

Granting Life-Changing Wishes Every Mile!

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for the Wish-A-Mile® Bicycle Tour and have a better understanding as to the Why. A cyclist that understands what they are doing, why they are training a certain way and how it positively impacts their ability to perform is more intelligent and the greater the experience. You do not need to do everything in this guide to be prepared for Wish-A-Mile and have a great time.

The information here will consider the course used for all three days of Wish-A-Mile. Over the full tour, you will cover 300 miles with some climbing. Mostly all through beautiful roads and countryside. You will have break stops spread throughout each day's route (approximately every 10-15 miles). All stops are fully stocked to take care of your food and hydration needs. This is in addition to breakfast and dinner each day that is provided by Make-A-Wish.

Wish-A-Mile offers a 300-mile, 200-mile and 100-mile option. Regardless of which option you choose, you will need to be able to ride for multiple hours each day. This translates to spending most of your time in Zone 2/Endurance or 4-5 out of 10 if based on relative perceived effort (RPE). In the beginning and for a large percentage of each day, the effort will be on the easier side. For that reason, this guide will focus on preparing for the Wish-A-Mile through spending most of your time in Zone 2/Endurance or 4-5 RPE. The reason for spending most of your time at Endurance during the Wish-A-Mile, is because this is an effort/workload that can be sustained for many hours with proper hydration and nutrition being applied at the same time. Because you will be spending most of your time during the race in Z2/Endurance, you will also train at that effort/work level. That way you are both very efficient and familiar with the effort required come race day. Efficiency or economy is key when wanting to get the most out of each race performance. The more efficient you are, the more work you can do over a given time.

Aside from being a workload that can be sustained for many hours, there are physiological benefits/adaptations an athlete gets from spending much of their time in Zone 2/Endurance. The adaptations are: An increase in cardiac muscle strength, increased mitochondrial density, increased capillary density, and improved stamina. Increased stamina is just that, the ability to keep going or do work. This is key for any endurance or multi-day event. Just like the muscles in our legs, we want our cardiac (heart) muscles to be strong. Where our legs power our bike, our heart helps to deliver what our muscles need to push the pedals. The stronger, more developed, and efficient your heart is, the greater the stroke volume or amount of nutrient rich blood that is circulated throughout your body and to your working muscles. Increased capillary density will allow for more nutrient rich blood to be delivered to your working muscles more efficiently. The more efficiently delivered blood to our muscles is even more impactful when the mitochondrial density is increased. With mitochondria being the powerhouse of our cells, the greater the number the more ATP is produced, and thus more work can be done.

Even though most of your training time will be spent in zone 2/endurance, there is still a benefit to spend time training in Zone 3/Tempo/5-6 RPE and Zone 4/Threshold/7-8 RPE. The benefits

are that if you spend time training in both tempo and threshold, you can increase the amount of work you can do within your endurance zone. Training in both tempo and or at threshold can also help to increase the amount of work you are doing within a set amount of time, which is beneficial if you are more constricted on time. With that said, if you are spending more time in tempo and or at threshold, your body will require more recovery than if you spend the same amount of time in your endurance zone.

Back to the more specific needs for the Wish-A-Mile Tour. Because there will be some hills (more time out of the saddle, lower cadence, greater fluctuations in speeds) there are some other components to consider when putting together your training.

1. Incorporate hills of varying length (both seated and out of the saddle) and work on being consistent with your efforts or perceived exertion. If you do not have hills, you can ride into the wind (seated or standing) and simulate climbs. Also know that when you stand your HR and workload will increase and you want those to be as gradual and controlled as possible. Timing when and how you get out of the saddle will also be key. Try to anticipate when you will need to stand. Start with getting out of the saddle 5-10 seconds before necessary.

2. Just as important as being efficient going uphill, you want to be able to stay consistent with your work being done on the downhill as well. This way you do not need to press super hard while climbing. Ultimately staying in control and maintaining a metronome like effort. A key to this will be to become very familiar with the gearing on your bike and know when and how quickly to shift to not break the rhythm. This can be done on downhills or riding into the wind and then turning and having a tailwind.

3. Incorporate varying cadence into your training rides. This can be done in conjunction with the hills/wind training mentioned above or can be done in isolation. When doing cadence work in isolation (w/o wind/hills) you can structure the work like other intervals.

