

# The Training Zones

NEW Zones	Old Levels	Sensation	Purpose	Duration
Zone 1	Level 1	<p>This intensity should feel fairly comfortable and your <i>perceived exertion</i> should be very low. Little or no concentration should be required at this intensity, and you should feel that, if necessary, you could ride all day.....</p> <p><b>RPE: 0-3</b></p>	<p>The purpose of Zone 1 rides are mainly for recovery. When the muscles are tired after racing or hard training, Zone 1 sessions can be used to help promote recovery. During low intensity exercise, toxins will be flushed out of the fatigued muscle cells, and nutrients (especially CHO) will be drawn into them.</p>	<p>If used for recovery, these sessions should not be any longer than an hour. However, there are situations where longer sessions are appropriate (such as technical skills training).</p> <p><i>How heavily these sessions figure in your training will depend on your own individual goals.</i></p>
Zone 2	Level 2 (low)  Level 2 (mid)  Level 2 (high)	<p>You will need to start concentrating at this intensity. Only a small amount of focus is required, but it is required none the less. If you do not concentrate at this intensity, you could quite easily slip back into Zone 1, so be careful.</p> <p><b>RPE: 4-5</b></p>	<p>The purpose of Zone 2 rides is to build an aerobic foundation and promote the utilisation of fat as a fuel source. This has specific relevance to weight loss and ultra-distance cyclists.</p>	<p>These sessions can vary quite considerably in length. As they are low intensity in nature, they represent the zone prescribed for longer rides. However, it is not unusual for them to figure as 1 or 2-hour slots as part of a recovery cycle.</p>
Zone 3		<p>This is a reasonably hard effort. Your breathing should be fairly regular without being heavy and laboured. When chatting to a training partner, you should regularly need to take pauses for breath.</p> <p><b>RPE: 5-6</b></p>	<p>The purpose of these sessions is to improve your aerobic power. Simply put, Zone 4 training improves your body's ability to extract oxygen from the air, transport it to the muscles, and use it (with fat) as a fuel.</p>	<p>Usually 1 to 3 hours, depending on the individual and circumstances.</p>
Zone 4		<p>This is a highly focussed effort, close to anaerobic threshold and just below race pace. Conversation with a training partner shouldn't be possible. In fact these rides are far better performed alone without the distraction of others.</p> <p><b>RPE 6-7</b></p>	<p>Because this intensity closely approximates anaerobic threshold, Zone 4 training offers significant benefits to the aerobic system as well as enhancing lactate clearance (a bi-product of anaerobic metabolism).</p>	<p>45 min to 2 hours max. These efforts can be split into intervals, often interspersed with Zone 2 efforts.</p>
Zone 5	Level 3	<p>This is the intensity of effort upon which all the others are gauged. Ride slightly off this pace and you will be in Zone 4, ride too hard and you will hit Zone 6 (where you will grind to a halt in minutes). Zone 5 is known in the Sports Science community as <i>Anaerobic Threshold</i>. This is a similar type of effort to that made in a 10-mile time trial. It is your maximum sustainable pace and it requires a significant amount of concentration (and pain tolerance).</p> <p><b>RPE: 8-9</b></p>	<p>The purpose of Zone 5 training is to tax both the Aerobic and Anaerobic (lactic) energy systems. The Aerobic system is worked close to its maximum and at the same time, the muscles are forced to produce and remove lactic acid at a consistently high rate. Zone 5 training taps into your aerobic and anaerobic power sources for maximum sustainable power...</p>	<p>Sessions of a continuous nature last between 20 and 40 minutes. If you can last any longer, you were not riding hard enough. Often the workload is split up over a number of 10-15 minute intervals to ensure quality is maintained.</p> <p><i>How heavily these sessions figure in your training will depend on your own individual goals.</i></p>
Zone 6	Level 4	<p>More commonly known as <i>interval training</i>, Zone 6 sessions are performed at an intensity, impossible to sustain for a long period of time, because they are so demanding.</p> <p>If targeting the <i>Phospho Creatine</i> (PC) energy system, expect to experience a rapid loss of power towards the end of the interval, but very little pain.</p> <p>On the other hand, a training session aimed at the <i>Lactic Acid</i> (LA) system should elicit muscular pain at the top end of the RPE scale.</p> <p><b>RPE: 10-11</b></p>	<p>The purpose of Zone 6 training is to overload the anaerobic energy systems so that they adapt and become stronger and more powerful.</p> <p>A cyclist with well-trained anaerobic energy systems will possess high power and speed capabilities over a short duration. This has relevance to fast starting, short hill climbs, breaking away, bridging a gap, sprinting, or any other sudden acceleration of pace.</p>	<p>Pure PC intervals should not last longer than 15 seconds, and a long recovery between bouts should be given to allow the PC stores to be replenished. The time span of a LA interval is usually between 30 seconds and 3 minutes. Above 3 minutes and the interval intensity begins to approximate <i>Anaerobic Threshold</i> (Zone 5). A recovery period that is too short will also have the same effect. Therefore, a recovery period that is slightly longer than the interval itself will tend to isolate the LA system.</p> <p><i>How heavily these sessions figure in your training will depend on your own individual goals.</i></p>



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## RPE Scale

	<b>RPE Scale</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Nothing at all</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Very Light</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Light</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Somewhat Heavy</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Heavy</b>
<b>6</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Very Heavy</b>
<b>8</b>	
<b>9</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Very, Very Heavy</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Maximal</b>

(taken from ACSM Guidelines, Fourth Edition, 1991)

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