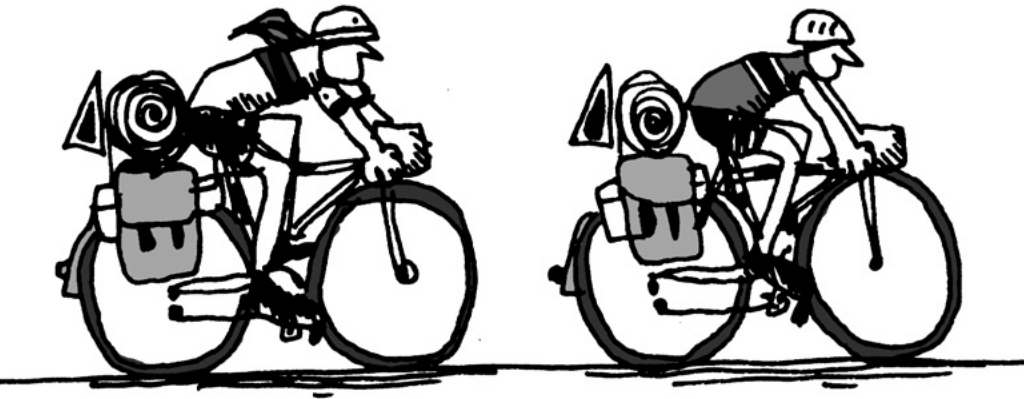


BEFORE YOU GO

*A Handbook for Adventure Cycling's
Supported Tours*



Adventure Cycling Association

150 E. Pine Street

Missoula, Montana 59802

Toll-free: (800) 755-2453

Email: tours@adventurecycling.org

www.adventurecycling.org

WELCOME

Congratulations! By signing up for an Adventure Cycling tour, you've taken the first step toward an exciting cycling adventure. The second step is preparing yourself and your bicycle for the tour of a lifetime.

Whether or not you're an experienced cyclist, a careful reading of this brochure will enhance your experience. It includes a timetable of what you need to do to prepare for your tour, along with details on Adventure Cycling policies and tour formats.

Best wishes for an enjoyable trip!



PREPARING FOR YOUR TOUR

The demands placed on you and your bicycle by a multi-day tour are much greater than those encountered on a casual day-ride. Use the following checklist and the tips that begin on page 8 to get ready for your tour. Refer to page 5 for on-tour policies and procedures.

PREPARATION CHECK LIST

Upon receiving your confirmation packet:

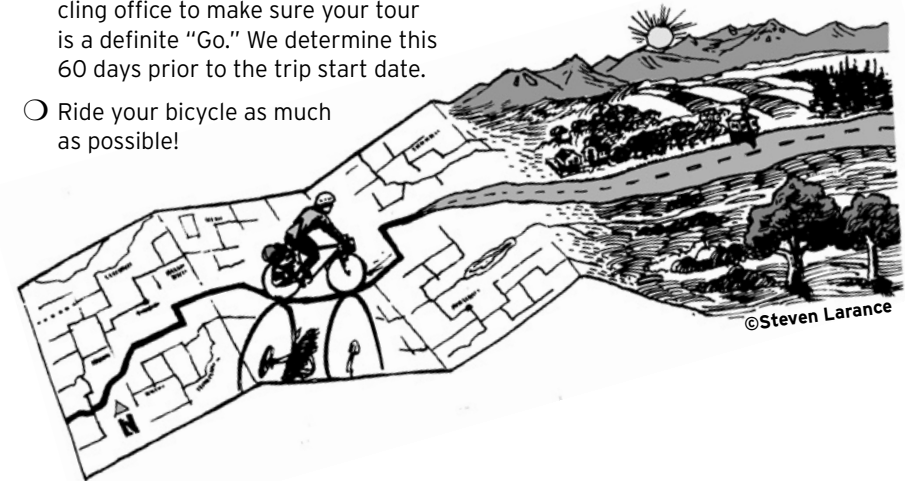
- Please read all materials sent to you from Adventure Cycling. If you still have questions, call the Tours Department at (800)755-2453, or e-mail us at tours@adventurecycling.org.
- Adventure Cycling highly recommends that you purchase travel insurance immediately after you've registered for your tour.**
- If there's a balance due on your trip, please forward your final payment so that we receive it at least 60 days before your start date.
- Arrange transportation for yourself and your bike.
- Before purchasing non-refundable travel tickets, call the Adventure Cycling office to make sure your tour is a definite "Go." We determine this 60 days prior to the trip start date.
- Ride your bicycle as much as possible!

60 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- If you haven't already started, don't wait any longer to begin training. Begin with rides of 20 miles or more a day, several times a week, working into longer day rides on the weekends. If weather or other circumstances prohibit this, use an indoor trainer, stationary bicycle or other form of exercise that taxes the cardiovascular system.
- Forward the balance due on your tour to Adventure Cycling.

