

Motocross Physical Readiness Race Guide

Joel Younkins

Physical Preparation Coach



Prepare For Success

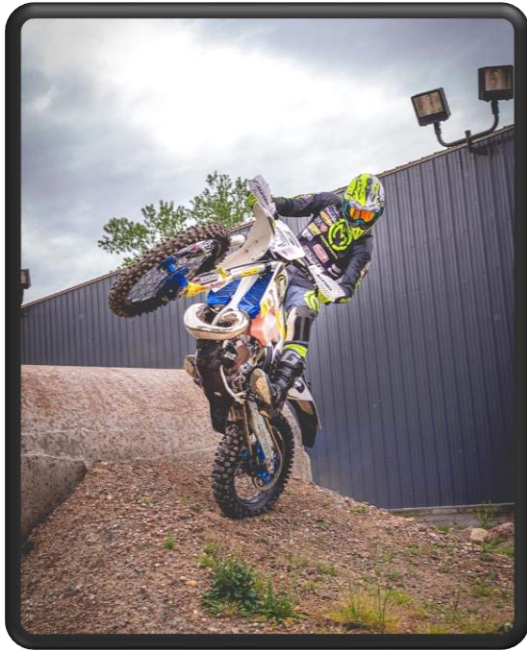
Introduction

When it comes to Preparation for Sport, there are three categories of preparation that must be maximized to reach optimal performance. You have Technical Preparation (Riding Skills), Tactical Preparation (Bike Setup/Line Choices) and Physical Preparation (Physical Fitness).

My job as a Physical Preparation Coach is to obviously handle the Physical Preparation side of the equation. Most people will look at Physical Preparation as just the work done inside of the gym or out on the road cycling/running. But the reality is, that the Physical Preparation process as a whole, is almost always the most complex part of the Preparation Equation. Your workouts can be off the charts during the Off Season or during the week to get ready for the race, but if you're not physically at your best on race day, then it doesn't matter how good your workouts were, how dialed in your bike feels, or what gate pick you have. Not being 90% or better (you're "A Game") is a recipe to leaving positions on the table that you could have gotten if you were physical ready for the race.

This [Motocross Physical Readiness Race Guide](#) is intended for you to take all of your hard work on the bike and off of it, and make sure that you're doing the little things right in your day to day life. This way, you can be sure, that you can optimize your hard work and be ready to bring you're A Game on race day!

Hydration



Daily/Weekly Hydration

Hydration is not something that you start on Race Day, or even the day before for that matter. It's an all of the time thing. As soon as the last race ends, is when hydration for the next race begins!

You must be drinking at least half of your Body Weight in Ounces of Water per day. This is a minimum amount. For example, if you weigh 160lbs, you need to be drinking at least 80oz of water each day. If you're riding or training on this day, you'll need to consume even more!

A great way of looking for hydration feedback is keeping an eye on the color of your urine. It should always be a pale yellow to clear color when you urinate. If it's darker than a pale yellow, start drinking more water immediately. If it's clear, then you're in the clear and can probably relax on drinking for the moment. You should be checking the status of your hydration every time you use the restroom...Don't worry,

you're an athlete, this is normal behavior...

Salt is another underrated element to your hydration. Salt will help pull water into your muscle cells, balance out your electrolytes, and improve nerve firing in your muscles (increased performance and less cramping). You should be lightly salting all of your meals and you will want to use Iodine Salt. More is not better, but you should be at least tasting the salt that you put on your foods and seeing some salt in your sweat when it dries on your clothes.

Bonus Tip: Adding an electrolyte powder to your daily water consumption will be beneficial for performance and recovery.

Race Day Hydration

Water should be consumed frequently throughout the day keeping your urine in a pale yellow to clear range just as you would during the week. Along with water, you should be consuming Sport Performance Drinks during Race Day, Practicing and Training alike. Sport Performance Drinks should be made up of primarily water, electrolytes, salt, and simple sugars. But keep in mind, the use of simple sugars should only be consumed around periods of intense activity like racing, hard motos, and hard workouts.

Between practice and motos, you should be sipping on a Sports Performance Drink. During longer races like Off Road events, you should be consuming more than just water. You will definitely be wanting to utilize a Sports Performance Drink in a Hydration Pack, or grab n' go bottles during the race. Either sip on it every 15 minutes, or drink a grab n' go bottle every 30-60 minutes. If you do bottles, make sure to have at least water in your hydration pack for longer events over 2 hours.

Nutrition



Daily/Weekly Nutrition

Food for athletes is just like the fuel you put in your bike. You need fuel to go just like your bike does. Not only does it help improve your performance in training and on race day, it is a critical part to the recovery process so that you can recover faster in which will allow you train harder and be ready on race day!

During the week, you should be focusing on consuming whole foods and not missing meals. An ideal eating plan for a racer should look something like this. Three main meals a day, Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner. Each meal should have a Lean Protein Source (chicken, eggs, lean beef/steak, fish, turkey, etc.), a Complex Carb Source (rice, potatoes, whole grain breads, oats, pasta, etc.), and a Vegetable

Source (green veggies, carrots, tomatoes, etc.). There should also be at least 2 additional snacks during the day. They can be between meals, pre-workout, post workout, before bed. Snacks should consist of sources like fruit, whey protein, greek yogurt, peanut butter, etc.

