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PERFORMANCE PLATEAU OR OVER-TRAINED?

Are you at that point in the season where no matter what you do you're not getting any faster? Here's the \$64-million question - have you reached a fitness plateau or are you overtrained?

Both plateaus and overtraining conditions are performance barriers, but diagnosing each and how to overcome them are different. Plateaus come with the territory of fitness. They can be frustrating, but they are not necessarily bad. Overtraining is also easy to overcome once you've diagnosed it.

Answering these questions will help you determine what course of action to take to overcome your performance barrier.

Do you:

- Feel worse after warming up than you did before you started your workout?
- Have a few restless nights of sleep per week?
- Feel like you have a loss of appetite even though you're training a lot?
- Have legs that throb at night in bed?
- Feel irritable a lot and even let the "little things" really bother you?
- Have a resting heart rate in the morning is 5-10 beats above normal that doesn't get lower even when you are well hydrated?
- Have a RPE that is extremely high even at low training heart rates?
- Feel generally tired and cannot sustain normal training heart rates for even short periods of time?
- Consider your training a roller coaster ride - one day you are flying, then next you feel tired and can barely move?



The fewer the questions you answered Yes to, the more likely you've hit a plateau and aren't overtrained. If you answered Yes to a majority of these questions, you're most likely overtrained. Here are some good ideas on what to do for each condition.

Beating Plateaus

One key to dealing with plateaus is managing expectation. We often forget that improvement in fitness is not linear. In the beginning of the training season fitness will come up fast. Most people can get about 80-90% of their fitness within the first couple of months of consistent training. During this time it's easy to be motivated because we see improvements in speed, strength, and endurance almost on a daily basis.

Then later in the year when you are in great shape and are trying to

TIPS TO BEAT THE HEAT

We all want to finish the season on a good note but may have to continue to deal with triple H days. So,

here are a few reminders on how to beat the heat during training and racing:

- Hydrate for 1-2 days before a hard training session or race, in addition to the workout/race
- Adjust your expectations - it's estimated that you should adjust estimated finish times by 5-7% for every 10-degrees over 60-degrees
- Drink during and after workouts, even short ones
- Read the enclosed Tri Doc Advice article about how much to drink

get the final little bit out of your program, visible progress in any of these areas can take weeks. The last 5-10% to peak fitness can take up to 6-months. This is where managing expectation comes into play. If an athlete expects that same rate of initial improvement, it can be very de-motivating when the outward signs take longer and longer to show.

Plateau periods need to be actively managed and expectations usually need to be adjusted. Back off slightly from planned workouts and see if the symptoms disappear. You could benefit from a week or two of reduced volume in your training and from cutting speed work out completely.

Overtraining Repair

Diagnosis is usually the toughest part since the tendency is to feel like you "should work harder if you want to get better." Actually, you should consider taking three or more weeks off of serious training. Cut back to active recovery workouts only during this period. Avoid the temptation to jump back into full training the second you start to feel better. Remember, that if you are very overtrained, feeling better will be on a relative scale. You may feel better than you did at your lowest point but you can still be weeks away from being fully charged back up and ready to go back into your full routine. After my first Ironman, my mind told me I was okay in about 2-weeks but my body wasn't ready to resume training until 6-7 weeks.

TABOO TOPICS FOR TRIATHLETES

Carb Loading

"Do I really need a huge carbo dinner the night before a sprint triathlon?"

Probably not- but you should not skip dinner either. For the average Age Grouper, a well balanced meal will most likely get you there since the race is not overly long (e.g. 1-3 hours).

The basic goal is to make sure your body has enough carbohydrates stored to get you through the next day's race. You will use up carbohydrates while you sleep but your body stores quite a bit to compensate for "carbo sleep loss." Also, it's a good idea to have a reasonable meal the morning of the race, e.g. ½ bagel with peanut butter, a bottle of Gatorade and a banana. Your breakfast, plus your stored carbs, should easily get you through the race.