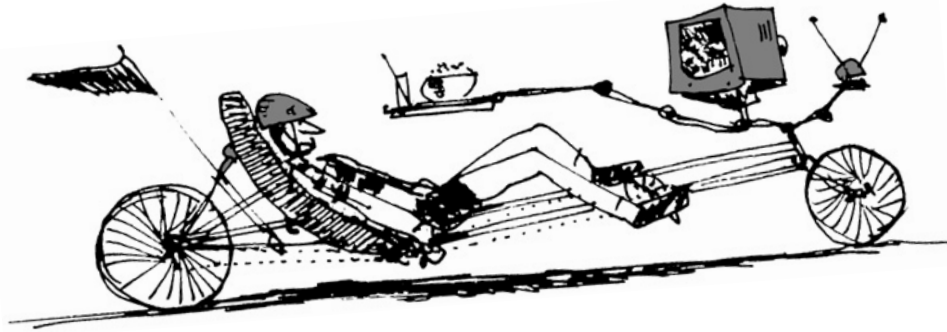
45 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Continue your training rides. Work up to 40- to 60-mile rides on at least one day each week, depending on the tour for which you're preparing.



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In addition to this brochure, you will receive a detailed information packet approximately 60 days prior to your tour departure date. The packet will provide logistical details about transportation, shipping your bike, a list of lodging options and where to meet at the start of the tour. If you registered for your tour just prior to its departure, this brochure will be included with the detailed information packet.



30 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Make final purchases of clothing and equipment.
- Make certain that all repairs and maintenance, including lubrication, are performed on your bike.
- Buy an extra pair of glasses or contacts and get a copy of your prescription.
- Continue your training rides, working up to 50- to 70-mile day-rides. You might want to try for a century - 100 miles in a day - if you're taking a trip of more than three weeks. Seek out hills and varied terrain, in an attempt to simulate the type of riding you'll encounter on your tour.

14 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Make sure that your bike is fully tuned and ready to go.
- Continue your training rides; be sure to include a couple of 50-70-mile days.

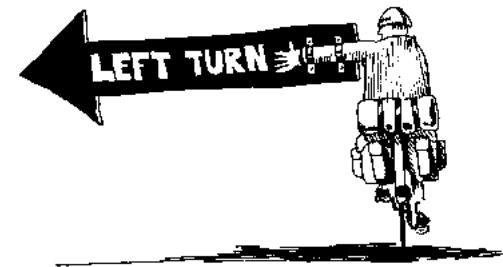
7 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Begin to taper your training so you'll be rested and fresh when you begin your tour.
- If your bike will not travel with you, pack and ship it to your trip starting point.

These "Rules of the Road" are important tour policies. They've evolved during the 35 years that Adventure Cycling has been leading tours, and are based on what we've learned from actual on-the-road experience. Please heed these rules; remember that a group, with its diverse personalities, requires a basic structure in order to function smoothly.

- A helmet (Snell, ANSI, DOT or CPSC approved) **MUST** be worn while riding, both during the day's ride and on any short trips from your overnight destination. This is a safety measure required by our insurance company.
- Display the provided safety triangle on yourself or your bike so that it is visible from behind.
- Headphones or dual earpieces (except hearing aids) are not allowed while riding.
- Obey all traffic laws and ride single file; drafting is discouraged.
- Whenever stopping, get at least 10 feet off the road. If there isn't room to do this, move to a safer area.
- Tour staff has the right and responsibility to insist that a participant receive professional medical attention if the staff feels it is necessary.
- Don't park bicycles against windows, gas pumps or near doorways.
- Alcoholic beverages will not be purchased with group funds.
- Never operate a stove on a table where people are sitting.
- Do not use personal eating utensils, knives, etc. To prepare group food
- Lost or damaged group cooking equipment must be replaced with group funds.
- Wash dishes at your campsite or in a designated "slop sink." Do not wash dishes in restrooms, at pumps or at water taps. Soap should never be used in streams or lakes.
- Never take personal food into a restaurant.
- Do not hitchhike, except in emergency situations.

NOTE: Failure to follow Adventure Cycling's "Rules of the Road" is grounds for dismissal from an Adventure Cycling tour, as is any other behavior determined to be detrimental to your group's well-being.



YOUR GROUP

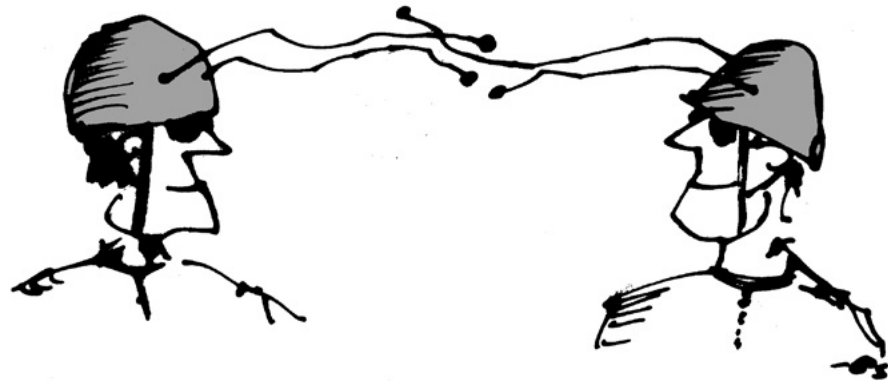
Your group will be comprised of riders covering a broad spectrum of age and experience. We generally have a mix of men and women, most of whom come solo. We also welcome foreign riders, and every imaginable occupation is represented. Some participants are seasoned cyclotourists, while many are first-timers.

While Adventure Cycling tours are designed to allow as much personal freedom as possible, each group member will have certain responsibilities to the group. As in any group travel situation, flexibility and the ability to compromise are essential. New friends and great camaraderie are the end results.

TOUR STAFF

The goal of Adventure Cycling's staff is to make your trip the best experience possible. They attend to the logistics of your tour and ensure that things run smoothly. All are certified in first aid and CPR, and many are trained bicycle mechanics. They patrol the route in order to assist you if you have a problem.

