

A Beginner's Guide to C4C Training & Preparation

Welcome to Cycle for the Cause! Remember, C4C is a ride, not a race. Be prepared, but be proud of what you're able to accomplish, all in the fight to #endAIDS. A few things to remember about the event in September:

- The Ride is fully supported with rest stops every 10-15 miles.
- The route is extensively marked with easy to see signs at eye level.
- You'll be given printed copies of turn-by-turn directions (route cues) as well as daily maps and elevations.
- In the middle of nowhere, have a bike issue and need a lift? You'll have a command center number to call to get picked up by our many sweep vans to get you and your bike swiftly to a rest stop.
- Route teams including medical, massage, moto safety at intersections, and sweep vans are all at your disposal to get you safely to the next hotel.

STEP 1: Get a Bike!

This first one seems like a no-brainer but it's the most important element. Get yourself a bike, ideally one specifically for long-distance road rides (lighter and therefore less effort to pedal). Not comfortable with the idea of clipping in? You can ensure your bike has cages so you can wear regular sneakers. As for clips, try them out and we promise you'll get used to them. Make sure you get properly fitted for your bike by a professional: bike frame size to your body frame size is important for maximum long-distance comfort. Practice riding around the parking lot at the shop or on a safe street with the salesperson. Ask them:

- "How do I clip in and out?"
- "How do I change gears?"

Need help finding an affordable bike? Reach out to us at cycleforthecause@gaycenter.org for suggestions!

Got a bike? Make sure it fits you and get it tuned up for the season.

STEP 2: What Else Do I Need?

Must Haves:

- Helmet (ASTM, Snell, ANSI, or CPSC approved)
- Two water bottles (one for water, one for electrolyte replacement drink)
- Two spare tubes (not tires) that fit your tire size
- Tire levers—these are small, plastic, and cheap
- Bike pump (bike frame style or CO2—if CO2 you should pack an extra cartridge or two)
- Personal identification

Nice-to-Have Equipment:

- Bicycle multi-tool
- Bike saddle bag (to hold your tubes, iron, cash, credit card)
- Two additional spare tubes
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen (if you want extra, we have it at the event)
- Camera/smartphone
- Lip balm
- Portable phone charger/booster

Nice-to-Have Apparel:

- Padded bike shorts (no one cares if you re-wear the same ones but feel free to bring up to three)
- Cycling jersey or, worst case, wicking t-shirts, tank tops, etc. (we will sell annual jerseys closer to the event). Layer up!
- Foldable rain poncho
- Arm/leg warmers made of wicking material
- Padded cycling gloves
- Cycling shoes (with or without clips)
- Extra jacket or fleece
- An extra pair of comfortable shoes (especially flip flops for the hotels)
- Additional casual clothing for the hotels
- Costumes or silliness for Red Dress Day and beyond!

STEP 3: Ok, So I'm Dressed. Now What?

Start to get comfortable on your bike. Don't worry about miles and training plans yet. Focus on getting comfortable with your bike and riding around your area.

Wearing clips and worrying about tipping over? Everyone does at first! But we know you'll get used to getting your feet safely in and out of those clips if you stick to it.

Tip: Practice approaching a stop sign on a safe road. Once you're about 30 feet away from it calmly practice twisting your foot out. When you get to the stop, practice leaning over onto the foot you've just twisted out. Then repeat. Repeat again. Make sure you practice on both sides! Practice shifting gears on a few different streets.

STEP 4: Learn the Safety Basics

- [Take a look at last year's safety video and watch it in its entirety](#)
- No headphones while training for or riding in C4C
- Be aware at all times
- Obey all traffic signals and signs—you're not invincible!
- Ride single file: only rarely can you ride side-by-side with other participants and even then, keep it brief
- Ride as far to the right of the road as is safely possible, except to pass
- Pass on the left side only
- Helmets must be worn at all times on the road
- Be able to stop within a reasonable distance of other cyclists and vehicles
- Communicate openly and loudly to your fellow riders ("On your left!", "Behind you," etc.)
- Use proper hand signals when turning and call out road hazards like potholes
- Be predictable
- Make left turns from the center of the road or left turn lane
- Do not cross the yellow centerline regardless of the passing zone
- Obey signs like single file for safety
- Move well off the road when you need to stop
- Check out New York City's Department of Transportation's [Bike Safety Guide](#)

STEP 5: Start Your Training

1. [Reference our 12 Week Program](#)
2. [Find Center-Hosted Training Rides on Our Website](#)
3. [Find Training Routes in the NYC Metro Area](#)

When you train, make sure you have a GPS or fully-charged phone handy in case you get lost. Want to download routes to a GPS device? Many online services offer this ability including RidewithGPS and MapMyRide.

Tip: Keep your phone on airplane mode until you need it to save battery. Also, pack a portable power booster if you're worried about losing juice.

STEP 6: Take Your Biking Know-How to the Next Level

Want to be the ultimate self-sufficient rider? We have Bike Techs on-site to change tubes, change tires, pump up your air, tune you up and offer basic bike assistance when you need support. Why not learn some of these things on your own while you're in the zone?

Many bike shops and retailers (such as REI) offer free classes or appointments to learn how to do these things. Also, check out some videos online here:

- [Fix A Flat](#)
- [How to Pump a Road Bike Tire](#)
- [How to Inflate a Road Bike Tire w/CO2 Cartridge](#)
- [How to Unclip from Your Clips](#)
- [How to Use Hand Signals](#)

STEP 7: Tune Up Your Bike

It's almost ride time and, while you may hate to part with your newfound best friend even for a second, it's best to get it tuned right before the ride for the smoothest and safest experience. Go back to where you got your bike and ask for a complimentary tune-up (usually provided with purchase). [Don't forget your Tune-Up Checklist.](#)

Questions? Concerns? Don't hesitate to get in touch with Marc Castaneda, Fundraising Coordinator at mcastaneda@gaycenter.org!