TRIATHLON TRAINING: LESS CAN BE MORE

Wondering if you're logging in enough training hours to reach your goals? How do you know if you're getting faster since no two races are the same? How do I make "life" not get in the way of more training time?



A Few great questions for the average triathlete but be careful of falling into the *quantity over quality* trap with triathlon training. Unfortunately, training quantity doesn't always equate to training quality or effective progress. Before you say "that's not me," truthfully answer these questions first:

- Are you thinking a lot about your training log and the hours you've accumulated?
- Wondering if your weekly training hours and goals are still in sync?
- Concentrating more on the quantity of training hours each workout and less on the workout goal and effectiveness?

Maybe now, you might feel you're too focused on the hours. Easy traps to fall in if you're trying to be more competitive, achieve a PR and/or lose sight of where your training is going. So many athletes judge their progress based on hours because it's easy to calculate and easy to associate with, i.e. more hours = better training.

No problem, the temporary lapse can be fixed and here are some good tips on how to **get more from less**.

- Examine your workouts in comparison to comparable previous ones, e.g. same distance, same course. Focus on what

TRI LINGO

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

A self-determined assessment of how hard you're working during a training session or race. Important to know in order to gauge how hard to push yourself. Two main scales using numbers are used but you can keep it simple too, i.e. "Comfortable" "Hard" or "Very Hard."

NOW THAT'S A TRIATHLETE!

"I see the double orange buoys signaling the last turn on the swim and start to get real emotional and start welling up. There's a newbie next to me, first tri, no wetsuit and he's going to make it too. I encourage him and am really starting to try hard not to break down since that would screw up my breathing. Round the orange balls and sprint to the shore. Taking off my wetsuit, eyes leaking, walking through the arch. I will never forget that moment."

GREAT TRAINING SONGS

What makes them great?
They either psych you up or simply make you feel good!
[Please don't wear headphones when you ride

would make you feel good from a time perspective and go get it.

- Look at a week in advance and pick 2-3 workouts that you place in a "priority" category. Take time to mentally and physically prepare for them (good nights sleep, proper nutrition, etc., easy-av. WO day before, etc.) and shoot for incremental progress and success.
- Review your training log and look for specific past workouts that you feel were almost in the "breakthrough" category. Decide what it would take to do them again with the same or better result and go for it.
- Pick a few weeks (can even be recovery weeks) where you actively seek the 3 R's – rest, refresh, rejuvenate. Make up one high quality workout of moderate duration for one day and nail it.
- Plan specific quality workouts into your go-forward schedule and celebrate their success- like you use to when you hit your weekly hour goal :)

BEGINNER'S CORNER: HOW TO GET THROUGH THE SWIM?

(An excerpt from Max Performance's Open Water Swim Clinic Series)

For many beginner triathletes, the swim portion of a triathlon can be the most challenging. Many new triathletes have relative strengths in the bike and run, but when it comes to the swim...the infamous "P" word comes to mind. (Panic!)

We like to refrain from saying the P Word and will discuss ways to reduce your Anxiety during the swim portion of an upcoming triathlon.



- **Positioning:** The start of a triathlon can be like walking into a washing machine on steroids, with all the white wash and grappling/kicking. So, why not eliminate some of that thrashing by positioning yourself in the back of your wave. Whether you start in the water or on the beach, let the rhyestars go out in the front. Then, get yourself into a rhythm without all the drama.
- **Recovery Strokes:** So you've started the swim and your beginning to feel like you can't get any air and your arms are tiring. What to do? Some great strokes to fall back on include the breast stroke or the backstroke. The goal is to gather more air and refresh your muscles. Take a minute and regain your composure before resuming your freestyle stroke. Many new triathletes ask the question: But don't I have to do freestyle the whole time? The answer is simply no. Sure, swimming freestyle will get you there the fastest, but it's perfectly acceptable to use alternative strokes to get you from Point A to Point B. And that goal is to reach the swim finish!!!
- **Sighting:** If you haven't completed an open water swim yet, we have to tell you a little secret: There are no lane lines at the bottom of the lake to keep you on target! Ughh. So, you'll need to pick your head up in some manner every few strokes to ensure you're not swimming military style....left, right, left, right, left....and adding an additional 250 yards to your swim! One basic technique is the breaststroke. Used for 3-4 strokes,

outside though!]

