

OVERLAND | American Challenge Pre-trip Training

Preparing for your 3,000-mile ride across the country

Training for the American Challenge requires focus, time management and dedication. In the months leading up to trip start, you will build your fitness and familiarity with bicycling by increasing your mileage progressively. Training is essential in preparing you for a healthy and enjoyable experience on this challenging trip. Use this calendar to track your training over the 12 weeks before your trip. Hand in your completed calendar to your leaders upon arrival at trip start. Feel free to contact us with questions.

Responsible Riding Practices

In addition to building fitness and familiarity with bicycling, preparation for the American Challenge includes increasing your awareness of responsible riding practices. Your Overland leaders will review safety practices and reinforce responsible riding at trip start and each day of riding.

The following guidelines have been developed by the League of American Bicyclists to help manage the risks associated with biking on roads; however, managing risks does not eliminate them. We encourage you to follow these guidelines when training for your trip, and we also encourage you to consult with local bike shops for route and riding advice.

FOLLOW THE LAW

You have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers. Obey traffic signals and stop signs. Ride with traffic; use the rightmost lane headed in the direction you are going.

BE PREDICTABLE

Make your intentions clear to everyone on the road. Ride in a straight line and don't swerve between parked cars. Signal turns, and check behind you well before turning or changing lanes.

BE VISIBLE

Ride where people can see you and wear bright clothing. Use a front white light, red rear light and reflectors when visibility is poor. Make eye contact with others and don't ride on sidewalks. When possible, ride with others; do not ride alone.

THINK AHEAD

Watch for turning vehicles and ride outside the door zone of parked cars. Look out for debris, potholes, and other road hazards. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.

RIDE READY

Check that your tires are sufficiently inflated, brakes are working, chain runs smoothly, and quick release levers are closed. Carry tools and supplies that are appropriate for your ride. Wear a helmet.

Adapted from "Rules of the Road," <http://www.bikeleague.org/>

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Preparing for Biking

Daily rides on the American Challenge average 85 miles over varying terrain, and the longest day is approximately 120 miles (exact mileage may vary by group). The itinerary also includes buffer days to allow for delays en route (most groups will find that they spend this day partially or completely off of the bikes).

Overland bicycle tours are self-contained—there is no van support except for one section in eastern California. You will carry all of your belongings, plus some group gear and food, on a sturdy rack mounted over the back wheel of your bike. You will hang panniers (these are saddlebags, pronounced “pan-yers”) off the rack and attach gear like your sleeping bag and sleeping pad to the top of the rack using bungee cords. On average, you will carry between 30 and 40 pounds of equipment on your bike (not including the weight of the bike). There will always be a range of abilities in every American Challenge group. Successful groups are the ones where the stronger riders commit themselves to support the weaker riders and where the weaker riders work hard to improve their riding. If you cannot easily maintain the minimum speeds required, then you are going to have to train more—and harder—than the requirements that we have outlined.

Pre-trip training

- 12 weeks before your trip: two rides a week of one hour each (14 miles over varied terrain).
- 8 weeks before your trip: two rides a week of 90 minutes each (21 miles over varied terrain).
- 4 weeks before your trip: four rides a week, two rides of two hours each (28 miles) over varied terrain and two rides of four hours each (56 miles) over varied terrain.
- You should also complete one ride of 85 miles or greater (the average daily mileage for American Challenge) in the four weeks before trip start.

All pre-trip training rides must be completed using the bike, pedals and shoes you will use on the American Challenge. **All rides should be fully loaded with all of your gear and clothing.** All loaded training rides must be at an average speed of at least 12 miles per hour. You must be able to maintain (or exceed) 12 miles an hour fully loaded on terrain that includes hills. Groups typically average 12 miles per hour while riding (although pace varies by group). You will start riding at first light, taking short breaks during the day, and complete the day's ride in the late afternoon to early evening.

A 12-mile-per-hour pace makes it possible for the group to get each day's miles done and have time for snacks, lunch, delays, breakdowns, and, at day's end, for essential rest and recovery.

Name:

American Challenge Pre-trip Training | Weeks 12–9 before your trip

TWO one-hour rides per week; 14 miles over varied terrain

Sun.

Mon.

Tues.

Weds.

Thurs.

Fri.

Sat.

12
weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

11
weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

10
weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

9
weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

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Name:

American Challenge Pre-trip Training | Weeks 8–5 before your trip

TWO 90-minute rides per week; 21 miles over varied terrain

Sun.

Mon.

Tues.

Weds.

Thurs.

Fri.

Sat.

8

weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

7

weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
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6

weeks out

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5

weeks out

Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:	Duration:
Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:	Miles:

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Name: _____

American Challenge Pre-trip Training | Weeks 4–1 before your trip

FOUR rides per week: TWO 2-hour rides; 28 miles over varied terrain & TWO 4-hour rides; 56 miles over varied terrain
Additionally, complete ONE 85-mile ride over the four weeks

Sun.

Mon.

Tues.

Weds.

Thurs.

Fri.

Sat.

4

weeks out

Date:

Duration:

Miles:

Date:

Duration:

Miles:

Date:

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Student signature _____