



WELCOME!

Everything You Need to Know to Bike MS!



The Ride: You have options

The first thing to know is **it is not a race. It's a ride.** The next thing to know is you have route options.

One-Day / One- Way: You only complete the first day of the ride – 86 miles. If you take this option, there is a shuttle service available which can take you back to the starting point. It comes with a \$15 fee, which makes it one of the few decisions you have to make early on. Some people do the one day option, party in Daytona Saturday night with friends who drive down, and ride back with them the next day.

150K Option: A bit shorter than the standard ride – 93 miles. The start/finish line is located at the

150 Mile: Differing routes may change the distance a little, but it's generally 86 miles each way. In the recent past, that route has been from the St. Augustine Airport to Daytona and back. In past years it has started at the World Golf Village. In other years, the first day destination was Jekyll Island, near Brunswick, Georgia.

Century Option: You ride 100 miles the first day. You could combine with the one day option and take the shuttle home, or you could ride the additional 80 miles (plus or minus) home on Sunday.

You make a selection from the above when you register. Apart from the one day option (because you have to pay for the shuttle service), the options aren't set in stone. You can, for example, decide to take the century option while riding the route the first day.

The Equipment: It makes a difference

First there's the bike itself. On the ride you will see all manner of two and three wheeled vehicles. You can do this ride on a beach cruiser, if you choose. You can do it on a mountain bike. (Most people will choose neither of these options.) By far, the bike of choice is a road bike with skinny tires. The tires are sometimes called 'slick' tires. The difference in weight and road friction between a mountain bike with fat knobby tires and a road bike with skinny tires is substantial, and makes a big difference in the difficulty of the ride. If you want the challenge of doing it on a mountain bike, go for it. A road bike will make this endeavor easier. Some people who own mountain bikes will replace the wheels/tires with skinny road wheels/tires. That's an option to make it easier, too.

The seat on the bike is another matter. You will prefer the small skinny seat of a road bike. If you're riding anything less than 20 miles, big cushy seats with shocks feel great. On longer rides, they lose their appeal.

If you start from scratch when you start training, you will probably ride less than 20 miles. If that's the case, doing it in shorts and a t-shirt is fine. As you go farther though, and you will, you'll want to invest in bike clothes. Bike jerseys and shorts pull moisture away from your body, which helps regulate your body temperature. Bike shorts include padding right where you need it. You'll want all that.

Be sure to check-in to one of our [Official Bike MS Bike Shops](#) for expert tips and recommendations.

As you venture farther from home, you will want to bring a few things with you. Bring some ID, money, a cell phone and a flat repair kit. You don't want to be stranded 20 miles from home with a flat tire.

Fundraising: It's easier than you think

Yes, the ride is a challenge, but here's the real reason we do this and it permeates everything else. After you register for the ride, you will be given a personal web page on the MS Society website. This is a great tool to help you raise money and track what you do. It will come with some text by default, but be sure to take some time to personalize it. It will help. It comes with a default fundraising goal, which is the minimum you are required to raise. Feel free to make that the first thing you change. People can go to the Bike MS website site and donate directly towards your fundraising goal using a credit card. This is especially convenient for you. As you receive cash and checks, you can manually enter those amounts using this participant center, so the fundraising total on the page accurately reflects what you have raised. Again, the fundraising minimum is \$200 but, most people raise more. The average fundraising amount per participant in 2012 was \$597. **To be eligible for prizes you must raise \$450 or more.**

You will find a pledge sheet on the Bike MS download section. You can save all your cash and checks people give you in an envelope and turn it in the event check-in. You are also welcome to mail the checks (DO NOT send cash) to the MS Society at any time. Our address can be found at the 'Contact Us' link on your web page. If you do this, enclose a note with your name/team so we know the checks are from people sponsoring you.

Fundraising Clubs

Beyond prize eligibility, there are many other reasons to raise more than the minimum. There are various [Bike MS Fundraising Clubs](#) that you should know about. You truly are an insider in one of these prestigious clubs.

400 MS Challenge: The \$400 MS Challenge is an opportunity for cyclists to double their minimum pledge in support of the MS NOW (No Opportunity Wasted) Research Campaign. The Society's research goal is \$250 million. For more information, visit nationalmssociety.org/research

Prior year participants who raised the minimum pledge of \$200 and returning in 2012 are encouraged to say: "YES" to the \$400 MS Challenge New cyclists can also participate by setting their minimum goal at \$400 TO MEET THE MS CHALLENGE!

Top Banana: You will hear the term "Top Banana" early and often. You become a Top Banana by raising a thousand dollars. This club is where you'll find the serious perks! Top Bananas are the VIP's of Bike MS and the perks may be found [online](#).

Training: Do it NOW!!

The fun begins. Start this early and do it often. This part differs for everybody. Training will make it possible for you to complete this journey you're undertaking. It won't make it painless.

Pre-Check-in: Don't wait until the morning of Bike MS

At some point you have to check in. You will bring your cash or checks you have collected.

Please have the money counted, the envelope sealed and filled out before checking in.