The staff can't do absolutely everything for you, however. Their purpose is to facilitate your touring experience. They will provide leadership and support, but in some ways you must rely on yourself. On our tours, even a novice will learn how to read a map, set up a tent and repair a flat tire. We believe this enhances everyone's sense of accomplishment, adventure and enjoyment.



WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Supported tour prices include meals, camping fees, maps, safety triangle, vehicle support/transportation of luggage, and T-shirt.

Items not included are transportation to/from the tour, personal spending money, overnight accommodations (other than those used by the group), bicycle parts (for repairs), extra snacks and alcohol.

INSURANCE

Health Insurance: We strongly suggest that you continue, or obtain, major medical coverage during your tour. Your existing homeowner's, tenant's, and/or auto insurance could also be useful in case of theft or damage while you're on the tour.

Travel Insurance: Our sincere wish is for every trip participant to attend and complete the tour of their choice. To protect yourself against personal emergencies, health problems, weather, transportation or other unexpected issues that might cause you to cancel or shorten your trip, travel insurance is strongly advised!

MEALS

We realize that the quality of our meals is of major importance to our tour participants, and we strive to ensure that our caterers maintain exceptional standards. Meals high in carbohydrates are the norm, and these are supplemented with salads, vegetables, breads and desserts. Lunches usually consist of sandwiches, cookies, fruit and drinks. Breakfasts are often a combination of hot foods such as pancakes, breakfast meats and



eggs, and cold cereals, breads/muffins/pastries and juice.

If you require vegetarian meals, and have not already informed us, please do so immediately so that we may accommodate you.

STARTING POINT FACILITIES

Your tour will begin with registration and an orientation meeting at the date and location listed in your detailed information packet. The meeting typically starts in the late afternoon, lasts for an hour or two, and is followed by a hearty dinner. The exact time of the meeting and information about the starting point facility will be listed in your info packet.

Allow time before the meeting to assemble your bicycle, since you will begin riding the next morning. Many participants arrive at the starting point a day or two early, which helps

them acclimate to higher altitudes and makes for a more relaxed beginning to the trip. Check with us to see if camping will be available at the starting point prior to your actual start date.

WEATHER

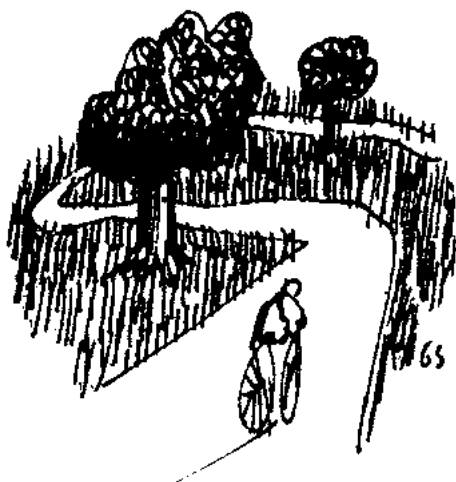
The rule regarding weather is: prepare for the worst, but hope for the best. In the western states, expect any kind of weather at any time of the year. You may encounter hot days (100° F), cold nights (below freezing), rain, snow and parching sunshine. Because the humidity is typically lower in the West, dehydration can occur without sensible perspiration loss. Be sure to consume plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.

In the Midwest and East, the humidity often rises above 90%, and when combined with high temperatures, can be especially draining. The rule of thumb for avoiding dehydration and low energy levels is to drink before you are thirsty and eat before you are hungry. Some tour groups opt for early departures to avoid midday heat.

In mountainous areas, the weather can be particularly varied and unpredictable, and people vary in their abilities to adapt to high altitudes. Being in good physical condition seems to help, and participants often elect to arrive early in order to acclimate themselves to higher elevations.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

You provide your own bicycle, tent, ground cloth, sleeping bag and pad. We also recommend that you bring a frame pump, some basic tools, spare



tube, patch kit and a saddle and/or handlebar bag.

Additionally, you'll need to bring appropriate clothing for on and off the bike. See "What to Take..." page 16.

DAILY CYCLING DISTANCE AND CONDITIONS

Adventure Cycling's supported trips operate on fixed itineraries. The group typically rides a prearranged route each day. You need to be prepared to ride the entire route as prescribed by the itinerary. Typically, you'll ride about 40 to 60 miles a day, depending on surface and terrain. Tours on gravel roads and/or dirt trails cover fewer daily miles, but 25-40 miles on rough surfaces is equivalent in difficulty to approximately 40-60 miles on pavement.

For any tour, it is important to train prior to your departure. Even with preparation, it is challenging to pedal long distances for several consecutive

days. Weather can be unpredictable - you may find yourself riding through rainstorms, oppressive heat or fighting headwinds. You may also need to climb mountain passes or share the road with vehicular traffic, depending on which trip you're taking.

The advantage of touring with Adventure Cycling is that you meet these challenges at your own pace. You have a lot of freedom on an Adventure Cycling trip, as the main group normally splits into sub-groups of two to four during the day to allow for varying interests and riding speeds.

RIDING PACE

Some folks ride quickly and arrive in camp as soon as possible; others take their time and get there just in time for dinner. Participants are encouraged to ride in groups of four or fewer cyclists. Most individuals end up riding with others who ride at a similar pace. All riders will receive maps with the designated tour route, but each cyclist is responsible for finding his/her way during the day. A staff member is normally at the rear of the group "riding sweep" with first aid supplies and tools.

