



When to Re-Test, Update Goal Distance or Adjust Your Rider Category

The best frequency for conducting a Bikelab Field Test (re-testing). For most cyclists using Bikelab, the recommended testing frequency is once every 12 weeks. For this reason, a "standard" training plan runs for 12 weeks which is the reasonable period of training required for most athletes to show progress (adaptation). That said, there are circumstances in which you may wish to re-test less, frequently. In this case, the re-test should be taken when training performances indicate that there has been a significant improvement in fitness.

Re-testing serves two main purposes:

1. It provides an opportunity to assess progress and compare the latest test result to any in your testing history
2. It can "re-set" your training focus and create entirely new training sessions, all 100% customised according to your Bikelab Field Test results, goal distance and rider category.

So, your re-testing frequency may vary from time to time based on circumstances and /or goals. It is always best to begin the testing / training process with a plan to re-test every 12 weeks and then adjust if needed, based on advice and assessment of your own needs.

Adaptation cycles. It is certainly true that some athletes adapt to training loads more quickly than others. In such circumstances, it may be necessary (even advantageous) to re-test before the 12 weeks of the training plan has been completed. Here are a few examples of when an athlete may need to re-test before 12 weeks:

- Where a cyclist has a significant training history and is returning after a break
- Cyclists under the age of 30 (as a guide) who tend to adapt more quickly than older cyclists.
- When a cyclist completes training plans to near perfection, without missing a single session.
- If the original Test was not conducted in accordance with the protocol. This can happen for a variety of reasons (which is why reading, understanding and implementing the test protocol is so important) and may result in key sessions being "under-spec" for the cyclist's ability / fitness level.

There are of course circumstances which may create a need to re-test less frequently than every 12 weeks, but these are not likely to be associated with the adaptation timeframe, but more to do with illness, stalled progress and lack of consistency in completing the prescribed training sessions.



Shifting your training or competitive focus. From time to time there will be a need to change the type of training that you do. It may be that you simply need to cut back a little or have competing priorities that mean there is less time to ride a bike. There are other circumstances where a change in focus (adjusting rider category) or training volume (adjusting goal distance) may be required, here are just a few:

- You have decided to do some racing and need more of a focus on intensity (update rider category)
- Just signed up for a quite mountainous gran fondo event (update rider category and goal distance)
- You have taken on an endurance-based event or goal (such as "Around the Bay in a Day") and need to increase stamina (update goal distance)
- It has been some time since you "attacked" your Strava PRs and you have decided to create "PR assault" fortnight where you will attempt to ride lifetime bests on several of your local climbs. (adjust your rider category and/or goal distance)

The truth is, there are many and varied reasons for wanting to change up your riding style, intensity or distance.

Just need a change. Your reason can be as simple as just needing a change. So, you may wish to adjust riding distance and/or rider category so that your rides have a different feel about them and/or the distances change to suit your new approach. The beauty here, is that even though you have adjusted your profile and created a whole new training plan (with sessions that look and feel new), everything you do will still be 100% customised around your physiological blueprint, mapped from your test results.

Re-booting. After being on a particular training pathway for a while, which can sometimes eventually resemble "groundhog day", it can be refreshing to create training sessions (and weeks) that give a sense of renewal. It may even be advisable to step back after a long period of hard training and set up a plan around significantly lower ride distances (adjust goal distance) and a general conditioning focus. This will allow a period of relative rest and recovery, prior to embarking on your next major cycling goal.

Motivation. Having the freedom / flexibility to change rider categories allows you to create training plans around a series of short-term goals. In this way, you may wish to set up a series of 12-week plans targeted at a range of specific goals. Examples may include:

1. 12 weeks to improve your climbing strength
2. Ride a faster time trial. This is also a "threshold builder approach" as the time-trial rider category is all about threshold power.
3. Improve your race performance and anaerobic endurance by selecting the "Racing Cyclist" category. Despite the name, this category is not only for racers, so may be used to improve your ability to surge hard for periods of up to 5 minutes, then recover and repeat.

Again, no matter what your goals or training focus, every plan you create, will be 100% customised for you.

You may also schedule breaks in between each of these 12-week training blocks. The flexibility of the Bikelab system means there is enough variation to keep almost any cyclist motivated and engaged with the training process.