

RAW 2026 Training Program

Introduction

This year is the 11th anniversary for the Ride Across Wisconsin and there have been some changes to this edition. Instead of a point-to-point ride across the state, RAW will once again feature a looped course over some of the best cycling roads the state has to offer. This year the ride will be held on a single day, no two-day option. There will be three distances, 175 miles and 100 miles and 60 miles. All will be challenging given the routes selected. And finally, the date of the ride is July 11, 2026.

RAW rides have always had a significant amount of climbing and the 2026 edition is no different. The climbing starts within the first 2 miles and doesn't let up. This means early pacing will be critical to insure a successful day.

Training

Following a consistent training schedule leading up to RAW is the best way to improve your prospects of having a safe and enjoyable experience. Your training should include a solid foundation of base miles along with a good mix of intensity, tempo riding, and a core strength program.

With the ride being early July, it is important to begin your training early. This training schedule is 6 months long and starts the 2nd week of January. If you are training in the midwest this likely means getting on your indoor trainer early. And it also means you will have some longer rides in March and April weather.

Weeks 1-3

Many riders have indoor trainers and can ride year-round. Other riders brave the elements and ride outdoors in the winter. And many riders do not ride during the winter months. By the last week in January, you will be riding 4 times per week. If you have been riding consistently this winter the first few weeks of this program will feel easy.

If you do not ride in the winter, fitness can be gained through a variety of activities like cross country skiing, fitness classes, running/walking, swimming, etc. Adding in some basic strength training can also be very beneficial during this period. I would recommend that during this period you should aim to get 3-5 hours of aerobic activity per week. This first month is also a great time to dial in your bike fit and equipment choices.

Weeks 4-27

Now is the time to begin more specific training. Your training should include a solid foundation of base miles along with a good mix of intensity, tempo riding and a core strength program.

- **Base Miles**

Your base miles will make up the bulk of your training and will be the primary means to achieve the necessary endurance for RAW. Ideally, you will gradually build your mileage over 5 to 6 months. Increasing your weekly mileage by no more than 15% per week and taking an easier recovery week every 3-4 weeks is the best way to safely build your riding volume. Most of these base miles will be done at EASY to STEADY efforts.

- **Intensity**

Your training should include rides at varying intensities. Adding intensity into your training will help you climb hills better, maintain a higher average speed and mentally prepare you for harder efforts. There are an infinite number of ways to add intensity into your training. Hill repeats, sprints, structured interval training are all ways to add intensity to your training. For purposes of this training program I've identified three different intensity levels.

EASY training is riding at a pace that is slower than the speed you plan to ride RAW. This is an easy recovery effort where your breathing is relaxed, and conversation is quite easy.

STEADY training is a slightly harder effort and should be a similar effort to the intensity you plan to ride the entire RAW. At a STEADY effort, your breathing has become slightly deeper than EASY pace, but conversation is still possible.

Then on one ride per week you should include efforts in the MODERATELY HARD/THRESHOLD intensity. MODERATELY HARD intensity has a higher perceived exertion than you plan to ride RAW and is characterized by a significant deepening of your respiration which will limit conversation or eliminate it all together. These efforts are typically shorter in duration and are followed by longer recoveries at EASY or STEADY intensities.

Another way to add intensity in your training is to climb hills. With the early climbing on this year's course, pacing will be key. Frequently riding hills will help you dial in your pacing for the event. Starting week 11 I suggest you start adding hills on your MOD-HARD days and ride a hill specific ride every other week until week 22. Then starting week 22 incorporate a weekly hill ride for the next 4 weeks. On these hill rides focus on climbing smoothly and efficiently. These rides will also be a good opportunity to evaluate your bike's gearing and determine if any changes are needed.

- **Long Training Rides**

Your long rides are the core of your training for RAW. Not only do these rides build your endurance they also provide good opportunities to test your pacing, nutrition plans and equipment choices. For 180 mile riders you should aim to build your long rides up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of your planned finish time. For 100 mile riders, especially if you have never done a 100 mile ride, I suggest you should have several rides equal to your expected RAW finish time. Use these rides to finalize your nutrition and hydration strategies. These rides will give you the confidence to know you can finish the distance.

- **Strength**

Whether you plan to ride the 100 mile or 180 mile option, RAW will challenge more than just your legs. That's why it's important to incorporate an overall strength program that emphasizes your core strength. Back, neck, shoulders, and arm muscles will also be pushed to the limit over the course of such a long day. So, it's important to work on these muscles as well. I recommend adding two core strength workouts a week to your program.

- **Pace Line Practice**

Being able to safely ride a pace line can save a significant amount of energy over the course of a long ride. Drafting behind another rider can reduce your effort by 20%. But riding safely and efficiently in a pace line is a skill that needs to be practiced. Find club rides in your area that teach paceline riding and incorporate these rides regularly into your training.

- **Bike Fit**

Being comfortable on your bike is an absolute must for long endurance rides. Things that are annoying on a century ride can derail a longer effort. You need to pay attention to the contact points; butt, feet and hands. Discomfort in any of these areas can lead to outright pain on a longer ride. Saddles, shoes, shorts and gloves should all be evaluated before your long ride. If you haven't had a professional bike fit, it would be wise to get one early in the season, so you have time to adapt to any changes. Be sure to let your bike fitter know that you are planning an ultra-distance ride.

- **Equipment**

Your equipment choices can make a big difference in your comfort and enjoyment of your ride. Wider tire selection 28mm to 32mm at slightly lower pressures can dramatically improve comfort. Taller gearing that

will allow you to remain seated and spin up the climbs will help save energy for the later miles. Be sure to let your mechanic know your ride plans.