LAYOVER DAYS

Some of our supported tours feature layover days. Layover-day locations are often selected in areas of significant interest, such as national parks or monuments. On these days, you may

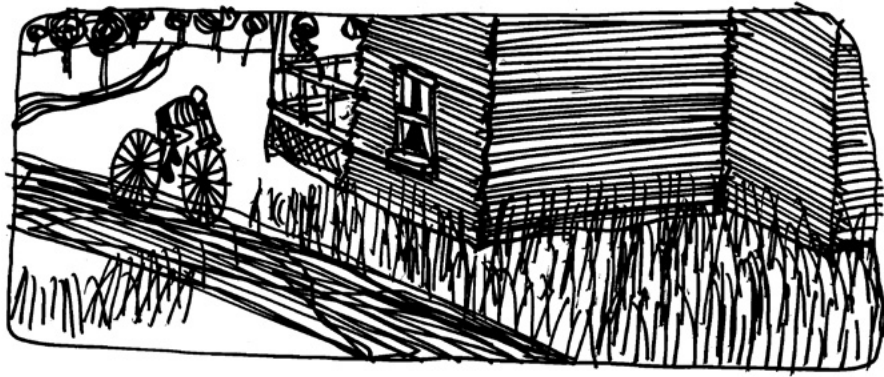
participate in a variety of activities. You can go for a day ride, choose to explore off-the-bike possibilities, relax, etc. We'll notify you of potential layover-day opportunities prior to the start of your tour.

GEAR TRANSPORT

We use an enclosed truck to transport your gear from campsite to campsite. When you arrive in camp, your gear will be waiting for you. You will be responsible for picking up your gear in the evening and bringing it back to the truck in the morning. Please limit your gear to one or two well-marked bags. You must be able to lift and carry the bags yourself, so pack lightly. During the day, you won't have access to your gear until you arrive in camp, so plan to carry everything that you'll need, while riding, with you on your bike.

MECHANICAL SUPPORT

On our larger supported trips, we provide a dedicated bicycle mechanic; on our smaller ones, you'll be accompanied by staff with mechanic training. We recommend that you carry a pump, spare tube and patch kit on your bike so you don't get stuck waiting for help with simple repairs. The mechanics do not charge for labor, but they must charge typical retail prices for parts. The mechanics come prepared with an assortment of standard replacement parts. If your bike requires unusual parts or tools, however, you may want to bring these



with you. We also recommend bringing extra spokes to fit your wheels. Your local bike shop can help you determine the correct spoke style and size.

S.A.G. SUPPORT

We expect that, by registering for one of our tours, you plan to ride the entire distance of each day's route. In most cases, support vans roam the route to offer assistance in case of medical emergency or equipment failure. These vans may not be used to shorten your daily ride on a routine basis.

LODGING OPTIONS

Motel and other lodging options are frequently available along our tour routes. If you elect not to camp, you must make your own reservations and pay for these accommodations yourself. Your detailed information packet will include a list of lodging options, which are generally located close to the camping facility. Adventure Cycling will transport your luggage to and from these lodging sites.

LATE ARRIVAL & EARLY TOUR TERMINATION

Sorry, but there will be no refunds for arriving late to a tour or for leaving the tour early.

The main factors to consider are comfort and function. We've seen people enjoy themselves on nearly every type of bicycle. We've had traditional touring bikes, racing bikes, mountain bikes, recumbents, hybrids, tandems and even triples join our events. The key is to make sure that you choose the appropriate type of bike for your tour and that you're comfortable on it.

Listed here are some bike characteristics that you'll want to consider:

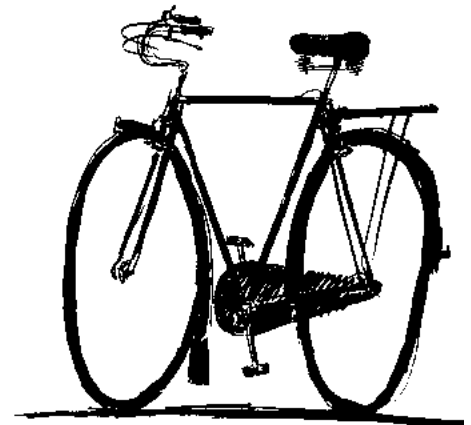
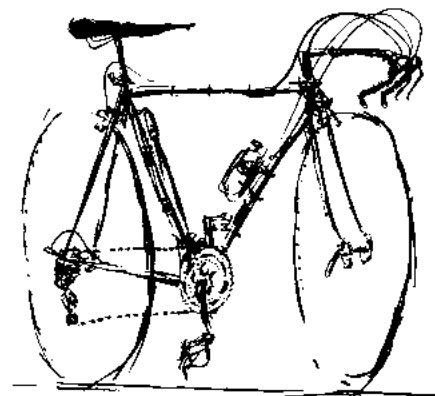
BICYCLE TYPES

Since on our supported tours, we transport riders' gear, many elect to ride their best or favorite bikes. On paved roads, standard touring or racing bikes are equally appropriate. On our dirt tours, mountain bikes or hybrid/cyclocross bikes typically fit the bill. Regardless, the most important thing is to use a bike that you're comfortable with and that is mechanically sound.

