

## AFTER THE RIDE

**Stretching:** Stretching may not be at the forefront of your thinking having completed the ride. Preferring to perhaps peel yourself from your saddle, eat and chill out exhausted, but happy, following your achievement. However, it cannot be stressed enough the importance of stretching at this point to allow muscles to return to a natural state, and to aid the body in its repair. There will inevitably be an amount of muscle soreness and stiffness approximately 24-36 hours following the ride, but a few minutes spent stretching and cooling down slowly following the ride, will go some way to keep this to a minimum.

**Quad Stretch:** Standing tall, bend your knee and aim heel to buttock (holding your raised heel with your opposite hand), keeping your knees close together. Hold for approximately 20-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

**Calf Stretch:** Standing tall, place one leg in front the other in a long stance. The front knee is bent and the back leg straight press the heel firmly to the floor . Hold for approximately 20-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

**Hamstring Stretch:** Standing tall, shift your weight onto the back leg from the calf stretch, so now the back knee is bent and the front leg is straight. Point your toes away, and lean the body forward until you feel a slight pulling on the back of the straightened leg. Hold for approximately 20-30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

**Shoulder & back release:** Adopt an all fours position. Think like a cat! Drop your chin to your chest, round up your back and tuck your pelvis underneath, sit back onto your heels and lengthen your arms forward along the ground. Repeat 4-5 times.

**Neck release:** From an upright, neutral position.

1. Relax your shoulders and tilt your head to the right, aiming to touch your ear to your shoulder (DO NOT FORCE YOUR HEAD INTO THE POSITION), hold for 4-5 seconds and repeat. Repeat on left side.
2. Relax the shoulders and lower your chin toward your chest, bring back up to a neutral position, then look upward, return to the neutral position. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

**Eating:** This may well be your only thought, and it is pretty hard to ignore the rumblings coming from your stomach, but, sometimes the exhilaration of successfully completing your challenge may make you forget to eat. Ideally, you need to make sure you eat within a 30 minute period of stopping cycling. This gives your body all the necessary nutrients it needs to re-fuel and repair any deficit that may have occurred during the ride.

Don't be surprised if you are constantly ravenous for the next 24 hours. Following any endurance activity the body is using vital energy stores, and these do need to be replaced. Do eat if you feel hungry, but try to eat things that are nutritionally advantageous and slow burning. Proteins are an excellent post race food grouping to consume. These include nuts, seeds, cereals, and poultry or fish.

**Drinking:** You may fancy consuming a few beers in celebration, but this may have the detrimental effect of dehydrating you!! In fact, following an endurance activity the effects of alcohol can be heightened, and you may not be able to tolerate as many alcoholic drinks as you might ordinarily consume. Following the ride it is best to keep drinking water and fruit juices to replace fluids that may have been lost throughout the day. That is not to say you should avoid alcohol altogether, but do keep it in moderation and ensure that for every alcoholic drink, you follow up with a glass of water.

**Lastly.....** Exercise probably will not be high on the agenda the next day, however, a light, gentle recovery spin for a couple of miles and following up with a few stretches, will go a long way to alleviating any stiffness and returning the body to its natural state....all ready to begin training for the next Bicycle SA ride!!