Schedule

Below are two training schedules (175 mile and 100 mile) that outline weekly mileage and intensity. Both are 27 week schedules that start on January 6, 2025. If you have any questions regarding this training you can email Jim Boldra at jim.boldra@wheelandsprocket.com

180 Mile Training Schedule

| | | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun | |
|------|----------|------|--------|---------------------|--------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| Wk # | Week of: | EASY | STEADY | MOD-HARD/ HILLS* | STEADY | EASY | STEADY | STEADY | Total |
| 1 | 01/06/25 | 15 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 40 |
| 2 | 01/13/25 | 15 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 40 |
| 3 | 01/20/25 | 10 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 35 |
| 4 | 01/27/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 5 | 02/03/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 6 | 02/10/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 7 | 02/17/25 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 15 | 0 | 45 |
| 8 | 02/24/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 15 | 0 | 50 |
| 9 | 03/03/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 0 | 60 |
| 10 | 03/10/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 35 | 0 | 70 |
| 11 | 03/17/25 | 15 | 0 | 20* | 0 | 10 | 40 | 15 | 80 |
| 12 | 03/24/25 | 15 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 15 | 45 | 15 | 115 |
| 13 | 03/31/25 | 10 | 15 | 15* | 0 | 15 | 50 | 20 | 110 |
| 14 | 04/07/25 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 0 | 15 | 50 | 20 | 130 |
| 15 | 04/14/25 | 10 | 20 | 20* | 0 | 20 | 62 | 20 | 132 |
| 16 | 04/21/25 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 0 | 20 | 75 | 20 | 175 |
| 17 | 04/28/25 | 15 | 20 | 25* | 0 | 20 | 100 | 0 | 155 |
| 18 | 05/05/25 | 15 | 20 | 30 | 0 | 20 | 50 | 30 | 165 |
| 19 | 05/12/25 | 15 | 25 | 25* | 0 | 10 | 100 | 15 | 165 |
| 20 | 05/19/25 | 20 | 25 | 30* | 0 | 25 | 85 | 35 | 190 |
| 21 | 05/26/25 | 20 | 25 | 35 | 0 | 25 | 110 | 25 | 240 |
| 22 | 06/02/25 | 25 | 30 | 15* | 0 | 15 | 60 | 30 | 160 |
| 23 | 06/09/25 | 30 | 30 | 40* | 0 | 30 | 135 | 40 | 265 |
| 24 | 06/16/25 | 30 | 35 | 40* | 0 | 35 | 80 | 50 | 230 |
| 25 | 06/23/25 | 35 | 40 | 45* | 0 | 40 | 165 | 0 | 280 |
| 26 | 06/30/25 | 35 | 40 | 50 | 0 | 20 | 75 | 10 | 230 |
| 27 | 07/07/25 | 40 | 35 | 40 | 0 | 10 | 175 | 0 | 305 |

100 Mile Training Schedule

| | | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun | |
|------|----------|------|--------|-----------------|--------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| Wk # | Week of: | EASY | STEADY | MOD-HARD/HILLS* | STEADY | EASY | STEADY | STEADY | Total |
| 1 | 01/06/25 | 15 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 40 |
| 2 | 01/13/25 | 15 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 40 |
| 3 | 01/20/25 | 10 | | | 10 | | 15 | | 35 |
| 4 | 01/27/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 5 | 02/03/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 6 | 02/10/25 | 15 | | 10 | | 10 | 15 | | 50 |
| 7 | 02/17/25 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 15 | 0 | 45 |
| 8 | 02/24/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 15 | 0 | 50 |
| 9 | 03/03/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 25 | 0 | 60 |
| 10 | 03/10/25 | 10 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 35 | 0 | 70 |
| 11 | 03/17/25 | 15 | 0 | 20* | 0 | 10 | 40 | 15 | 80 |
| 12 | 03/24/25 | 15 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 15 | 45 | 15 | 115 |
| 13 | 03/31/25 | 10 | 15 | 15* | 0 | 15 | 50 | 20 | 110 |
| 14 | 04/07/25 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 0 | 15 | 50 | 20 | 130 |
| 15 | 04/14/25 | 10 | 20 | 20* | 0 | 20 | 62 | 20 | 132 |
| 16 | 04/21/25 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 0 | 20 | 75 | 20 | 175 |
| 17 | 04/28/25 | 10 | 0 | 25* | 0 | 0 | 85 | 50 | 145 |
| 18 | 05/05/25 | 15 | 20 | 30 | 0 | 20 | 50 | 30 | 165 |
| 19 | 05/12/25 | 15 | 0 | 25* | 0 | 0 | 50 | 80 | 145 |
| 20 | 05/19/25 | 20 | 25 | 30* | 0 | 25 | 85 | 35 | 190 |
| 21 | 05/26/25 | 20 | 25 | 35 | 0 | 25 | 100 | 0 | 205 |
| 22 | 06/02/25 | 25 | 15 | 10* | 0 | 0 | 60 | 40 | 140 |
| 23 | 06/09/25 | 30 | 30 | 40* | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 160 |
| 24 | 06/16/25 | 25 | 30 | 25* | 0 | 20 | 75 | 20 | 170 |
| 25 | 06/23/25 | 20 | 25 | 15* | 0 | 0 | 100 | 30 | 175 |
| 26 | 06/30/25 | 35 | 30 | 25 | 0 | 20 | 50 | 20 | 180 |
| 27 | 07/07/25 | 15 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 100 | 0 | 140 |