WHEELS AND TIRES

There are numerous wheel options available these days. Some feature low weight or better aerodynamics; others offer greater durability and dependability. Whichever you choose, be sure to select high-quality wheels that are tailored to the types of roads and terrain that you'll be riding.

Similarly, selecting the appropriate tire for your tour can enhance your experience. If you'll be traveling smooth, paved roads, you can choose a slick or semi-slick tire. Avoid tires that are too narrow, though, as they'll yield a harsher ride and be more susceptible to punctures. For 700C-size wheels, we recommend tires that are at least 25 mm wide. If you're touring rough gravel or dirt surfaces, it's best to have a tire with an aggressive or knobby tread. And, you'll want a wider tire (700 x 32 mm or greater) to give you better traction and more cushion. For those running 26" wheels, 1.25-1.75" slick tires work well on pavement, while 1.9-2.25" widths are optimal for gravel and dirt.



GEARS

Most of our riders find that a triple crankset, combined with a wide-ratio cassette or freewheel, best provides the broad range of gears needed to get over and through the varying terrain on our tours. Stronger riders may get by with a double crankset and/or narrow-ratio gearing on trips without much elevation change. In technical speak, high gears of 100-110 inches and low gears in the mid-to-upper 20s, are generally adequate for most of our tours. If your tour is particularly hilly or mountainous, it would be wise to have as low a gear as your bike will accommodate.

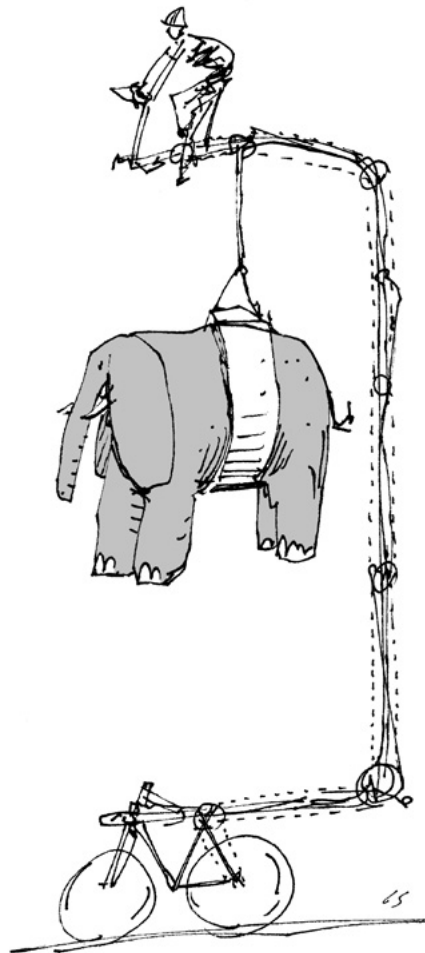
BICYCLE FIT

Comfort during long hours in the saddle is essential to enjoyable bicycle touring, and proper positioning is the key to being comfortable on the bike. Take the time to ensure that your bicycle fits you well; your local bike shop can help assist you with this.

Improper saddle height often causes knee pain. Pain in the inner or front portion of the knee is generally caused by riding with the seat too low. Pain in the outside or back of the knee is usually due to the seat being too high. Your saddle should be raised to the point where there is only a slight bend in your knee when your foot is at the bottom of the pedal stroke. If your hips rock or swivel in order to reach the bottom of the pedal stroke, your saddle is probably too high.

Most touring cyclists prefer their handlebars placed level with or, at most, an inch lower than the height of the saddle. This position

is more upright than the traditional aerodynamic "racing" pose, but it often affords cyclists greater comfort over the long haul. Similarly, you may choose between standard drop handlebars or flat bars (with bar-end extensions). The goal is to have and use multiple hand positions so that upper body fatigue and numbness can be avoided. Experiment with different adjustments and styles to determine what works best for you.



You'll be surprised by how well your body will adapt to new physical challenges. But, unless you adequately prepare yourself, the first few days on a tour could be unpleasant - or even bring your trip to a grinding halt.

CAUTION: *It is advised that you receive a thorough physical exam by a medical doctor before your tour. If you have any doubts about your condition, consider having a stress test and EKG. A sports-oriented physician should be well-versed in the special demands placed on the body by cycling.*

Let your doctor know that you will be doing a bicycle tour, and discuss your daily target mileage and the type of terrain that you'll be covering. Remember that riding at higher elevations presents significant challenges, as do extreme weather conditions.

Tell your physician about the special stresses your body will experience while touring. Your cardiovascular system, eyes and skin (from sun and wind), muscles and connective tissues (especially knees), nerves in your hands (from road shock), and your gastro-intestinal system (from varied water sources, irregular meals, and sustained daily exercise) all may be affected to a certain degree.

CONDITIONING

Begin your training at a distance that feels comfortable, whether it is 5 or 25 miles. Try to ride 3-4 days per week. Gradually increase your mileage over the course of several weeks, working up to 70-mile rides (or more). In training for a tour, riding speed is less important than endurance and time spent on the bike. The goal is to eventually ride several consecutive days (as you will on your tour) and spend 3-5 hours in the saddle each day.

Commuting to and from work is one way to help achieve this.

It's also important that you avoid overtraining. If you begin to feel increasingly tired, depressed, irritable or start to dread riding, you may be training too hard or too often. When your tour starts, you don't want to feel "burned out," or suffer from sore knees or other overuse maladies. Listen to your body and rest when necessary.

