

Ride Further, Longer, and More Often

One of the keys to happiness in my life is to remember that I am a big dummy. In the scheme of things, I know very little. This helps to prevent me from gripping on to my beliefs too firmly and helps to keep me in an ever-learning student mode. If you watch our YouTube Videos, you will know that I have been sharing what I am learning about in our recent videos.

When I started doing Backcountry Discover Routes (BDRs) I wanted to ride them hard, ride all day, and then wake up and do it again. The problem was that the days are long, the riding is routinely tough, and starting on day 2, my body would start to show signs of objection. I figured I just needed to train harder before the next big adventure. I was very wrong.

I was doing a bunch of things wrong. Nobody came along and got me on the right path, but I did figure out what my body needed by asking athletic friends, reading books, and seeing some professionals.

I am going to make this article super short, and just tell you what I am doing. I will spend very little time on the why, because in many cases it takes several hours of reading or listening to understand. You can pursue understanding if you want, or just do what I am doing.

Here are the topics.

1. Build the Right Type of Fit Body
2. Build Aerobic Function (The Geeky Topic)
3. Breathe Properly, Like Always
4. Stop, Stretch, and Hydrate with Electrolytes
5. Stop, Stretch, and Hydrate with Snacks
6. Dress Properly
7. Manage Your Physical & Mental State
8. Choose Your Tribe

That's a lot to cover. Let's keep each one super short.

Build the Right Type of Fit Body

If your exercise program is centered around being powerful, but your goals are to ride all day, and lots of days in a row, your training does not match your goals. I do workout for my core, arms, back and chest, and my repetitions are between 50 and 150. That's training for endurance.

My legs get routine training on my mountain bike, however, instead of going for a really tough 1 hour ride, I go for a pretty tough 3+ hour ride. Not only am I getting in the reps and the time, but I do something else that ties into our next topic.

Sample Resource: Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones, by James Clear

Build Aerobic Function

Maximal Aerobic Function (MAF) training is a heart rate-based exercise method which enhances endurance and fat burning by staying below your MAF heart rate (calculated by subtracting your age from 180). This

approach improves energy efficiency, reduces injury risk, and encourages sustainable, long-term performance improvements. MAF promotes training smarter, not harder.

I am 52. When I mountain bike, my watch is set to my heart rate. I try to do most of my ride at or below my MAF (128). The more a person does this, the more they build their capacity.

Here's the zinger. If you can keep your body in aerobic mode, as opposed an anaerobic, you are 16X more efficient. How's that for a huge number!

So, when somebody is stuck, or you are doing something especially hard, consider calming down. Go slower, not harder. The tortoise really does win the race if the race is to ride further, longer, and more often.

Sample Resource: The MAF Method: A Personalized Approach to Health and Fitness, by Dr. Phil Maffetone

Breathe Properly, Like Always

I find it amazing that our society has forgotten the importance of how to breathe properly. I need to save space and this one is easy to explain. Breathe through your nose always. Even when exercising up to near your capacity!

A Must Read for any Human: Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor

Stop, Stretch, and Hydrate with Electrolytes

If I am sweating, which I pretty much always do on a moto, I stop every hour for a major chug of my water, and I take two 250 mg sodium pills. I do not use much weaker dissolvable things that you put in your water, and I do not use a premixed drink. None of those are the same. Water + Pills.

Water alone does not work! When you sweat, you lose salt. If you drink water, and don't add salt, your body cannot absorb the water because then the concentration of salt in your body would then be even lower, which is super bad (e.g. muscle cramps).

- Do you drink a lot of water on hard / hot rides, pee a lot, and get tired? This was Dirt Chimp Andrew's deal. Drink lots, pee lots. Tired too early!
- Do you get big muscle cramps after a hard day? This was Dirt Chimp Scott's problem. I was afraid to bend my knee too much in the evening as my hamstring threatened to seize into very painful cramps. I felt helpless!

So, you are stopped, eating salty pills, drinking a good amount of water. Now, being the smart and mindful person that you are, you ask yourself "What else should I be doing right now?" The answer is stretching. Your muscles are working hard doing a specific task. Give them a little stretch. Hold each stretch for a long time, like 30 seconds (I know, right) but that is what all of the bendy people say, and it seems to work.

Chat with your buddies as you bend deep and touch your toes, stretch out those calf muscles, do some freaky quad stretch things, and generally just get a little bit more flexible. If your homies won't get into it with you, tell them they are too uptight or something.

Stop, Stretch, and Hydrate with Snacks

This is your second stop every hour, but instead of electrolyte pills, you have a little snack. Our advisor, a multi Ironman winner and certified nutritionist, tells us that it is best to separate hydration and electrolytes, and hydration and food, by at least 15 minutes. She could kick my butt so I am going to listen.

Your snacks should be very easily digestible. We love our Energy Bomb Cookies (Recipe in TMA) but I would trust anything in a running store if you don't mind not knowing what actually goes into making the stuff (I do eat a couple of GUs per mountain bike ride when I run out of my cookies).

Dress Properly

If you are overheating, which is often a challenge, it saps a massive amount of your energy. Andrew and I each wear the most breathable clothing over our armour for just about every ride. For example, we have yet to find anything that even approaches Mosko Motos Kiger Mesh Pant for breathability.

If it gets cold or wet, we have layers that we add where we don't have to take anything off, like our boots, to get the added protection. Stay cool!

Manage Your Physical and Mental State

Moto Yoga in our videos. Recognize when the current situation requires 100% effort, and provide it. Then, when you don't need to be at 100%, calm down! Loosen the grip. Slow your breathing (through your nose). Take notice of your entire body and what is tense, and what is relaxed. Work to relax and conserve energy and only give the current riding situation what is needed. Look ahead, breath, take it all in.

The physical part naturally helps your mental part, but there is more work that can be done sometimes. If you are in upset conditions, and things are not going as planned, stay calm. Breath properly. Slow down and think. Plan, plan, plan do. Getting worked up only helps in fight or flight situations, and that's not the norm. Things are just a little messed up, so it's time to calmly recalculate and consider energy because you are in this to ride longer, further, and more often.

Choose Your Tribe

If your goal is to ride further, longer, and more often, then hang out with people who have similar goals. This is important life advice. You are likely going to be the average of the people you hang out with. Choose to hang out with more people that reflect the person you want to become, ask questions, be humble and open to learning, and they will very likely help you along your journey.

Learning Why

I have tried to focus on what I am doing. If you want to learn why, like the science and why it is worth your effort, here is the summary of resources that I have referenced. Each of these, being scientifically based, has pages of actual scientific references.

The Books:

- Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor
- The MAF Method: A Personalized Approach to Health and Fitness, by Dr. Phil Maffetone
- Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones, by James Clear

Wrap-Up

Do you like content like this? Soon you will be able to comment in TMA Articles. For the time being, if you have any thoughts to share, please email us as Info@ThatMotoApp.com.