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FIT 4



ADVENTURE

by Lisa Thomas | photos by Simon Thomas

Lisa soaks in the morning sun in Baja, Mexico, before starting her "Fit4Adv Workout Program."

So, you're heading off on your long-awaited trip; it could be for a couple of days or, if you're lucky, even longer....

You've been planning for a while, preparing your bike to make sure it's ready. You have your tools, spares, riding kit, boots, helmets, gloves and probably a camping kit. You may have attended a few riding clinics, or watched videos of those who've gone before you. And you've probably scoured the pages of *ADVMoto*, riding as often as you could because you want to do everything possible to be the best rider you can be.

You're now ready for your trip! But are you fit for riding? During our 14 years on the road, Simon and I have maintained a well-rounded fitness program. And there are three main things you need to think about and work on in order to get your body "adventure ready":

1. Stretching to promote good flexibility and suppleness
2. Aerobic conditioning
3. Strength

All of these must work alongside good nutrition. If you have no idea what foodstuffs to carry or how to cook them when traveling, have a peek at my cookbook, *Dirty Dining: An Adventurer's Cookbook* available online via Amazon.

FIT 4 ADV

Before each workout, we warm up with a five-minute brisk walk or three-minute jog and do a full body stretch routine. After the full session, we gently stretch each major muscle group, holding each stretch for a count of 20 or more*.

AEROBIC CONDITIONING

These exercises are short and intense in order to elevate your heart rate and push you physically.

Mountain Climbers are tough, but they are also a great all-body conditioner that can be performed anywhere, anytime.



JUMPING JACK

1. Stand with your feet together, knees slightly bent, and arms to your side.
2. Simultaneously jump your feet out wide, landing on the balls of your feet while raising your arms above your head.
3. Without pausing, quickly jump the feet back in, lowering your arms.
4. Repeat movement continuously for one minute.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Make sure you brace your abdominal muscles throughout this entire exercise while breathing normally.

1. Starting on the floor on your hands and knees, bring the left foot forward directly under the chest while straightening the right leg.
2. Keeping the hands on the ground and core tight, jump and change legs. The left leg should now be extended behind the body with the right knee forward.
3. Repeat movement for one minute.

FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPLENESS EXERCISES

Here are a few examples of our favorite stretches that are also easy to do before and after you ride.

LOW LUNGE

Main muscle group stretched: legs, groin, and hip flexors. Make sure your front shin stays vertical and your knee doesn't move forward past your ankle or drop out to the side. You may have to step your front foot forward more. The heel of your front foot should remain on the floor.

1. Step your right foot forward into a lunge and lower your left knee onto the floor.
2. Place both hands on your front thigh.
3. Gently push your right hip forward while stretching your left leg back.
4. Hold for a count of 20 then change legs.

On the *Low Lunge*, really make sure your chest is lifted to extenuate the stretch in your hip flexors. Build up slowly and go deeper as you improve.



ARM CIRCLES

Main muscle group stretched: shoulders.

1. Stand with arms extended by the sides, perpendicular to the torso.
2. Slowly make large circle with both outstretched arms. Breathe normally.
3. Continue circling for 30 seconds, then repeat circling the other way for another 30 seconds.

STANDING QUAD

Main muscle group stretched: quadriceps. You should feel a mild pull gradually spread through the front of your left leg. Try to keep your knees together as the knee should not flare outward.

1. Touch a wall or stationary object (such as your motorcycle) for balance, stand with your feet hip-width apart, pull your abdominals in, and relax your shoulders.
2. Bend your left leg, bringing your heel toward your butt, and grasp your left foot with your left hand.
3. Hold the stretch for a slow count of 20 while pushing against your hand with your foot.
4. Switch legs and repeat.

BURPEES

1. Stand with legs shoulder-width apart.
2. Bend your knees, place your hands on the floor directly in front of you and kick both legs back so you end up with your stomach and thighs on the floor. Your elbows should be bent.
3. From this position, do a push-up and, as you press up, push your hips up.
4. Jump your feet under your hips and stand.
5. From standing position jump in the air, bringing your hands over your head.
6. Once you land, immediately continue and repeat the movement for one minute.

WRIST AND FOREARM STRETCH

Main muscle group stretched: Forearms, wrist, and hand. This is a great stretch to do before, during, and after riding.

1. Extend one arm straight out in front of you with your palm down.
2. Bend your wrist, pointing your hand toward the floor, and rotate outward.
3. Use your other hand to rotate your hand upward until you feel a stretch in your forearm.
4. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds.