A FEW TIPS

- Relax as you ride, and take a break and stretch every couple of hours
- Eat and drink frequently, in small amounts
- Drink 4 - 5 quarts of water daily
- Avoid injuring your knees; "spin" at a cadence of 90 to 110 rpm
- Avoid sore hands (and road rash in the case of a fall) by wearing cycling gloves. Change hand positions frequently
- If you're not already wearing cycling shorts with a synthetic chamois, get some! And, remember, cycling shorts are designed to be worn without underwear
- To avoid or treat chafing/saddle sores, apply chamois cream (sold at bike shops) or other lubricant to the irritated area or the chamois in your cycling shorts
- Bathe frequently
- Launder your cycling clothes frequently. It's best to rotate your cycling shorts so that you wear a clean pair each day

RIDING SKILLS

Good cycling skills will increase your enjoyment and safety on your tour. Practice riding so that you can look behind you without veering to either side. Although not required, Adventure Cycling recommends the use of a rearview mirror. A mirror attached to your helmet or handlebars can make checking behind you easier. Don't make abrupt steering movements, especially on downhills or on slippery surfaces, because you may lose traction. Avoid pedaling when you're leaning into a turn; your pedal or toe clip could catch on the pavement and cause you to fall. Hold the inside pedal at the top of the revolution when cornering.

CADENCE AND GEARING

The system of gears on multi-speed bicycles lets you select different pedaling rates, or cadences. The optimal cadence range for most cyclists is between 90 and 110 rpm. Spinning a gear that is too low causes your cadence to be too high. This is tiring and makes you bounce on the saddle. Pushing a gear that is too high (a common error) causes your cadence to be too low. This can cause knee pain, which is the main reason people are forced to stop cycling on a tour. Any time you feel the slightest twinge of pain in your knees, stop riding. Check your position and saddle height to see if an improper adjustment is causing strain on your knees. When you resume riding, check your cadence. Skillful cyclists use their various gears to maintain a brisk, but steady cadence over changing terrain.

BRAKING AND EMERGENCIES

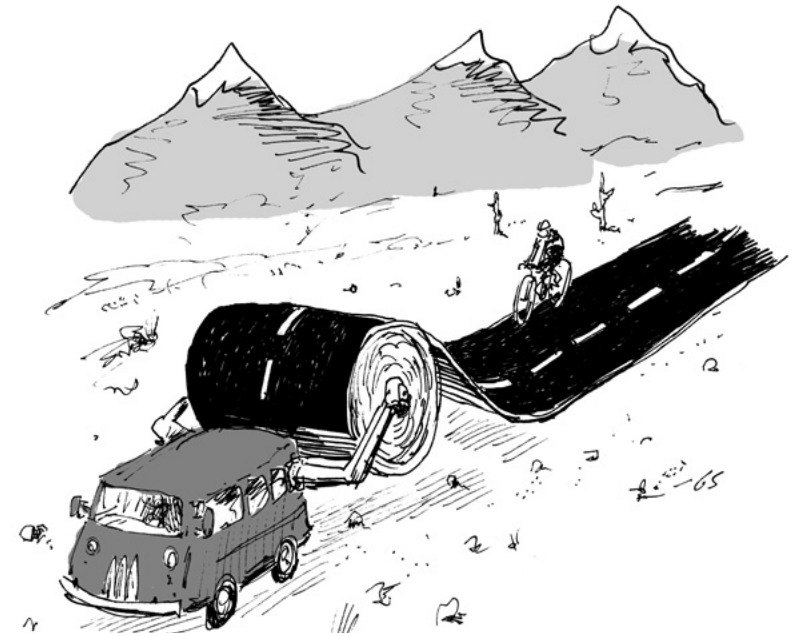
A cardinal rule of bicycling is to brake before you must, especially on curves and downhills. Brake prior to going into a curve; then, if you need to slow down more, brake gently while in the curve. In general, your front brake has greater stopping power. Take care not to apply it too forcefully – you'll risk locking up your front wheel and doing an "endo." Your rear brake stops in a more measured fashion; use it to "feather" or modulate your decelerations. Always apply your brakes gradually, especially if there are other riders near you. Use special caution on downhills: bicycles accelerate rapidly, and loose gravel, rocks, vehicles and cattle guards can appear quickly when you're moving fast.

CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

Motorized traffic presents the greatest danger to cyclists. If a vehicle overtakes you on the road, assume that there is a line of traffic following it, and that the following drivers have not seen you. Towing units and RVs are often equipped with mirror extenders that can clip unsuspecting cyclists. Be attentive and ready to leave the road if necessary.

Watch for oil, wet leaves, loose gravel, railroad crossings and foolish cyclists stopped in the roadway.

Be aware that when you are heading directly into the sun, motorists behind you are doing the same and they may have difficulty seeing you. Try to avoid night riding, but if you must ride after dark, use lights and wear reflective clothing. Fog can be just as dangerous; it distorts depth perception and drivers generally have less experience navigating through it.



A FEW WORDS ABOUT MOUNTAIN BIKE TOURS

If you can ride a bicycle, you can ride a mountain bike. To best prepare yourself physically for your tour, ride your mountain bike as much as possible. If you don't own a mountain bike and will be renting one specifically for the tour, ride your road bike as much as possible before the trip begins. If you have hills nearby, seek them out to prepare yourself for the ascents and descents found on most mountain-bike routes.

