RPE.

Tempo (T)

Terrain: Flat to uphill or indoor trainer

Description: Ride at a pace that is challenging but not too hard. Keeping steady consistent pressure on the pedals with a constant rhythm, as if you were on the front of the group doing a long pull.

Effort: The top of moderate – 6 RPE.

Steady states (SS)

Terrain: Flat or indoor trainer

Description: A challenging interval just below your lactate threshold. Keeping the effort steady for the duration of the interval, with constant pressure on the pedals.

Effort: Moderate to hard – 6.5 to 7.5 RPE

Tempo climbs (Tempo.C)

Terrain: Long gradual hill – 4 to 6% gradient

Description: A challenging interval, just below the climbing lactate threshold. Keeping the effort steady for the duration of the interval, with constant pressure on the pedals.

Effort: Moderate to hard – 6.5 to 7.5 RPE

Threshold Climb (TC)

Terrain: On a steady climb – 4 to 8% gradient

Description: A challenging interval at your climbing lactate threshold. Keeping the effort steady for the duration of the interval, with constant pressure on the pedals.

Effort: Moderate to hard to very hard – 8 to 9 RPE.

Hill accelerations (HA)

Terrain: On a steady climb – 4 to 8% gradient.

Description: A challenging interval at and above your climbing lactate threshold. Keeping the effort steady for the duration of the interval, but as prescribed time passes, accelerate for 30 sec to simulate repeated attacks.

Effort: Moderate to hard to very hard – 8 to 9 RPE.

Power intervals (PI)

Terrain: Flat or indoor trainer

Description: An intense or maximal interval at a high cadence. Using the first minute to build up to desired intensity, cadence or speed, go as hard as you can sustain for the remainder of the prescribed time period. Concentrate on maintaining the desired cadence for the entire interval.

Effort: Extremely hard to maximal – 10 to 10+ RPE.

Speed Intervals (SI)

Terrain: Flat to slightly downhill

Description: Repeated maximal speed and intensity intervals. Focus on accelerating and maintaining the power for the duration of the prescribed interval.

Effort: Extremely hard to maximal – 10 to 10+ RPE.

Sprint intervals (Sprints)

Terrain: Flat to slightly downhill, solo or with a lead-out.

Description: Ride up to desired speed then select sprint gear, accelerate to your best cadence possible, then sit and power through to the finish line in an aerodynamic position. Try to maintain a high cadence throughout.

Effort: Extremely hard to maximal – 10 to 10+ RPE.

8 weeks to Ride Joburg! Beginner

Your cycling career is young. You are trying to get some routine and structure to assist in your fitness levels. In the two months just before the Ride Joburg, following these principles can help you prepare for the challenge of the race day! This programme is based on the rating of perceived exertion (RPE), rather than power or heart rate, which you may have access to as well.

Without starting the conversation of power and heart rate zones, we have stuck to a simpler explanation of efforts below. (Power-based workouts are possible to include in software that is available. We can expand on those principles in time, so enquiries are welcome.)

Week 1

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, ascending tempo intervals of 3 × 10 min T (slightly harder each time), 5 min RBI. Cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, tempo intervals of 4 × 8min T, 3 min RBI. Cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 2:00
Day 7	ER 1:30 – or rest day

Week 2

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 Slow pedal & tempo (5 min warm-up, 2 × 5 min SP, 2 min RBI, 3 × 10 min T, 4 min RBI). ER and cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, tempo intervals 3 × 12min T, 4 min RBI. Cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 2:30
Day 7	ER 1:30 – or rest day

Week 3

Day 1	Rest day
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Day 2	ER 1:00 Fast pedals (FP) & tempo (5 min warm-up, 2 × 5 min FP, 2 min RBI, 3 × 10 min tempo, 3 min RBI. Remaining time RR
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00, tempo with power intervals (10 min warm-up, 2 × 10min T, 4 min RBI, 6 × 1 min PI with 2min RBI. RR to cool down in remaining time.)
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 3:00
Day 7	ER 1:30 or rest day

Week 4

Day 1	Rest day – Recovery week.
Day 2	ER 1:00 easy!
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00 easy!
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER, 2:30 tempo climbs, (selecting a route where you can ride up climbs of around 6 to 10 mins. Aim for at least 4 repeats of a hill of that length in the Tempo.C intensity)
Day 7	ER 1:30 or rest day

Week 5

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 tempo & SI (10 min warm-up, 2 × 10 min T interval, 4 min RBI, 2 sets (4 × 30 sec FP, 30 sec RBI), 5 min RBS. RR in remaining time.
Day 3	Rest Day
Day 4	ER 1:00 steady state 6s (10min Warm-up, 4 × 6 min SS, 4 min RBI. Cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GB 3:30
Day 7	ER 1:30 easy or rest day

Week 6

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, steady state w/ accelerations. (10 min warm-up ramp to SS, (2 min 5/10, 2 min 6/10, 2 min 7/10, 2 min 8/10, 2 min 9/10) 4 min RBI, SS sets × 4 (4 min SS, 30 sec SI) 4 min RBS. ER to cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	Rest Day
Day 4	ER 1:00 easy!