- *"I Got A Feeling"* by Black Eyed Peas
- *"Panic Switch"* by Silver Sun Pickups
- *"Dancing Queen"* by Abba
- *"Wide Open Spaces"* by Dixie Chicks
- *"The Fear"* by Lily Allen
- *"Down&quo t; by Jay Sean feat. Lil Wayne*
- *"Tell Me 'Bout It"* by Joss Stone
- *"Good Girls Go Bad"* by Cobra Starship

the breaststroke allows you to pop your head up and then resume freestyle. Other techniques include forward sighting during a freestyle stroke.

All of the techniques above will help you reduce your anxieties during the swim portion of a triathlon and help you feel more confident and comfortable in the open water. The three bullets above are a just a brief description of topics that are covered during Max Performance's Open Water Swim Clinic Series. We hope to see you a future 2010 Max Swim Clinic!

TRIDOC ADVICE: HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU DRINK?

A week or two of 90+ degree weather and this question is on quite a few triathlete minds. Drink too little, you worry about dehydration. Drink too much; you worry about hyponatremia (low blood-sodium levels). Either condition will certainly reduce performance. Drink too much water and not enough salt and you can disrupt the delicate balance of blood-sodium concentration. Symptoms include nausea, muscle cramps and disorientation – very similar symptoms as dehydration. But you should have a good sense whether you took in too much or too little water. The easiest thing to do if you feel its hyponatremia during an event, is to stop drinking. Exercise will shed excess water through sweating and urination. Dehydration – do the opposite.

SPECIAL THANKS

Max would like to extend a Special Thanks to Stiena Wakeman and the rest of the Old Colony YMCA East Bridgewater Branch volunteers. Their dedication to the sport of triathlons and their level of enthusiasm is unprecedented and truly appreciated. They are a wonderful example of sportsmanship and show the kind of values and community spirit that make the YMCA so great.

Show your support for the Old Colony YMCA by checking out their website here:

www.oldcolonyymca.org



So, how much should you drink to avoid over or underhydration? Weighing yourself before and after runs is the best way to find out if you are taking in the right amount of fluids. To estimate your fluid needs, weigh yourself naked before and after a hard one-hour run. Convert the amount of weight lost to ounces to figure out your sweat rate per hour--so a loss of one pound means you sweated about 16 ounces of fluid. In this case, you would try to replenish fluids at a rate of about 16 ounces per hour.

If figuring out your sweat rate is too much work, guidelines suggest drinking anywhere from about 14 to 27 ounces per hour. The higher end of the range applies to faster, heavier individuals competing in warm environments and the lower rates for the slower, lighter persons competing in cooler environments. When you're out for more than 30-minutes, choose sports drinks over water. The carbohydrates and electrolyte sports drinks contain help you stay energized and better hydrated during longer runs.

SUPPORTING CHARITIES

We hand picked a few to support their [causes](#) and allow participants to do the same. Hope you do!

Rosie's Place

Prostate Cancer Foundation

Local YMCAs

Team Hole in the Wall

Souls 4 Soles

TITLE 9 TRI FOR 2009- SOME FUN NUMBERS FOR PARTICIPANTS



This year's race is shaping up to be another great event. Many women have asked us questions about age group #s, experience levels and finishing expectations. So, we summarized some of that information for you in rough form:

- 49% of the participants are 40 or over
- 43% are Newbies (there are 3 Newbie Waves)
- 62 people are doing the Buddy system to race with a friend
- Using last year's results, adjusted for this year's course lengths, here are some estimates on finishing times. If you want to finish in the:
 - Top 10% of all participants – 1:12
 - Top 25% - 1:17
 - Top 50% - 1:26
 - "Now I'm a Triathlete Category" Finish your category with a smile, call yourself a triathlete and receive a really cool Finisher Medal – EVERYONE

Remember, you are all unique individuals with unique backgrounds, fitness levels, lifestyles and goals. Measure yourself relative to these perspectives most of all and you'll guarantee yourself a wonderful experience!

