

WINTER AGAIN ?

Like the seasons, we are all different. This Winter may be mild, cold, or rainy & each of us needs individual "tweaks" to keep us on track & progressing as athletes. Some of us are already planning next season, some of us are doing R&R, some of us are racing Cyclocross or late season events. For your information, Cyclocross is a Winter cycling event which includes running, jumping barriers, & cycling. The event has been in existence since about 1900 & became a World Championship Event in the 1950's. The Oregon race schedule will be found on website <http://www.obra.org>. If you are a bike in R&R mode then check a schedule & go watch, the event will inspire you to action.

MUSCLE TIME

Winter is muscle time. Winter is also a fun & progress time. Our ego's all get rebuilt with a good dose of the "Overload Principle". There is nothing better than knowing that you have put on extra muscle will get you to the finish line faster. The ingredients in the recipe are a pinch of socializing, a pound of rollers, a quart of weights, a spot of testing, a dash of sauna, season with stretching and cook for four months. If the recipe is not under or overcooked, the result will be an athlete who is strong & wants to go fast.

READY SET FAST!

The Winter Preparation is the time to put on extra muscle to not only perform the prime functions of the sport but to work on muscle balance, agility, & flexibility. More simply put, this is the time to be stronger, quicker, & more bendable. There is a catch in this brief explanation of Winter Preparation, if you want last years results, then do last years workouts !! Get out your notebook & examine your November, December & January workouts. If the notebook idea is an alien creature, then you can be reasonably assured that your progress will be minimal. Just like water seeking its own level, we all will seek a physical & emotional comfort zone. Notebooks are the policemen of Dragnet--- just the facts.

THE TOOLS

Now is the time to grab your notebook & track bag & head for the weight room for about four months of body enhancement. First on the list of exercise activities is a good warm-up. Tops on the A List is using cycling rollers & a fixed gear bike with some short high tempo intervals. Allow forty five minutes for warm-up prior to doing weights. Fixed gear bikes are great training devices & almost any older ten speed can be converted to a fixed cog. A fixed gear training pattern was part of a number of F.I.A.C. training books for many years. The major benefits are an increase in leg speed & pedaling efficiency. There are nine muscle groups which do the pedaling & fixed gear makes them all work.

There are lots of possible alternative devices & methods to getting a good warm-up. You may use wind or magnetic trainers, exercise bikes, ergometers, or run on a track. To be effective at the weights, you must do a effective warm-up. The body is just not happy with going from a desk to pushing substantial weights around, muscle groups can contract more rapidly when they are warmed to the task. For the triathlete, it may be even more effective to mix up the warm-up routine as in run to bike or bike to run.

HEAVY STUFF

Are you ready for some weights? The answer is sure, but, wait & get your cliché's in order. Don't forget what you already probably know. Start all over, at the beginning- not with weights & reps that ended your preparation. Try two to three sets of fifteen each repetitions at about 75% of single capacity. The maximum strength gains will be made with heavy weights, just don't start heavy and get injured. You will be well served to get a good illustrated text on weight lifting to make sure that the principles, & proper form is understood. If there is a certified trainer handy, ask questions.

For cycling, if all the training is done on the bike, then the likely result will be an arched back, weak abdominals, tight quads, weak upper body & a lack of flexibility. On the other hand, the most effective training is specific exercise & the most effective strength builder for the bike is to do slow repetitions (50 RPMS) at very high pedal pressures on a bike or ergometer. If you just did the bike for strength, then your muscle balance, posture, & leg speed would decline.

Here is a partial list of weights for cycling: Leg Press, Hamstring Curl, Toe Raises, Bench Press, Bench Row (exaggerate to work the back), lat pull downs, leg Extensions, Leg Lifts, Back Raises, Roman Chair, & all manner of abdominal exercises. Lunges, Squats, Cleans & Dead Lifts can be added as skill & strength progresses.

The typical progress for Winter strength building will go from two to three sets at 15 repetitions at 75% to 12 or 8 repetitions with heavier weights and to failure. This is a simple task, warm-up with vigor, on to the weights, keep good records, move the targets, stretch, shower, and look in the mirror to say "what a successful person am I".

The next Tips will spend more time on targeting improvements and adding a base of volume.

Questions will be answered!

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