Just because you hand in the envelope doesn't mean you should stop fundraising! People can still use your webpage to donate online with their credit card. You can still collect checks and mail them to the MS Society for about a month after the ride. The deadline to be eligible for prizes is October 31st.

Check-in options:

- *Top Banana VIP Check-in and Reception* – This is a private check-in for Top Bananas.
- *Mass Pre-Check in* – The week of the ride there will be a one day mass check-in from 8am-8pm. Check the website and emails for specific dates.
- *Friday Evening Out-of-Towner Check-in* – This check-in will be at the Comfort Suites near the World Golf Village on the night before the ride. It starts at 4pm.
- *Morning of the Ride* – If you plan to check-in the morning of, arrive early and please be patient.

When you check in you'll receive a ride bag, an event T-shirt and Ride Jersey (if you have raised \$450). The bag will have your rider number on two pieces of paper. You will pin one to the back of your jersey for the ride. The other gets attached to your bike. Make sure you have these. A luggage tag that goes on your overnight bag will be included. It should also have a number, and that number should match the other two. It's how we know which bag to give you when you reach your Saturday destination.

Planning the Day of the Ride

The objective is to plan, so the morning of the ride, all you have to do is get there, turn in your overnight bag, get your team picture taken and get on your bike.

Packing: You can bring **one** overnight bag with your luggage tag on it. Make sure you have clothes for Saturday night and riding clothes for Sunday. You may also want to bring a change of clothes for Sunday afternoon when you finish the ride. If you wear cycling shoes, bring others to wear Saturday.

Biofreeze is a product like Ben Gay or Icy Hot, but better. You'll want to pack this for any aches after your ride.

The night before the ride, set your clothes out for the next morning, get organized so the next day you just get up and go.

The Day of the Ride

Leave home early. You will be surprised by the traffic getting into the St. Augustine Airport (assuming that's where you start) at 6am in the morning. Remember, a few thousand bicyclists are planning to do the same thing. Hopefully you are already checked in, so you aren't standing in line. If not, join the line and plan on being there a while. There will be trucks there (probably semis from Landstar) waiting for your overnight bag. Turn it in here. There will be team photos. Someone with a bullhorn will be calling for you when they do your team picture. Then it's a matter of being ready to go. The top three fundraising teams from the prior year lead the ride. If you aren't on one of those teams, stay clear of the start/finish line. The ride officially begins at 7:15am.

The start is a slow, cautious exercise. This is one reason you want to attend training rides; they will give you an idea of what this is to ride in large groups. Remember, there are probably more than 2,500 people on bikes trying to get on the road. Ride defensively; at least until you get a few miles down the road and the crowd begins to thin.

Do not hurry. This is a ride, not a race. The object is not to get there first. It's to arrive safely.

There will be motorcycles riding with you warning motorists to watch out for you. There will be vans from bike shops along the route to assist you if you have mechanical problems. There are also SAG vehicles. (SAG stands for Support and Gear.) Mostly, the mission of these vehicles is to pick you up if for whatever reason you elect to catch a ride to the next rest stop.

Rest stops

There will be a rest stop at approximately every 10-15 miles. They will have food and drinks. The drinks will be cup-less, so be sure to bring at least one water bottle. They may also have other things, like Advil and/or Biofreeze. There will be porta-potties. It's a good idea to stop at most of the rest stops. Grab a bite to eat and refill your water bottle(s). You aren't required to stop at any. Most have fruit, like orange slices and bananas. Sometimes there are candy bars and PB&J sandwiches.

Meals

Over the course of the weekend there are 5 meals served; breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Lunch on Saturday is served in Daytona. Your family and friends are welcome to eat with you. They can either pay \$5 for one meal or \$20 for the whole weekend. Wristbands will be sold on site at the customer service tent.

Saturday Overnight – To book call the [Daytona Hilton Oceanfront Resort \(386\) 254-8200](#)

Cyclists are responsible for their own hotel accommodations in Daytona. Hopefully you make your hotel reservations early. You will finish at the Hilton Hotel, where all the evening festivities and meals will occur. Be sure to mention Bike MS when you book your stay.

Bike Parking – Look for signs. You won't need a lock - there will be a security guard all night. If you are a Top Banana, the VIP Bike Parking is inside Hilton Hotel.

Luggage – Your luggage will be available near the finish line. The volunteers will need to see your bib number to get your luggage.

Tent Village – Whether you are on a team or an individual rider, the tent village is the place to be on Saturday.

Saturday Dinner & Program – A spaghetti dinner is served at in the Hotel Ballroom, followed by a festive program presented by the National MS Society.

Sunday Breakfast – A hot breakfast is served starting in the same ballroom as dinner.

Coming Home

The trip home begins at 7:15am. Most riders will leave then, but you don't have to. Some have been known to sleep in a little and leave at 8:00am. You must be on the road by 8:00am.

You will probably be sore. Advil and Biofreeze from your goodie bag come in handy on Day 2. If you brought Biofreeze, you will be popular. Remember the object is not to get there fast. It's to get there safely. There will be lunch and entertainment at the Finish line. You can stay a while or leave immediately, but the feeling you will have makes everything you did to get ready for this moment well worth it.