We offer a wide variety of mountain bike trips. Some are on dirt roads; others are on single track. Please read the tour descriptions thoroughly or call the office if you are unsure about the type of mountain bike trip you're considering.

Because of the upright positioning and the need to occasionally "hop" your front tire around in rough terrain, mountain-bike riding requires more upper body strength than does road touring. You would be wise to include some upper-body work in your training program: push-ups, pull-ups, workouts with weights or on a rowing machine, or anything else that gives your arms and upper torso a good workout.

Opportunities to refill water bottles can be very limited along mountain-bike routes. Plan on carrying 2-3 large water bottles or a large hydration pack.

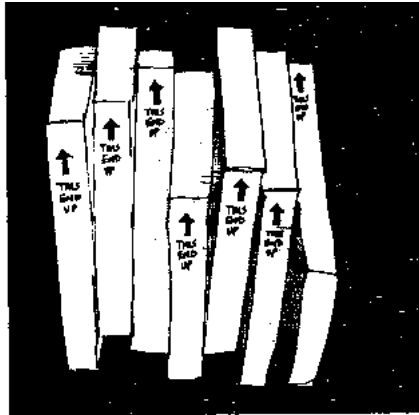
Participants who live at low altitudes may want to arrive a few days early to adjust to the higher altitudes generally associated with mountain-bike riding. Steep climbs at high elevations can cause shortness of breath and general fatigue. Be prepared to climb more slowly as you adapt to higher altitudes.

CLOTHING

Versatility, function and suitability for anticipated conditions are the primary considerations when deciding what to take along on your bicycle tour.

When it gets chilly, it's best to layer your clothing for warmth. Avoid cotton undergarments - they trap moisture, chafe your skin and are poor insulators when wet. Instead, it's best to choose synthetic fibers that wick moisture away from your skin. Next comes a wool sweater or synthetic fleece jacket; both are good insulators, even when wet. Your rain/wind jacket serves as the outer layer. A breathable waterproof fabric, such as Gore-Tex®, will keep you dry and is an effective windbreak. Coated, waterproof raingear tends to dampen your clothing from the inside and is not a good choice.

NOTE: Adventure Cycling's Cyclo-source catalog includes some of the best cycling gear available; it's selected using the recommendations of Adventure Cycling staff and participants.



Carry a light, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt to protect your skin from the sun. Clothes should do double duty: For example, your off-bike outfit should double as a sun protection or warmth layer.

Cycling shoes have stiff soles to increase pedaling efficiency and to protect your feet from the sustained pressure of pedaling. Good touring shoes can double as riding and walking shoes. Feet often swell slightly when riding, so choose shoes that allow free movement of your toes.

PACKING

While on Adventure Cycling's supported tours, you'll enjoy the luxury of having us transport most of your gear. We do recommend keeping your wallet, camera and often-used items in your jersey pockets. Always take these with you when you leave your bike. Tools for fixing flats can go in a small saddle bag for easy access.

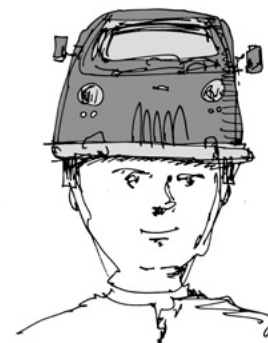
Modify the following list depending on your personal needs and past experiences. Keep in mind that you generally won't need any more gear for a 90-day tour than for a 7-day tour.

PERSONAL

- Cycling helmet, Snell, ANSI, DOT and/or CPSC approved (required on all tours)
- Cycling shorts, with synthetic chamois lining (2 pair)
- Leg warmers or tights for riding (rain pants could substitute)
- Short-sleeved jersey (2 or 3)
- Light, long-sleeved shirt for sun protection and off-bike wear
- Heavier long-sleeved top
- Rain/wind gear (jacket and pants) Gore-Tex® or a similar waterproof, breathable fabric recommended.
- Comfortable shorts for off-bike wear (1 pair)
- Comfortable pants for off-bike wear (1 pair)
- Underwear (2 or 3 pair)
- Socks (2 or 3 pair)
- Touring shoes, that are good for walking as well as riding.
- Cycling gloves
- Bathing suit
- Sandals (optional)

FOR MOUNTAIN OR SPRING/FALL TRIPS

- Wool or polypropylene hat
- Wool or polypropylene mittens or gloves, over thin polypro liner gloves
- Waterproof shoe covers
- Wool or polypropylene socks



MISCELLANEOUS

- Toiletries
- Towel (lightweight to enhance quick drying)
- Pocket knife (Swiss Army type is handy)
- Lightweight lock and cable (not a U-lock)
- Two or three water bottles
- Basic First Aid Kit
- Bandannas
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Insect repellent

PERSONAL TOOLS AND SPARE PARTS

- Tire levers/patch kit
- Spare tube (and tire, depending on the trip)
- Frame pump
- Spare spokes
- Rearview mirror
- Bicycle light
- Any tools that may be unique to your bicycle

CAMPING

- Sleeping bag - Down-fill bags are warmer, weigh less and pack smaller, but aren't as effective in wet weather. Fiber-fill bags are less expensive for comparable warmth, along with being heavier and bulkier, but will keep you warm even if wet.
- Sleeping pad - The closed-cell foam pads work well, but self-inflating pads are more comfortable.
- Tent - Lightweight and preferably free-standing with separate rain fly.
- Ground cloth

TIPS ON BICYCLING CAMPING

On most trips, we use commercial campgrounds with showers, laundry and a store on the premises. Our backcountry tours may utilize primitive campgrounds with only a pit toilet, picnic table and a water supply. Between these two extremes are campgrounds at county, state and national parks, which we utilize from time to time.

