

Let's Climb Those Hills! - Individual 20 Week Hill Climb Training Plan

Welcome to the South Downs Hill Climb Series individual 20-week training plan, designed to help you get to your first Hill Climb! Aim to finish the training plan 2 weeks before the start of the hill climb series.

As ever, please consult your health professional/doctor before embarking on this training plan to ensure you're able to cope with the stresses on your body.

Once you've read the plan, please read the accompanying notes below the plan.

Overview

- **Weeks 1-5:** Building Base Fitness
- **Weeks 6-12:** Increasing Intensity and Specificity
- **Weeks 13-20:** Peak Training and Tapering

Detailed Weekly Plan

Weeks 1-5: Building Base Fitness

Goal: Develop aerobic base, improve general fitness, and introduce basic hill climbing techniques.

Week 1-2:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of **Threshold** HR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 1**
 - 30 minute warm up @ 40-60% of FTP
 - 2 x 6 intervals of 40s max effort, 40s soft pedalling (max sustainable effort)
 - 10 minutes of z1 in between
 - Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
 - Ideally on a climb with a consistent gradient or an indoor trainer
- **Thursday:** Strength training (focus on legs and core, 1 hour)
 - Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (3 hours, Zone 2, include some hills)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, varying cadence up the hills. Option: cycling out of the saddle for 30 seconds to 1 minute every 5 or 10 minutes up the hills

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- OR specific hill repeats – Session 1 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with gradient 6-8% (or indoor trainer) for a 1-minute effort
90 – 105% of FTP, cadence 70-80. Do 6 repeats.
- **Sunday:** Long endurance ride (4 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Week 3-5:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (2.5 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 2**
 - 30 minute warm up @ 40-60% of FTP
4 x 2 minute intervals (or 5x, 6x, 8x intervals if well trained)
For the interval start off standing and finish sitting - duration is key
3 minutes easy pedalling between intervals
Intervals at 115-130% of FTP
Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
Use a climb of consistent gradient (4-8%)
For me @220 ftp, 275 watts (125%)
- **Thursday:** Strength training (focus on legs and core, 1 hour)
 - Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (3.5 hours, Zone 2, include more hills)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, varying cadence up the hills. Option: cycling out of the saddle for 1 minute 30 seconds every 5 or 10 minutes up the hills
 - OR specific hill repeats – Session 1 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with gradient 6-8% (or indoor trainer) for a 1-minute effort
90 – 105% of FTP, cadence 70-80. Do 6 repeats.
If correctly conditioned: 90 – 105% of FTP, cadence 60-70. Do 8 repeats (add 2 repeats each week to a max of 15)
- **Sunday:** Long endurance ride (4.5 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Weeks 6-12: Increasing Intensity and Specificity

Goal: Introduce high-intensity training, improve hill climbing technique, and start including more intensity.

Week 6-8:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (2.5 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 3:**
 - 30-minute warm-up @ 40-60% of FTP
4 minutes @ 115-125% of FTP followed by 2.5 to 3 minutes recovery
4,5,6 or 8 repeats (8 for well trained athletes only)
Cadence 90+, gradient 4-8%
Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
- **Thursday:** Strength training (focus on legs and core, 1 hour)
 - Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (4 hours, Zone 2, include hills and some high-intensity efforts)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, varying cadence up the hills, cycling out of the saddle for 2 minutes every 10 minutes up the hills, increasing intensity to 75-90% of FTP for the last hour of the ride
 - OR specific hill repeats – Session 2 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with gradient 9+% (or indoor trainer) for a 1-minute effort
106 – 120% of FTP, cadence 60-70. Do 9 repeats if you can.
On every 3rd repeat get out of the saddle: 106 – 150% of FTP, cadence 60-70
- **Sunday:** Long endurance ride (5 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Week 9-12:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (3 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 4:**

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- 30-minute warm-up @ 40-60% of FTP
4x4 minute intervals @ 115-125% of FTP followed by 2.5 to 3 minutes @50-60% of FTP
After the 4 repeats -> 4*40:40 (from Session 1) max sustainable effort/soft pedalling
Cadence 90+, gradient 4-8%
Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
- **Thursday:** Strength training (focus on legs and core, 1 hour)
 - Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (4.5 hours, Zone 2, include hills and high-intensity efforts)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, varying cadence up the hills. Option: cycling out of the saddle for 2 minutes every 10 minutes up the hills, increasing intensity to 80-95% of FTP for the last 60 minutes of the ride
 - OR specific hill repeats – Session 2 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with gradient 9+% (or indoor trainer) for a 1-minute effort
106 – 120% of FTP, cadence 60-70. Do 9 repeats if you can.
On every 3rd repeat get out of the saddle: 106 – 150% of FTP, cadence 60-70
- **Sunday:** Long endurance ride (5.5 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Weeks 13-20: Peak Training and Tapering

Goal: Peak fitness, refine hill climbing skills, and taper for competition.