MAX PRAISE

"Well, if you combine Max Performances' ability to run a triathlon with the Sharon triathlon site, you'll have one great race! It's wonderful to have the beautiful venue back in play and run by such a fine organization. I'm even taking time from my Ironman training schedule to do this race in 2009."

-Don M

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NUTRITION NEWS: TOP NUTRITION TIPS FOR TRIATHLETES

Basing your diet and sports nutrition habits on sound principles and the most recent information available can yield better fitness training results. So, following the tips below can help maximize your health and performance:

Optimize your body composition

One of the most effective ways to boost your triathlon performance is to optimize your body composition and achieve a body fat percentage that is close to the minimum your body needs. By following the other nutrition tips listed below and training smart, you will gradually shed any excess body fat you may be carrying.

Eat a balance and a variety of foods

A balanced diet is one that includes everything from fruits to vegetables to milk and dairy products in proper proportion. It provides healthy quantities of carbohydrates, vitamins, salts and minerals. Eating a varied and balanced set of foods is the best way to ensure you get enough and not too much of all the nutrients your body

needs.

Limit your consumption of processed foods

Processed foods can contain unhealthy chemical additives and often contain hidden sugar, salt, and fat. In addition, processing takes a lot of the nutrients out of nutrient-rich foods. Try to limit these foods by reducing your consumption of processed grains and foods with added sugar and minimizing your consumption of fried foods and foods containing processed oils.

Customize your nutrition

Everyone has a unique set of nutritional needs so that the same foods may have very different effects in different bodies. That's why some people can function well on a high carb diet while others function best on a moderate carbohydrate diet. In order to truly customize nutrition for your body, you'll have to pay attention to how various foods and eating patterns affect you. Recording everything you eat throughout the day in a food journal will help you connect the effects various foods have on your body.

Eat frequently

Eating smaller meals throughout the day is shown to result in less fat storage than eating 2-3 large meals. Frequent eating also benefits performance in workouts by keeping your energy level fairly consistent throughout the day.

Drink up

Drinking during workouts and races is proven to enhance exercise performance by keeping blood volume higher and core body temperature lower. Keep in mind that sports drinks tend to be a better choice than plain water because they are absorbed faster and retained better in the body.

Post exercise recovery

While the pre exercise meal can help ensure optimal performance, the post exercise meal is critical to recovery and improves your ability to train consistently. One of the most important sports nutrition discoveries in recent years is the fact that timing is essential with regard to post exercise nutrition. The most important nutrients to take in immediately following each workout are water and electrolytes for hydration, carbohydrate to replenish muscle glycogen stores, and protein to repair and rebuild muscle tissue. Research shows that combining protein with carbohydrate in the two hours after exercise nearly doubles the insulin response, which results in more stored glycogen. The optimal carbohydrate to protein ratio for this effect is 4:1 (four grams of carbohydrate for every one gram of protein).

Don't overdo it on race-day

Some people can tolerate a higher rate of nutrition intake during exercise than others, however many triathletes are more likely to overdo nutrition during races than to take in too little. It's important that you experiment with different nutritional practices before and during workouts. This will help you determine which pre-workout meals, drinks, and schedules work best for you so you know what will work best for you on race day.

TRIATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

EMILY PAUL

Profile – I'm 54, a CPA (own my small tax firm in Boston) and a widow of 2 and ½ years.

The “beginning” - I've been interested in doing one for about a year after a couple of friends (about my own age) mentioned it to me. I started reading about the sport and the thought of “multi-sport” appealed to me – two of the three activities are not hard on my feet, ankles, knees and hips – something us older folks think about! In the past, I've only exercised for fitness and weight loss –vague and ambiguous goals. I wanted to find an activity where I would exercise for an “event” and not just to fit into skinny jeans. Also, as a tax accountant, I know the value of a DEADLINE to get you focused.



