ULTRACICLISMO

GUIDES · NUTRITION

Cramp on the bike: what to do

Fatigue before salts. Ease off, stretch, watch the signs.

When it hits

1
Ease off
Easy gear. If it locks, stop safely.

2
Stretch gently
Hold, no bouncing, until it eases.

3
Give it minutes
Ride easy: it can return.

4
Ask why
Pace, climbing, food, heat?

Sensible prevention

- [x] Start easier than your body asks
- [x] Train the route's distance and climbing
- [x] If prone, note when they happen
- [x] Heat and heavy sweat: electrolyte drink
- [x] Don't overdrink
- [x] Easy gears for long climbs
- [x] Test everything in training

Normal or something more?

One muscle, eases with stretching in minutes
Normal: ride on easier

Keeps coming back, or heavy heat and sweat
Watch: shade, eat, electrolytes, cut it short

Won't ease, dark urine, confusion, vomiting, chest pain
Stop and get help: 112

Myth and evidence

MYTH	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS
It's always low salts	Crampers rarely have lower sodium; fatigue and pace matter more
Drink water and it passes	Plain water after heavy sweating may make it worse
A banana fixes it	Potassium rises little and slowly
Magnesium prevents them	No trials in athletes; didn't help older adults
Pre-stretching prevents them	No change in susceptibility; stretching stops one
Pickle juice works via salt	Acts before blood changes: a reflex

Not always just a cramp
Pain that won't ease, very dark urine, confusion, vomiting, chest pain or dizziness in extreme heat: stop and call 112.

General information; not a substitute for a health professional. Sources: Schwellnus 2009/2011, Miller 2010/2022, Maughan 2019, Cochrane 2020, MedlinePlus.