

# Recovery Secrets for Gravel Cyclists Over 50



Stay Strong • Ride Further •  
Recover Faster

**GRAVEL**  
ENDURANCE

  
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**BEYOND TARMAC**  
The UK gravel & bikepacking journal



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# Welcome

**Gravel cycling is one of the best ways to stay fit, adventurous, and connected with the outdoors—especially after 50.**

**But there's one big difference between riding in your 20s and riding in your 50s and beyond:**

**Recovery is now your biggest performance tool.**

**Improving how you recover means:**

- fewer aches
- more enjoyable rides
- better endurance
- more confidence on the trails
- reduced risk of injury

This guide shows you practical, science-informed recovery habits that work wonderfully for beginners and returning cyclists. Let's help your body feel fresher, stronger, and ready for the next adventure.

# What changes after 50?

**1. Slower Muscle Repair** - As we age, the body takes longer to repair tiny tears caused by riding. This is normal.

**2. Reduced Collagen & Joint Cushioning** - Your tendons and joints may feel stiffer after high-vibration gravel rides.

**3. Longer Inflammation Clearance** - Your body clears inflammation more slowly, meaning soreness can last longer.

**4. Hormonal Changes** - Both men and women experience changes that affect energy, sleep, and strength.

## The Good News?

Gravel cycling is low impact, heart-healthy, and social. It's one of the best lifetime sports for maintaining mobility, cardiovascular health, and strength.

# The 7 Core Recovery Secrets.

# **SECRET 1 —**

# **Follow the 10% Rule**

# **to Reduce Fatigue**

**Your training load should grow slowly.**

Increasing weekly ride time or intensity by more than  
~10% can cause:  
lingering fatigue  
joint pain  
motivation dips

Consistency beats big weekly jumps every time.

# **SECRET 2 —**

# **Master the Post-Ride**

# **Recovery Window**

**The 60–90 minutes after a ride are critical.**

## **✓ Hydrate**

Aim to replace lost fluid and add electrolytes if the ride was over 60–90 minutes.

## **✓ Refuel**

Prioritise:

Protein: supports muscle repair

Carbohydrates: replenish energy stores

Colourful veg or fruit: helps reduce inflammation

## **✓ Light Mobility**

5–10 minutes of gentle stretch/mobility reduces stiffness the next day.

# **SECRET 3 —**

# **Sleep: Your Over-50**

# **Superpower**

**Sleep is the most effective recovery tool available.**

## **Tips for better sleep:**

Keep your bedroom cool

Avoid screens 1 hour before bed

Reduce caffeine after midday

Consider a pre-bed wind-down routine (breathing, stretching, reading)

Aim for 7–8 hours where possible.

# **SECRET 4 — Strength Training Helps You Recover Faster**

**Stronger muscles = less soreness = faster recovery.**

**A simple weekly routine:**

2 days per week

20–30 minutes

Include: Squats, Deadlifts or hip hinges,  
Core work, Light upper-body strength.

This improves bone density,  
stability, and joint comfort.



# **SECRET 5 — Mobility & Flexibility for the Gravel Body**

**Cycling tightens certain muscles.  
Gravel, with its bumps and vibration,  
amplifies this.**

**Daily 5–10 minute mobility suggestions:**

Cat–cow  
Hip flexor stretch  
Glute stretch  
Thoracic spine rotation  
Ankle mobility  
Neck stretches

Doing this consistently far outweighs  
doing it perfectly.

# **SECRET 6 — Fuel Like an Athlete Over 50**

**Nutrition supports recovery more  
than many cyclists realise.**

## **Protein:**

Aim for consistent protein intake throughout the day to support muscle repair.

## **Hydration:**

Being slightly dehydrated increases fatigue more in older riders. Sip water throughout the day.

## **Anti-inflammatory foods:**

Berries  
Leafy greens  
Oily fish  
Olive oil  
Nuts and seeds

Small, daily habits > big, occasional changes.

# **SECRET 7 — Listen to Your Body**

## **Know when to Rest**

### **Signs you may need an easier day:**

Persistent fatigue

Trouble sleeping

Mood dips

Elevated resting heart rate

Tightness that doesn't ease after warm-up

The bike suddenly feels “heavy”

Rests are not setbacks. They're where the real improvement happens.

# Bonus Tools.



# 48-Hour Post-Gravel-Ride Recovery Plan

## Immediately After Ride

Hydrate + electrolytes

Protein + carb snack

10 min mobility

## Later That Day

Normal balanced meals

Gentle walk

Light stretching

Early night

## Next Day

Easy spin or walk

Hydrate well

Focus on nutrient-dense meals

## Day Two

Normal light-to-moderate riding

Continue mobility

# 10-Minute Mobility Routine

Cat-cow (1 minute)  
Hip flexor stretch (1 minute per side)  
Glute stretch (1 minute per side)  
Thoracic twist (1 minute per side)  
Neck mobility (1 minute)  
Ankle circles (1 minute)  
Calf Stretch (1 minute)

## Weekly Recovery Habit Tracker

Tick off each day:  
Hydration  
Enough sleep  
10+ minutes mobility  
Healthy meals  
Easy recovery day  
Strength training (2x weekly)

# Final Thoughts

Recovery isn't about slowing down

**- it's about giving your body the support it needs to ride more, feel better, and stay active for decades.**

Gravel cycling over 50 is empowering, joyful, and transformative.

With the right habits, you can ride with energy, confidence, and comfort.