Week 13-16:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (3 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 5:**
 - 30 minute warm up @ 40-60% of FTP
4 repeats of the following (5 or 6 if you're feeling strong)
30 second maximal sprint, followed by 3 minutes @ 95-105% of FTP, then 10 second sprint to finish the interval
Flat ground
5 minutes of Z1 between intervals
Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
- **Thursday:** Strength training (focus on legs and core, 1 hour)

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- Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (5 hours, Zone 2, include hills and high-intensity efforts)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, increasing intensity to 85-100% of FTP for the last 60 minutes of the ride
 - OR specific hill repeats – Session 2 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with gradient 9+% (or indoor trainer) for a 1-minute effort
106 – 120% of FTP, cadence 60-70. Do 9 repeats if you can.
On every 3rd repeat get out of the saddle: 106 – 150% of FTP, cadence 60-70
- **Sunday:** Long endurance ride (6 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Week 17-20:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (2 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 6:**
 - 30 minutes warm up @ 40-60% of FTP
3 x (13 x 30 seconds all out sprint->15 seconds recovery)
Flat ground
10 minutes Z1 between intervals
Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
- **Thursday:** Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Saturday:** Group ride (2 hours, Zone 2, include hills and high-intensity efforts)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, increasing intensity to 90-105% of FTP for the last 30 minutes of the ride
 - OR specific hill repeats – Session 3 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
Local hill with some really steep sections (or indoor trainer) for a 2-minute effort
106 – 150% of FTP, cadence 55-65. Do 6 repeats if you can, increment by 1 each wk
On every 3rd repeat go really hard for the last 50m (zone 7 150%+ ftp) - In or out of the saddle
- **Sunday:** Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

For the 2 weeks before the Hill Climb Series and the weeks during the series:

- **Monday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR
- **Tuesday:** Zone 2 endurance ride (2 hours)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Wednesday: VO₂ Max session 6:**
 - 30 minutes warm up @ 40-60% of FTP
 - 3 x (13 x 30 seconds all out sprint->15 seconds recovery)
 - Flat ground
 - 10 minutes Z1 between intervals
 - Cool down: 20 mins of 40-60% of FTP
- **Thursday:** Rest
 - Optional: Zone 2 endurance ride (1-2 hours)
- **Friday:** Rest or light recovery ride (1 hour, Zone 1)
 - < 55% of FTP, 50 - 60% of max HR

If no event at the weekend

- **Saturday:**
 - Specific hill repeats – Session 3 (see Training Overview – Hill Repeats)
 - Local hill with some really steep sections (or indoor trainer) for a 2-minute effort
 - 106 – 150% of FTP, cadence 55-65. Do 9 repeats
 - On every 3rd repeat go really hard for the last 50m (zone 7 150%+ ftp) - In or out of the saddle
- **Sunday:** Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

If there are one or two hill climb events on Saturday

- **Saturday:**
 - **Hill Climb Event** – good luck
 - : If another **Hill Climb Event** – **good luck & that's it for the day**
 - Otherwise - Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Sunday:** Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

If there is a hill climb event on Sunday

- **Saturday:**

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- Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
- 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm
- **Sunday:**
 - **Hill Climb Event** – good luck
 - : Follow by Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

If there is a hill climb event on Saturday and Sunday – It doesn't get any better!

- **Saturday:**
 - **Hill Climb Event** – good luck
- **Sunday:**
 - **Hill Climb Event** – good luck
 - : Follow by Endurance ride (2 hours, Zone 2)
 - 55-75% of FTP, 69-83% of THR, Cadence 80+ rpm

Notes

The plan should be used as a guide for what you do. If you are short of time, cut down the number of rides per week or reduce their duration. Do not have more than 2 days of high intensity work per week.

It is important to stay within the power/hr ranges for zone 2 rides to ensure you get the associated benefits. No power meter or heart rate monitor – refer to the Training Overview.

It may be helpful to use an indoor trainer for the sessions although it is not a requirement.

You should always warm up as part of a ride. For high intensity training, warm up for 30 minutes @ 40-60% of FTP. Follow your high intensity ride with a cool down - 20 minutes @ 40-60% of FTP. For zone 1 or zone 2 rides, start slowly and use the first 10 minutes to gradually build to zone 1 or zone 2 pace.

It is beneficial to do some stretching and have a recovery drink after your sessions.