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ALPES / FRANCE

Training advices #1

Less than 6 months remain before the 5th edition of the Alps Epic. Therefore, it's time to get to work, to be ready at the end of June to cover hundreds of kilometres and climb many meters of elevation.

This year we offer a different approach to physical preparation and training based on the latest trends which may change your habits a little. So, no more low intensity, long distance training. We're going to do the opposite and here's why...

Basically, by starting with long distances at a slow pace, we develop the endurance of muscle fibres known as slow-twitch muscles. But isn't that the aim? Yes! But the problem is, once this work has been done, muscles no longer capture and record increases in rhythm and therefore the body switches directly to the fast-twitch fibres once the tolerance threshold has been exceeded. Because fast-twitch fibres get tired very quickly, you will not be able to continue at a high intensity for a very long time.

On the other hand, if we start with intensity, the body will develop the power of fast-twitch fibres as well as the slow-twitch fibres, and endurance work can come later. Researchers have discovered that it is easier for slow-twitch fibres to gain power and then endurance rather than the opposite way round. The transformation is much less effective because the body favours fast-twitch fibres, less economical but easier to use, as soon as the power required is too high.

I therefore suggest you start by training for two weeks without special exercises, where you change your pace depending on the terrain. The aim is to wake the body up without ending each session exhausted but still having pushed your body's limits. Count two to four sessions based on your current level of between one and two hours to start with. If you keep the pace up high, you'll see that this is more than enough. Add one or two muscle building sessions which will help you eliminate unwanted movement, reduce the risk of injury, and optimize power transfer between your body and the machine.

Then it will be time to start the serious work, with at least a month's training where the focus will be on the development of Maximum Aerobic Power and Strength. The advantage of this type of session is that it is perfectly feasible indoors during the winter months and for short periods. An hour of home training with a few exercises and the job's done! For a good development count one GPP session and two MAP



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sessions per week. At the weekend, enjoy mountain biking outings, road cycling or other sports such as cross-country skiing, ski touring, cross-country running, etc... You can practice these sports up to three hours.

What exercises should you do to work MAP and Strength?

MAP is the maximum power that a trained athlete can maintain for about seven minutes. Therefore, the objective is to ride at this intensity by splitting the duration of effort to have a total duration of at least seven minutes. Also keep recovery times equal to the times of effort so as not to switch to another theme such as lactic or threshold.

For Strength, after a good warm-up, alternate hard pedalling phases in the hardest gear of your bike at about thirty rounds a minute (for three to five minutes) and recovery phases in hypervelocity at about one hundred rounds a minute (for two to four minutes).

So, there's a good start for your preparation for this incredible adventure that awaits you in July.

Now it's up to you have to adapt these tips to your level or, if necessary, contact us for a specific plan for your level and availability.

**Your Epic Coach
Gwenael Morra**



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