Examples:

5 x 1-2 min at + or - 5 to 10 rpms (depending on low or high cadence work) of your natural cadence with 3-10 min between. With a progression over time looking like: 5x2min, 5x3min, 3x5min, 3x7min, 2x10min.

4. Bring the above two training pieces together with power and/or HR. More specifically, work on being able to have fluctuations in speed, gradient and cadence all the while maintaining a relatively consistent HR and/or Power output.

The reason why the above training techniques will be key in preparing for the Wish-A-Mile, is that when a lot of medium to bigger spikes happen when the effort could be more controlled, you tend to burn through more “matches” than needed and then must reduce your effort/workload to recover. The drop is usually low enough that when averaged with the spikes,

the overall efforts put the athlete at a slower overall time or reduced overall distance. Consistency and metered efforts will be key.

Key focus points:

- Plan to spend most of your time in Zone 2/Endurance.
- Plan for 1 long ride a week. The goal being to add 10-15 min every week, except for recovery weeks.
- Plan to have 1 recovery/off the bike day a week. If you need more or day to day life forces multiple days off the bike, that is ok.
- Your warmup will include some Z2/Endurance work as you gradually build.

Example of warmups:

1. 10-15 min: starting low to mid Z1/ RPE 4 and then gradually build to Z2/Endurance and work to hold until the final 15-20min of your ride, which is when you would begin to warm down.
2. 10-15 min: starting Z1 and Z2 for the first 8-12 min. Hold that effort and do 4 x 30 sec higher cadence (+10rpm from natural cadence) with 30 sec natural cadences between.

March: (Goal 3 - 4 rides per week at 30min - 1hr:15min)

1. All rides Z2/Endurance.
2. Bonus: your legs are always moving, even if you are going downhill.

April: Total Weekly Mileage 100-100+(Goal 2-3 rides at 45min - 1hr:15min & one longer ride of 50 - 60 miles)

1. All ride Z2/Endurance (Goal 2-3 rides at 30min - 1hr:15min & one longer ride 1hr:15min-1hr:30min).
2. 2 rides with lower cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance).
 - a. 2-3 x 1-2 min at 5rpm below your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal (3 min natural cadence between).
3. Bonus: your legs are always moving, even if you are going downhill.

May: Total Weekly Mileage 115-130 (3-4 rides at 60 - 90 min & one longer ride 1hr:30min - 2hr)

Towards the end of May, pick a weekend to do a back-to-back 50-60-mile ride Saturday and Sunday)

1. All rides except 1 with efforts at Z2/Endurance.
2. 1 ride with lower cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 1-3 min at 5rpm below your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal. (3 min natural cadence between).

4. 1 ride with higher cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 2 min at 5-10 rpm above your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal (3 min natural cadence between).
5. 1 ride with 3x3 min at Z3/Tempo (3-5 min easy between efforts).

June: Total Weekly Mileage 150-150+ (Goal 3-4 rides at 60 - 90 min & one longer ride 2hrs - 3hrs.)

Towards the end of June, pick a weekend to do a back-to-back metric century Saturday and Sunday)

1. All rides except 1 with efforts at Z2/Endurance.
2. 1 ride with lower cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 1-3 min at 5rpm below your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal (3 min natural cadence between).
4. 1 ride with higher cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 2 min at 5-10 rpm above your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal. (3 min natural cadence between)
5. 1-2 rides with 3x3 min at Z3/Tempo (3-5 min easy between efforts).

July: (First two weeks 3-4 at 60 - 90 min & one longer ride 2hr:30min - 4hrs.)

Find a 100-mile organized ride or get teammates together to complete a 100-mile training ride.

1. All rides except 1 with efforts at Z2/Endurance.
2. 1 ride with lower cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 1-3 min at 5rpm below your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal. (3 min natural cadence between).
4. 1 ride with higher cadence work (still within Z2/Endurance range).
 - a. 3-5 x 2 min at 5-10 rpm above your natural cadence or one gear lower than normal. (3 min natural cadence between).
5. 1-2 rides with 3x3 min at Z3/Tempo (3-5 min easy between efforts).

1 Week to go: The focus is staying moving and making sure you have your equipment and gear ready. *Your long ride will be the Wish-A-Mile.

1. All rides are done Z1/Active recovery unless otherwise noted. All ride times capped at 60 min total.