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(Adapted from [Coach Fred's Solutions to 150 Road Cycling Challenges](#))

## Heat & Humidity

**What's the matter?** It's July, and where lots of us live global warming is no joke. Baby, it's hot out there and, in many places, humid too.

**Here's help:** Fortunately, a bike is well suited to hot-weather exercise. It goes fast enough to create a breeze that helps evaporate perspiration to cool the body. Bikes have bottle cages so we can haul fluid to replace much of what's lost through sweat. And bikes cover ground quickly so we're usually in range of air-conditioned convenience store for cooling off while replenishing liquids.

Let's look at 7 ways to combat summer's heat.

- **Hydrate.** The warmer it gets, the more important it becomes to keep fluids topped off. It isn't simply a matter of performance, although it begins being compromised with the loss of as little as 2% of body weight as fluid. Worse, becoming dehydrated in hot conditions can be health- and even life-threatening. So always start each summer ride with 2 full bottles. If you're going to be out for more than 90 minutes in areas without stores or other water sources, you may want a back-mounted hydration pack as well.

**Tip:** A hydration pack filled with ice works great to reduce core temperature. And as the ice melts, you'll have a supply of cold water to drink, further controlling the internal furnace. Hydration packs are a great solution for extreme heat.

- **Use ice and insulation.** You need to drink, but warm fluids on a hot day are hard to swallow and won't cool you. Use insulated bottles from Polar or CamelBak and get to know which convenience stores have crushed ice dispensers in their soda machines. Fill bottles with ice, top off with water or a sports drink and you'll have cold fluid for 90 minutes or so -- till the next stop.
- **Consider an electrolyte supplement.** Products such as Endurolytes, ZYM or NUUN can be taken during rides to replenish electrolytes lost in sweat (sodium, chloride, magnesium, potassium, calcium, etc.). This may improve performance and stave off cramps. Some riders report benefits, some don't. Most sports drinks contain some electrolytes.
- **Dress for distress.** Choose light colors in a relatively loose-fitting jersey with a long zipper to help air circulate and sweat evaporate. If you're concerned about sun damage to your skin and wind drag doesn't matter, consider long-sleeve garments specifically made for hot-weather riding by companies such as Sun Solutions.
- **Use sunscreen.** Sizzling weather is accompanied by a greater risk of sunburn. Fried skin will make you feel even hotter and more uncomfortable, so use sunscreen with a high SPF rating. Check for a sport-specific formula that stays on better during heavy sweating. Smear plenty on areas that are often overlooked: nose, lips, ears and the back of the neck and knees.
- **Ride early or late.** Many cyclists in hot regions ride at dawn or dusk during summer to escape the hottest part of the day. Consider getting a good lighting system so your rides aren't delayed or stopped by lack of daylight.
- **Reduce intensity.** When it's hot, more of your body's power production has to be diverted to cooling. So you can't work as hard or as long as in lower temperatures. Think about how hard it is to ride more than an hour on the trainer when the room is warm. It can be just as bad outside in hot conditions. So reduce both intensity and distance. Save the century PR attempts for cooler weather.