CHOOSING A CAMPING SITE

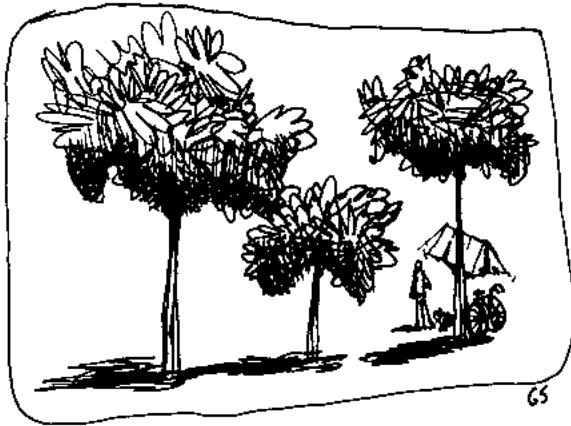
Look for level, dry ground with natural cover (grass, pine needles, or leaves) located at least 200 feet from water sources (lake, river, stream). Avoid gullies and damp areas which are colder and harbor more insects. On warm nights, an open, breezy site will have fewer bugs. Check for trees and other objects around the campsite that gusty winds could send crashing down on you. If electrical storms threaten, don't sleep near a solitary tree, as it may act as a lightning rod.

DRINKING WATER

Giardiasis, a debilitating intestinal illness, is caused by a protozoan that is found in surface water throughout north america. Even the clearest mountain streams may be contaminated, so never drink untreated water.

FOOD

Food purchasing, preparation and cleanup are done by pairs of group members on a rotating basis, in conjunction with the tour leaders/van drivers. Normally, dinner and the next day's breakfast and lunch supplies are purchased toward the end of the cycling day.



COOKING

Never put a working stove on a table where you or others are sitting! Keep the fuel bottle closed and away from a lit stove.

CLEAN-UP

Before washing dishes, scrape off remaining food residue. Carry water to your site for dishwashing (don't wash under pumps, in bathrooms or in surface water). Dispose of your gray water in a service sink or toilet; if neither is available, empty it at least 100 feet away from your campsite. Food odors from wash water can attract mice, chipmunks, raccoons, bears and other pests. When leaving a campsite, make sure it is at least as clean (or cleaner!) as when you arrived.

TRANSPORTATION TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR BICYCLE

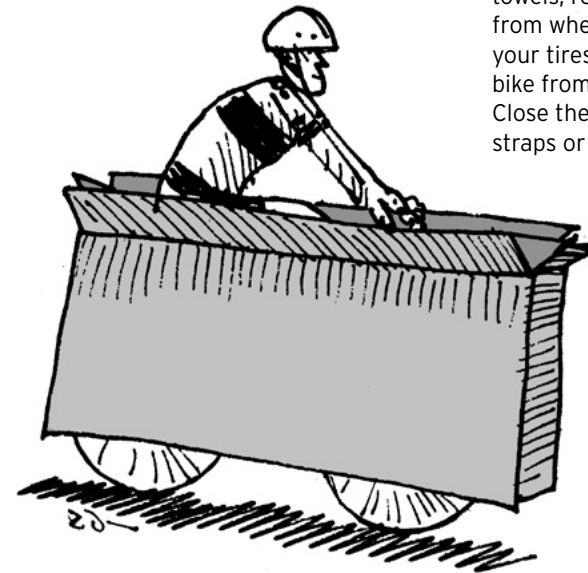
NOTE! To be safe, ship your bicycle 10 days in advance. Even if you choose an overnight or three-day shipping option, allow two or three extra days for the bicycle to arrive. No shipping company has a perfect record!

AIR VS. GROUND

Expect to pay up to \$200, each way, to have your bike accompany you on your airline flight. FedEx, UPS and similar services will ship your bike for considerably less, but you'll need to plan ahead to utilize this option. Most of our trip starting points will accept delivery of and hold your bicycle until you arrive. Consult the shipping information in your itinerary and call ahead to make arrangements for shipment. Regardless of transportation mode, we advise insuring your bike against damage or loss.

PACKING

Don't wait to pack your bike an hour before your (or its) departure. Plan to do this at home several days prior, and expect the process to take a few hours. Many seasoned cyclotourists use padded carriers or hard-sided cases to ensure that their bikes are well protected during shipment. Such carriers may be purchased (or possibly rented) from local bike shops, mail order suppliers or Adventure Cycling (www.adventurecycling.org/store/index.cfm). At the very least, you'll need to pack your bike in a cardboard bike box, which usually can be obtained from your local bike shop at little or no cost. Typically, you'll need to turn or remove your stem/handlebar assembly and pedals, lower or remove your seatpost/saddle, and take off (at least) your front wheel. Place your bike in the carrier or box along with your wheel(s). You may also elect to pad your frame with bubble wrap, pipe insulation or towels, remove quick release skewers from wheel hubs and partially deflate your tires - all of which protect your bike from jostling during shipment. Close the carrier/box securely with straps or tape, and it's ready to go.





Adventure Cycling Association

150 E. Pine Street
Missoula, Montana 59802
Toll-free: (800) 755-2453
Email: tours@adventurecycling.org
www.adventurecycling.org

