

# Sample Cyclo-Cross training

## Monday

1hr Recovery ride or rest with lots of post-ride stretching, especially hamstrings, groin and lower back.

## Tuesday

AM Run 20-30 minutes.

PM 1.5 hr road ride w/ short hard intervals.

## Wednesday

Hard cross workout

Barriers and running transition practice with short technical race intervals.

Short race endurance practice 15-40 minutes.

## Thursday

AM Run 20-30 minutes steady medium

PM 2.5 hrs on road easy

## Friday

Rest Day

1 hr spin very easy

Stretch and hydrate

## Saturday

1.5 hr cross or road ride with 2 x 5 minute medium intervals and 2-3 race intervals of 2-5 minutes each with 5 minute recoveries

## Sunday

Race (including minimum 30 minute warm-up and stretching)

## Some pointers

Practice starts. Typically start in the big ring and large rear cog. This eliminates trying to shift chainrings as you are accelerating. Set up a 50-foot grassy straight with a turn into some single-track and find a friend or two to race for 6 - 8 starts.

Set up a short cross course with whatever barriers you can put together. The regulation height maximum for barriers is 16 inches, although you will find many promoters use shorter ones.

I like to take 1 month off from racing before the first cross race. This helps the brain and body rebuild for what can be a five month (September to February) season for the elite.

Although it is often tempting to continue racing immediately after cross because fitness is so high, I recommend taking a rejuvenating break. This is key in establishing a good yearly cycle.

## Transitions on and off the bike

Whether cross is the focus of your year or simply a training tool, to survive a cross race will require being able to mount and dismount from the bike to get over barriers and run up hills.

First practice lifting the bike and find your two grabbing locations. Use 2 fingers under the top tube and find the balance point where both wheels rise evenly from the ground. This will be where you grab the bike for barriers and short runs. Next grab the downtube, usually in about the middle, and practice lifting the bike onto your shoulder for longer runs. Do 2 x 20 reps of "bike ups", lifting the bike from the two basic holds up into the position you will carry it.

Once you have established your grabs, start practising mounts and dismounts at walking speed. First ride around on some grass and practice swinging your right leg over the bike and coasting as that leg dangles straight down behind your left leg. Keep your hands on the hoods and practice cornering and coasting as long as you can like this.

Once you feel comfortable riding and coasting like this, then step the right leg between the bike frame and your left leg still on the pedal, and begin to walk. (Hint: click out of your pedal with the left shoe before you start and just stand on the pedal to avoid staying clipped in once you dismount.) Practice stepping the right foot through for fast and flat dismounts, typically into barriers, and simply step back off the bike for slower

(the cowboy dismount) typically uphill. Practice both ways very slowly until you feel comfortable, each time just throwing the right leg back over the saddle and remounting at walking speed.

In practising the remount, start at walking pace and keep it very slow until you eliminate repeated hopping on the launching foot onto the saddle. Work toward one smooth lunge onto the right pedal and instantly begin to pedal. Keep your eyes looking forward; use your peripheral vision to help your feet find the pedals. Just keep pedalling, your feet will find the pedals. If you need to take a quick glance down at the pedals before you remount, do it. Just like the dismount, once you feel comfortable (or at least not totally foolish) then add a little speed, and eventually a flat barrier, then a full 15-inch high barrier to practice regularly.

## Running for cross

Running is essential for racing cross at a high level. You can't avoid it in a race, and although you might hear of guys who don't train their running, on courses with longer runs or very muddy conditions, they will suffer. Although most racers can sprint up a cross run-up, an untrained runner will not recover as quickly or be able to stay with good runners on the longer runs.

Running is best approached in a similar way to your cycle training. Start easy and build up a base of moderate running time, typically three times per week for 20 minutes for a couple weeks, then add some longer threshold intervals and then peak your running with short, sharp hill acceleration during a moderate 30-minute run.

## Running Programme

### *Pre Season*

10-50-minute runs beginning with walking the downhills and flat portions\* and working toward steady threshold intervals with recoveries 3x/week.

### *Season*

20-30-minute runs starting with 3 x 3-minute intervals at race pace 2x/week.

### *Peak*

20-30 minute runs with short explosive uphill running bursts of 5 - 30 seconds 1x/week.

\*Running uphill is very similar to the pedal stroke and is the ideal transition because it is easy on cycling-trained muscles and decreases your risk of injury.

## Quick Cross Tips

Steer the bike underneath you, do not lean body into corners.

Lift butt at least slightly off seat through corners.

Pedal while remounting, even if pedals aren't there yet.

Ride easy for 15 minutes and stretch prior to practising barriers to avoid pulls. Practice perfectly smooth transitions, slowly first, add speed later.

If you feel rough and out-of-control over barriers, slow down a notch or two.

## Conclusion

If you want to be a better bike racer and take your riding to a new level, then cyclocross is for you. To get better at the technical side of cross, watch some of the best racers in the country ride and then study books, videos or DVDs to learn more and to mentally rehearse smooth transitions. For Cyclocross info check out: <http://www.cyclo-cross.com>. Now get out there and get muddy!

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