Athletic Interests - Prior to triathlon I played a little tennis but other than that – nothing! I went to college in North Carolina (UNC-CH) in the seventies and back then (and maybe now) you couldn't graduate from a state university without being able to swim a certain distance (100 yards as I recall). I was a terrible swimmer and of course, failed the test. I ended up taking 2 semesters of swimming and college and grew to love it.

Triathlon Accomplishments – We'll see! I'm doing my first tri on Sunday 7/26/09 and I'm very nervous! I volunteered at a tri in July (great thing to do by the way to learn more about the sport without the accompanying nerves of doing the race) and really enjoyed the people I met. *(yes, I did finish it and had a blast - I'm a triathlete!)*

Motivation - I need a diversion away from my desk job – something to get me up off the couch and outside exercising. This has been a great way to enjoy the summer. Exercise is a great way to beat back the blues. I also like the people involved with the sport – they're healthy in so many ways – mentally and physically.

Goals for 2009 – Overcome my anxiety of swimming any distance in open water (even a third of a mile) and to get through my first tri with a happy feeling. After that I need to focus on running – my most detested activity! I can't seem to get beyond the “clomp/clomp” feel of jogging/running.

MAX'S FEATURED RACE OF THE MONTH



September 20, 2009

Demarest Lloyd State Park

Dartmouth, MA

9:00am Start

Sprint Triathlon: 1/3 Mile Swim, 14.7 Mile Bike, 3.1 Mile Run

End the season on a great note! The Buzzards Bay Triathlon makes every triathlete appreciate the beauty of an amazing Park and course layouts. The bike course is a major highlight with views of the bay, farmhouses, and stone walls, with fall foliage at its peak. Demarest Lloyd State Park is true hidden gem that serves as a fantastic season wrap-up!

Here's what triathletes had to say about the Buzzard's Bay Triathlon:

"That was the best race of the year (of 7!). Nothing beats the one-way swim and a great bike ride. Loved the mile markers each mile on the run (thank you) and I think it was the most enthusiastic, loudest post-race crowd yet. Every finisher was greeted by applause and clanging cowbells. Nice job!"

-Claire M.

[Click Here](#) for more info & to register!

Stay healthy, excited, and spirited!

*Be well,
Tim Richmond, RD
[Max Performance](#)*

RACE WITH MAX TO WIN A QUINTANA ROO FRAMESET



&



Max's Official Bike Sponsor **Quintana Roo** and **Quad Multisport** are giving away a QR Lucero Lite Frameset at the end of the 2009 season!

Here's how it works: Race with Max and you are entered into the drawing. The more you race with us, the better your chances at winning this great frameset! At the end of the season, we'll randomly pick a winner.

This is just another reason to join Max in 2009!

TRIATHLETE SPORTS



TriathleteSports.com is one of the largest online distributors of triathlon wetsuits, clothing, gear, and accessories. With their low price guarantee you can't lose!

TriathleteSports.com offers great features such as:

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WETSUIT RENTAL DEALS FOR TITLE 9 & BUZZARD'S BAY



(Try and Buy offer is excellent too)

Water temperatures for both races may be a little chilly, so consider an economical rental from xterrawetsuits.com

Take a look at their super "try and buy" offer too, since they need to unload 2009 inventory this late in the year!

OUTDOOR RECREATION OF HOPKINTON

Outdoor Recreation of Hopkinton (ORH) is located within Hopkinton State Park, a 1500+ acre complex with a spring fed 175-acre lake and three islands to explore, miles of trails, open fields, two swimming beaches and many beautiful vistas to enjoy. Hopkinton State Park is a fun and safe location to enjoying boating of all types.

ORH offers the following services for reasonable prices:
Kayak Rentals

Canoe Rentals
Rowboat Rentals
Summer Camp
Sailing Lessons
Kayaking Lessons
Kids Birthday Parties
Corporate/Private Events

For more info visit:

www.outdoorrec.com/home/hopkinton-state-park