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Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 1:00 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints. If no race weekend = GR 4:00
Day 7	Race day - Tshwane Classic. If no race day = rest day

Week 7

Day 1	Rest day – recovery Week
Day 2	ER 1:00
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 3:00 Moderate hilly route
Day 7	Rest day

Week 8

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 race week activation, (warm-up 10 min, 2 × 5 min SS, 5 min RBI, 3 × 20 sec SI, 10 min T, RR cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00 easy ride!
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 1:30 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints.
Day 7	Race day – Ride Joburg!

Caution:

Before starting any strenuous exercise, programme or participating in a strenuous event, such as the Ride Joburg, it is advisable to visit your doctor for a full physical examination and medical clearance to proceed. This especially applies if, for any reason, you have had any health or illness challenges in the months before this.

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8 weeks to Ride Joburg! Keen competitor

Riding in the faster-seeded groups and wanting to finish quicker than 3 hrs. If you are already at a good fitness level and have been training consistently, then this is a programme that you can do. This programme is based on rating of perceived exertion (RPE), rather than power or heart rate, which most people have access to.

So, unless we start the conversation of power and heart rate zones, which we can get through some testing principles, we have stuck to a simpler explanation of efforts below. (Power based workouts are possible to include in the softwares available to most athletes. We can expand on those principles for those that wish in the build up to the Ride Joburg, so enquiries are welcome.)

Week 1

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, tempo intervals 3 × 12min T, 5 min RBI. Cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00, 10min Warm-up, Tempo spikes 3 × 12min (2minT, 2 min SS, 2min T etc.), 5min RBI. Cool down in remaining time
Day 5	RR 1:00/Rest
Day 6	Moderate GR 3:30
Day 7	ER 2:00

Week 2

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 steady state 6s (10 min war--up, 4 × 6 min SS, 5 min RBI) Cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00 slow pedal & SS (5 min warm-up, 2 × 5 min SP, 2 min RBI, 6 × 4 min SS, 3 min RBI). ER and cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	RR 1:00/Rest
Day 6	Moderate GR 3:30
Day 7	ER 3:00

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Week 3

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 steady state 7s (10 min warm-up, 4 × 7 min SS, 5min RBI). Cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00 tempo to steady state humps – 10 min warm-up, 6 sets of (3 min T, 3 min SS, 1 min RBS). RR cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	RR 1:00/Rest
Day 6	Moderate GR 4:00, including 4 × 15 sec SI during the ride.
Day 7	ER 3:00

Week 4

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:30 easy!
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:30 easy!
Day 5	RR 1:00 – Coffee ride/rest
Day 6	ER 1:00 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints. If no race weekend = GR 4:00
Day 7	Race day – Amashova Classic. If no race = 2:00 hill repeats TC, (15 min warm-up, 6 × 6min TC on 4 to 8% hill, min 3 min RBI, remaining time ER)

Week 5

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, power lactate (10 min warm-up, 4 sets: (2 × 15 sec SI, 45 sec RBI, 5 min SS, 5 min RBS). RR to cool down in remaining time.
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00, ramps to SS with 20/40s (10 min warm-up, 2 × 12 min ramp from T through SS. Steady increase in effort from an 7/10 RPE until 10/10 RPE at the end of 12 min, 5 min RBS). Finish off with 5 × 20 sec SI, 40 sec RBI. RR cool down in remaining time.
Day 5	RR 1:00/Rest
Day 6	Moderate GB 4:00
Day 7	ER 2:00 easy

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Week 6

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, V02 max efforts (warm-up 10 min, 10 min T, 3 min RBI, 6 sets V02Max (2 min SS, 1 min PI, 3 min RBS). Finish with 3 × 20 sec SI, 40 sec RBI
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00, Tempo with Power Intervals (10min warm-up, 2×10min T, 4min RBI, 6 × 1 min PI with 2min RBI. Remaining time RR to cool down)
Day 5	RR 1:00/Rest
Day 6	ER 1:00 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints. If no race weekend = Hard GR 2:30
Day 7	Race day – Tshwane Classic If no race day = ER 3:30 easy

Week 7

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:30 easy!
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:30 easy!
Day 5	RR 1:00 – Coffee ride/rest
Day 6	ER 3:00 easy to moderate
Day 7	ER 2:00 hill accelerations (choose route with hills lasting at 6 to 8 min, steady pace on hill with 30 sec HA every 1 min 30). Aim for 3 to 4 hills of that length.