STRENGTH EXERCISES

Your core is the central part of your body, those muscles involved in supporting your torso. Your legs are also working continuously to provide you balance and control, while your back muscles are working to stabilize your upper body, ensuring you stay connected with the bike. All of these muscles must be exercised and worked when you're off the bike.



Many experts are now telling us that just 30 seconds of the *Forearm Plank* is more beneficial than 100 sit-ups.

FOREARM PLANK

Main muscle groups worked: abdominals, arms, legs, and lower back. You should be in a straight line from head to heels.

1. Lie face down; clasp your hands. Feet should be hip-width apart, and elbows a shoulder-width apart.
2. Tuck your toes to lift your body, contracting your abdominals while drawing your pelvic floor muscles toward your spine. Your forearms remain on the floor.
3. Hold for 60 seconds or as long as you can; breathe normally.


The opposite *Arm-Leg Plank* looks so simple, but you'll be surprised how tough it can be to perform properly.



PLANK WITH OPPOSITE ARM AND LEG LIFT

Muscle groups worked: total body with extra emphasis on abdominals. Keep your spine straight and your abs engaged throughout the movement.

1. Kneel on all fours.
2. Contract your abs and draw your pelvic floor muscles toward your spine.
3. Reach your right arm forward; at the same time, stretch your left leg back and flex your foot.
4. Hold for a count of five, then release. Repeat using left arm and right leg. Do this 10 times, alternating sides.



Wrist and forearm stretches are so simple, yet so beneficial that you'll be wondering why you haven't been doing them all along. Get started right now.

Once you can comfortably crank out 20 plus *Semi-Push Ups*, go onto *Full Push-Ups*.



SEMI-PUSH-UP

Muscle groups used: arms, chest, and shoulders. Don't let the belly collapse and don't let the shoulders come too far forward.

1. Kneel on all fours, hands under your shoulders.
2. Lift your feet and cross your ankles.
3. Contract your abs and, with elbows pointed back, look forward and bend the elbows until your chin touches the floor.
4. Pause at the bottom before pressing back up.

FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH EXERCISES

A squat and a lunge are the functional exercises for standing up on the pegs. With this, your whole body has to work in order to stabilize you; a variety of muscles must work together to produce these movements.

Who needs a gym? Try 100 *Air Squats* along with 100 *Push Ups* and then some *Pull Ups*. I guarantee you'll be challenged.



BODY-WEIGHT SQUAT (ALSO CALLED THE AIR SQUAT)

Muscle groups used: quadriceps, butt, and abs. This exercise will help you hold your "up on the pegs" position. As you squat, keep your head and chest up and push your knees out and remember to keep your abs tight!

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your knees slightly bent, head up, and eyes forward. Place your hands on your hips.
2. Slowly lower yourself as if you were going to sit on a chair, keeping your weight on your heels. When you're halfway to the floor, pause, and then slowly come back up.
3. Return to the start position, keeping your knees slightly bent (don't "lock" your legs).
4. Do as many of these as you can in one minute, making sure you keep the movement controlled and maintaining your "form."

WALKING LUNGE

Muscle groups used: quadriceps (front of thighs), gluteal (buttocks), hamstrings (back of thighs) and calves. This exercise uses muscles that will help with your neutral "up on the pegs" riding position. Do not allow your front knee to go forward beyond your toes as you come down, as this places stress on the knee joint. Make sure that you keep your front shin perpendicular to the ground. Keeps your abs tight and your torso upright throughout these walking lunges.

1. Stand with your hands by your sides.
2. Take a large step forward with your left foot so that your right leg is stretched out behind you, right heel lifted.
3. Slowly bend your knees so your left knee is directly over your left ankle, and your right knee nearly touches the floor.
4. Inhale as you go down. Maintain balance.
5. Squeezing your glutes, exhale and push up, bringing your right foot forward to meet the left foot, returning to start position.
6. Keep moving forward using alternate legs. Try to do as many lunges as you can in one minute.

IN SUMMARY

As your fitness, strength, and suppleness increase, you'll gain added control over your motorcycle and become a smoother and more efficient rider. More fitness equals more miles, and miles equal smiles!

A more detailed version of this story can be found at AdventureMotorcycle.com. For more related information visit 2RideTheWorld.com and look for the "Fit4ADV" section. **ADV**

*Before beginning this or any workout program, consult your physician. If you feel any pain during any of the movements described below, stop the exercise and consult your physician.



Lisa Thomas is best known as the world's foremost female adventure rider, but what few know is that she owned and operated her own gymnasium and fitness center, and is a qualified fitness professional and coach. 2RideTheWorld.com