You will want to avoid highly processed foods that are high in fat like chips, fast food, pastries, etc. and focus on consuming healthy fats like olive oil, nut butters, and avocado. Consuming bad fats do very little to nothing to improve performance and is a sure way to increase bodyfat levels when they are overconsumed.

By eating like a true athlete, you will have proper energy levels throughout the week to prepare for your races and increase your chances of recovering from your training to come into race day ready to go!

Race Day Nutrition

It's essential to consume calories on race day. You cannot let nerves, heat, or time derail you from eating. You do not need to eat a full course Thanksgiving Meal on race day, but you need to be consuming small snacks/meals consistently throughout the day. Your main source of food should be in forms of Carbohydrates. This includes starchy carbs that are lower in fiber content. Your only high fiber (Oatmeal/Brown Rice/Sweet Potato) meals should be first thing in the morning or at least 2 hours prior to riding. Once the race gets closer, or in between practice/moto's, you want to consume lower fiber starchy carbs (white rice/white bread/white potato), trail mix, and fruits.

Lean Protein should still be consumed on race day, but you want to keep the amounts lower than you would during the week. It's harder to eat on race day due to schedules, heat, and adrenaline levels, so it's best to get majority of calories from carbs because it provides a much faster source of usable energy on race day.

Fats should be avoided as much as possible during the day. Your only meal that can have some fat levels would be first thing in the morning or during prolonged rest period on race day (2-3 hours or more). Fats provide a good source of energy, but it's a very slow-release of energy, not fast enough for high level competitions. Fats also slow down absorption rates of carbs and protein due to the fact that they take longer to break down in your stomach, and on race day you don't want to roll up to the line with a heavy stomach...

Keep in mind, foods higher in fat, such as peanut butter, are okay to help get in some extra calories alongside with your Carbohydrates. For example, foods like Peanut Butter Sandwiches would be fine in this scenario. But your race day meals should not be heavily consumed with foods like steak, bacon, and avocado. If you go this route, it would be like putting pump gas in your bike that is mapped with a high compression piston, you'll be sputtering too!

Mental State



The Day Before the Day Before

In College, my Football Coach always called Thursdays (we played on Saturdays) The Day Before the Day Before. At this point in time, all of the hard work on the bike and in the gym needs to be decreasing on this day. This is a time where you shift your mental state of, "I'm putting in this work," towards thinking "I'm getting ready for battle." Your focus should become more about your Mind Set, Bike Preparation, and Physical Readiness towards exceling for the race.

You can still ride your bike and get in a gym session, but it should not be exhaustive. Keep the volume low and the intensity can be relatively high if you feel like it's important. Practice sessions should be short sprint laps or technique sessions that are no more than

half of the time that you are usually practicing for. In the gym, you can still push heavier weights, and push heart rates towards your Anaerobic Threshold, but again the volume of the total session should be very low from your normal gym sessions! You should wake up the next day (The Day Before) and not feel sore or fatigued at all. In fact, whatever you did on the Day Before the Day Before (2 days out), you should be able to replicate it no problem The Day Before the race.

The Day Before

The Day Before your race, you want to focus on being as relaxed as possible and in control of the day. You should be in a positive mind state and be as optimistic as possible for the race. I would focus half of the day on mentally planning for the race, going over race strategy, and making sure everything and everyone is ready to go.

The other half of the day, I encourage you to step away from race focus. While still keeping your Hydration and Nutrition on point, I would suggest trying to do something that will actually take your mind off of racing to avoid mental fatigue. Things like watching a movie, going sightseeing, or hanging with some friends and family are great ways to keep you in a good mental state but also as relaxed as possible.

Performing some light stretching, mobility drills, or light walking/cycling The Day Before is a great way to stay physically loose and keep your blood flowing. This will keep/get your Physical Readiness in a heighten state!

Race Day

On Race Day, you want to have a plan for waking up as organized as possible to eliminate any stressful situations. You want to preplan your day so that everything just flows right into the race. Over plan for any situation that could go wrong. So that when and if it does, you have it covered and you don't have to stress about it and lose focus.

Racing in of itself is highly stressful. Not just physically, but mentally as well! You need to conserve as much energy as possible to be able to unleash your physical and mental capacity on the track, not off of it. Remain calm from the time you wake up and put yourself into a positive mood upon waking. What you do not want to do, is wake up acting like your race is in 15 minutes. Save your "kill mode" attitude for the race itself. Ramping up your internal fire can cause you to exhaust yourself early and leave you feeling mentally flat on the starting line. You want to be cool, calm, and collected on Race Day. As your race gets closer and closer, you can begin to raise up your intensity levels to spike as the gate is dropped or when the green flag is waved.