Week 8

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 tempo & FP (10 min warm-up, 15 min T interval, 5 min RBI, 3 sets (4 × 30 sec FP, 30 sec RBI), 5 min RBS. Remaining time RR.
Day 3	ER 1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00 race week activation, (warm-up 10 min, 2 × 5min SS, 5 min RBI, 3 × 20sec SI, 10 min T, Remaining time RR cool down
Day 5	RR 1:00/rest
Day 6	ER 1:30 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints.
Day 7	Race day – Ride Joburg!

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8 weeks to Ride Joburg! Intermediate

You have been cycling for a while. Your base fitness is reasonable, but you want some structure to assist you in the few months just before your event. If your hopes are to ride a time of between 3 and 4 hours, this is a programme for you. This programme is based on rating of perceived exertion (RPE), rather than power or heart rate, which you may have access to as well.

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Week 1

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, ascending tempo intervals 3 × 10 min T (slightly harder each time), 5 min RBI. Remaining time cool down.
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30 easy
Day 4	ER 1:00 slow pedal & tempo (5 min warm-up, 2 × 5 min SP, 2 min RBI, 3 × 10 min T, 4 min RBI) Remaining time ER and cool down.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 3:00
Day 7	ER 2:00

Week 2

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, tempo intervals 3 × 12 min T, 4 min RBI. Remaining time cool down.
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30 easy
Day 4	ER 1:00, 10 min warm-up, tempo w/ SS spikes 3 × 12 min (2 min T, 2 min SS, 2 min T etc.), 5 min RBI. Remaining time cool down.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 3:30
Day 7	ER 2:30

Week 3

Day 1	Rest day
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Day 2	ER 1:00, Slow Pedal & SS (5min Warm-up, 2×5min SP, 2min RBI, 6×4min SS, 3 min RBI) Remaining time ER and cool down
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30 easy
Day 4	ER 1:00, tempo with power intervals (10 min warm-up, 2 × 10 min T, 4 min RBI, 6 × 1 min PI with 2 min RBI. Remaining time RR to cool down)
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GR 4:00, including 4 × 15 sec SI during the ride.
Day 7	ER 2:30

Week 4

Day 1	Rest day – recovery week.
Day 2	ER 1:00/1:30 easy!
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00/1:30 easy!
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 2:30
Day 7	ER, 2:00 hill repeats TC, (15 min warm-up, 4 × 6 to 8 min TC on 4 to 8% hill, 5min RBI, remaining time ER)

Week 5

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 tempo & SI (10 min warm-up, 1 × 10 min T interval, 4 min RBI, 3 sets (4 × 30 sec FP, 30 sec RBI), 5 min RBS. Remaining time RR
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00 steady state 7s (10 min warm-up, 4 × 7 min SS, 4 min RBI). Remaining time cool down.
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	Moderate GB 3:30
Day 7	ER 2:00 easy

Week 6

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00, steady state w/ accelerations. (10 min warm-up ramp to SS, (2 min 5/10, 2 min 6/10, 2 min 7/10, 2 min 8/10, 2 min 9/10) 4 minRBI, SS sets × 5 (4 min SS, 30 sec SI) 4 min RBS. Remaining time ER to cool down.
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30

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Day 4	ER 1:00 fast pedals (FP) & tempo (10 min warm-up, 4 × 3 min FP, 2 min RBI, 3 × 6 min Tempo, 3 min RBI. Remaining time RR
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 1:00 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints. If no race weekend = Hard GR 2:30
Day 7	Race day - Tshwane Classic If no race day = ER 3:00 easy

Week 7

Day 1	Rest day – recovery week
Day 2	ER 1:00/1:30 easy!
Day 3	Rest day
Day 4	ER 1:00/1:30 easy!
Day 5	Rest day
Day 6	ER 3:00 easy to moderate
Day 7	ER 2:00 hill accelerations (choose route with hills lasting at 6 to 8 min, steady pace on hill with 30 sec HA every 1 min 30). Aim for 3 to 4 hills of that length.

Week 8

Day 1	Rest day
Day 2	ER 1:00 race week activation, (warm-up 10 min, 2 × 5 min SS, 5 min RBI, 3 × 20 sec SI, 10 min T. Remaining time RR cool down.
Day 3	ER 1:00/1:30
Day 4	ER 1:00 easy ride!
Day 5	Rest ray
Day 6	ER 1:30 pre-race warm-up. Including some short accelerations and 2 × 15 sec sprints.
Day 7	Race day – Ride Joburg!

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