

ROADMAN CYCLING / PRINTABLE PLAN

12-WEEK STRENGTH TRAINING PLAN FOR CYCLISTS

A conservative beginner plan that learns, repeats and progresses without sacrificing the bike.

Two non-consecutive sessions is a practical starting point - not a universal law.

LAST REVIEWED 31 AUGUST 2026

Full guide: roadmancycling.com/blog/cycling-strength-training-12-week-beginner-plan

How to use the plan

This is a conservative starting framework for healthy cyclists who are new to resistance training. No cyclist study has tested this exact 12-week package. Choose exercise versions that fit your competence, equipment and joint comfort.

The programme-level rule

Gym progress counts only when the whole week improves. If lifts rise while every priority ride becomes flat, reduce gym volume or change its placement.

The three phases

Phase	Frequency and work	Progression test
Weeks 1-2: Learn	1-2 sessions; 1-2 sets; leave 3-4 good reps available.	Technique stays controlled; symptoms do not worsen over 24-48 hours.
Weeks 3-6: Repeat	Move toward 2 sessions; 2 sets on main patterns; mostly 6-12 reps.	Both sessions repeat cleanly and priority rides retain quality.
Weeks 7-12: Progress	2 sessions if recovered; 2-3 sets on selected main movements.	Add one variable only when the whole week remains productive.

Before week one

- + Seek qualified guidance for relevant cardiovascular, neurological or orthopaedic conditions, osteoporosis, recent surgery or unexplained pain.
- + A beginner does not need a one-repetition-maximum test. Technique and tolerance come first.
- + Stop and seek urgent help for chest pain, fainting, unusual breathlessness or rapidly worsening neurological symptoms.

The two-session template

These are example movement options, not mandatory lifts. Use support or a machine when it improves control and progression.

Session A

Exercise pattern	Accessible option	Weeks 1-2	Weeks 3-12
Knee-dominant	Goblet squat or leg press	1-2 x 6-10	2-3 x 6-12
Hip-dominant	Supported hinge or RDL	1-2 x 6-10	2-3 x 6-12
Upper pull	Seated row or pull-down	1-2 x 8-12	2 x 8-12
Calf	Standing or seated raise	1-2 x 8-15	2 x 8-15
Trunk / carry	Carry or Pallof press	2 short efforts	2 controlled efforts

Session B

Exercise pattern	Accessible option	Weeks 1-2	Weeks 3-12
Knee / single-leg	Supported split squat or step-up	1-2 x 6-10 each	2-3 x 6-12 each
Hip-dominant	Hip thrust or kettlebell deadlift	1-2 x 6-10	2-3 x 6-12
Upper push	Push-up or dumbbell press	1-2 x 8-12	2 x 8-12
Upper pull	Row or pull-down	1-2 x 8-12	2 x 8-12
Trunk	Side plank or dead bug	2 short efforts	2 controlled efforts

How hard should a set feel?

Weeks 1-2: finish with three or four good repetitions available. Later, selected work can move toward one to three when technique, joint comfort and recovery are stable. Stop before form changes or pain appears.

My substitutions

Pattern	Selected exercise	Starting load	Notes
Knee-dominant			
Hip-dominant			
Upper pull			
Upper push			
Trunk / carry			

Progress across 12 weeks

Week	Primary job	Progression boundary
1	Learn session A; minimum work	Leave 3-4 good reps; note next-day response
2	Learn session B; repeat A if recovered	No added load unless both technique and comfort are stable
3	Move toward two sessions	Add a repetition before adding load
4	Repeat the same menu	Keep the programme recognisable
5	Progress one main movement	Add reps, load or a set - never all three
6	Consolidate	Priority rides remain the programme test
7-8	Progress selected main patterns	Keep 1-3 good reps available
9-10	Continue controlled strength	Plyometrics are optional, not compulsory
11	Hold useful work	Reduce accessories if riding load is high
12	Retest the same measures	Compare gym, bike and recovery outcomes

Progress only one variable

- + Add a repetition inside the planned range.
- + Or add a small amount of load.
- + Or add one set to a selected main movement.
- + Do not increase repetitions, load, sets and exercise difficulty together.

Plyometrics are optional

Jumping requires landing skill, appropriate health and sufficient strength. A beginner can continue progressing controlled resistance training through week 12.

Fit strength around the bike

Option	How it works	Use it when
Separate demanding sessions	Place strength and the priority ride on different days or provide a longer gap.	Either session repeatedly loses quality when combined.
Consolidate stress	Complete the priority bike work first, lift later, then keep the next day easy.	Time is limited and both sessions remain productive.

Weekly placement worksheet

Day	Bike priority / duration	Strength	Recovery note
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Review the whole programme

- + Did the key ride complete its intended work?
- + Did soreness change movement, cadence or normal daily activity?
- + Did joint discomfort appear or worsen?
- + Did the selected lifts progress across several exposures?

Readiness and session log

One low HRV reading or one poor night is not a diagnosis. Use symptoms, sleep, energy, soreness, joint comfort, recent load and the next important session together.

Signal	Green direction	Caution direction
Symptoms	No illness symptoms	Fever, respiratory or gastrointestinal illness
Sleep	Near personal pattern	Repeated short or fragmented nights
Energy / mood	Normal for this rider	Material drop across several days
Soreness	Mild and improving	Changes movement or worsens
Joint comfort	Stable	New, sharp or progressively worse pain
Next ride	Low priority or well separated	Race, test or key intervals are close

Adjustment order

1. Remove optional accessories. 2. Reduce three sets to two. 3. Keep familiar exercises and controlled load. 4. Shorten the session. 5. Skip and reassess when symptoms or pain make training inappropriate.

Session log

Date	Exercise	Load	Reps x sets	Reps left	Next-day note

STRENGTH THAT FITS YOUR CYCLING

Roadman's upcoming iPhone app will choose a 30, 45 or 60-minute cyclist-specific strength session, protect key rides and use readiness guardrails to hold or reduce volume with a plain-language reason.

Join the single early-access list at roadmancycling.com/app

Evidence notes and sources

This plan uses group-level evidence to set conservative boundaries. It does not claim one beginner cycling protocol has been proved.

Primary sources

- + Cyclist-only heavy-strength meta-analysis: 17 controlled studies, 262 cyclists, low outcome certainty. PMID 40632222.
- + Non-failure versus failure resistance training: 20 studies, 556 healthy adults. PMID 42410632.
- + Concurrent-training sequence meta-analysis. PMID 28783467.
- + Cycling and bone-health systematic review. PMID 23256921.
- + WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Links

Full guide: roadmancycling.com/blog/cycling-strength-training-12-week-beginner-plan

Exercise guide: roadmancycling.com/blog/cycling-gym-exercises-best

Strength-session planner: roadmancycling.com/tools/strength-session-planner

Recovery screen: roadmancycling.com/tools/recovery-screen

App early access: roadmancycling.com/app

Safety boundary

This document is educational. It does not diagnose, treat or clear an individual for resistance training. Seek appropriately qualified help for relevant health conditions, pain, recent surgery or concerning symptoms.

ROADMAN CYCLING / BUILD THE HABIT, PROTECT THE BIKE

Reviewed 31 August 2026. Version 1.0.