Make sure the people on your team understand how you optimally operate on race day and what you like and don't like. Make sure they're on the same page as you. If you like to tell jokes and laugh or whether you like to be left alone, they should all know how to communicate with you to support your preparation and performance. 99% of people who are there for you, want to have a sense of feeling that they helped you at some point during your racing. Do not be afraid to delegate certain tasks or objectives to individuals on your team/family/friends.

Recovery



24 Hours Post Race Recovery

24 Hours after your race is a critical time to jumpstart your recovery process so that you can restart the process of being physical ready for the next race. This is important so you can get back to training hard during the week and follow up a great performance the next weekend. The next 24 hours should be spent recovering your CNS (Central Nervous System). Here are a few things you will want to do:

- Rest from Racing/Riding
- Partake in a leisure activity (movie, golf, swimming)
- Deep Static Stretching 30s Holds per body part/3 times per session
- Eat a High Carb Day

- Consume lots of fluids with electrolytes
- Add in an extra nap
- Massage Therapy
- Contrast Shower: Alternate the shower Hot and Cold. With water running over your head and down your back, go as hot as you can stand it for 15-30 seconds and then go as cold as you can stand it for 15-30 seconds. Repeat this for a few minutes.

24-48 Hours Post Race Recovery

From 24 Hours to the 48 Hour mark, you still need to be thinking about recovery. If you don't, you can push your race recovery time to the 72-hour mark and beyond. And we don't have time to be delaying the recovery process that long after every race especially if you have to line back up the next weekend...In this period, we want to get the body ready to leave the recovery state and get back to a higher level of readiness to train and practice again. Here are a few things that you can do during this 24-48 Hour window:

- Light Aerobic Session: (20-60 minutes) (Heart Rate:110-130bpm)
- Light Stretching: 30s Hold per body part/1-3 times per session
- Eat your normal meal plan (keep carbs increased if needed)

- Consume normal fluids/electrolytes
- Add in time to review, reflect, and plan for the next race
- If your body feels slow (like you can't wake up), take a Cold Shower/Bath
- If you're body still feels like it's in race mode and you feel restless, take a long Hot Shower/Bath

Off Day Workouts ("Light Workouts")

During the week, you should have hard days and lighter days. On lighter days, the workload should be kept "light" so that you do not run your body into the ground. It's actually much more productive to get in light sessions to help with recovery and you will actually be able to get much more total work done during the week. A lot of racers like to cycle or use other forms of cardiovascular training to help with their endurance. This is fine, but you DO NOT have to have a road bike to accomplish elite levels of conditioning.

You should be performing low intensity aerobic workouts on the days off from hard motos or hard gym workouts. You should also be working on your body as well by performing some light stretching, massage work, or chiropractic work on these days if needed. Depending on your weekly training plan, you can also get in abdominal training, rehab/prehab exercises, and some lighter strength training work.

For your low intensity aerobic training on your Off Days, it should be kept to 20-60 minutes of total work. If you're really sore, or feeling beat up, stay closer to the 20-minute mark. If you're feeling good, push more towards to the 60-minute mark. Heart Rates should be 120-150 bpm or it should be 65-84% of your Anaerobic Threshold for Recovery based workouts. If you're feeling good and you want to accomplish some Endurance adaptations on this day, you can push for 85-91% of your Anaerobic Threshold. Only high-level athletes should go beyond 60 minutes on their "light days."

Here is a weekly example of how a training week could look to optimize training and recovery.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Race Day	Recovery	Hard Workout	Light Workout	Hard Workout	Light Workout	Race Prep

This is just an example of a model; you don't have to follow this. But here are a few takeaways for you to remember as a general guideline.

- Have at least one recovery day from the race
- Have two hard workouts
- Have at least one lighter workout during the week
- Hard and Light Workouts can include Riding and Gym workouts in the same day or separate

- It's best to keep harder training sessions 48 hours removed before and after competition!

Conclusion: Sleep

If you're still reading, then congratulations! You get the chance to learn about the number one thing you can do on your own that takes no talent at all that will directly improve your physical readiness.

It is to get your sleep!

Putting in the work, pounding out motos during the week, training hard in the gym, and focusing on your recovery strategies is all great stuff...But a lack of sleep can derail all of your effort and hard work on race day if you're not valuing sleep. Sleep is the number one thing you can do to make everything else work the way it should.

As athletes, you should be aiming for at least 8 hours of sleep every night. If you can go to sleep and wake up at the same time, even better. Keep your room dark, cool, and if you want to further improve the quality of sleep, in times of high stress, ZMA can be an awesome supplement to add to your arsenal.

Research has shown over and over again how a lack of sleep can derail your performance and recovery. If you don't believe, look for yourself. But if you want to be ready for race day, take your sleep serious!

I hope by now, that by pounding out moto's and grinding in the gym isn't the only non-negotiable things we need to do in order to be physically ready for race day. What we covered today takes no talent to execute. Everyone from a C Rider to a Pro Rider can do all of the things to improve performance. The best racers and athletes take these little details just as serious as their made workouts and practice sessions!

As with everything in the physical preparation process, sleep, hydration, nutrition, mental state, and your recovery all go hand in hand to balance out your hard work, so that you can show up to race day with fresh and ready with "A Game" as the gate drops!

-Coach Joel