A simple, stylized green Christmas tree with a grey shadow underneath.

Happy Holidays!

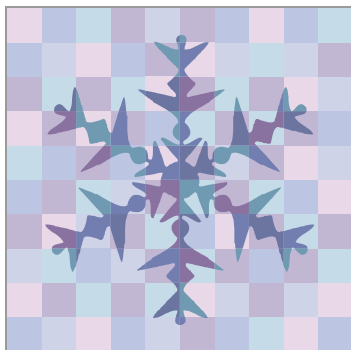
Too Snowy to Run?

Then you can always ski!

Ok, so we don't have any snow just yet – but we will – this *is* New England after all - and it *is* December (everyone have their holiday shopping done?). Where did the year go?

Anyway, I grew up in the woods of upstate New York next door to a cross country ski area and tree farm. Even though I didn't always appreciate it back then, I know first hand that cross country skiing is a LOT of work and a fantastic cardiovascular workout! Cross country skiing is a great alternative to running, a way to enjoy the snow and get outdoors during the winter, and since you're gliding along, much lower impact on the knees and joints.

Now that I have come to realize how lucky I was growing up, I know that I'm still pretty darn lucky since we have two cross country ski areas less than 30 minutes from downtown Boston – the Weston Ski Track and Great Brook Farm State Park. And, both areas offer night skiing options so you can get some quality outdoor exercise in the evenings after work.



Weston Ski Track, Weston

www.ski-paddle.com/skitrack/skitrack.shtml

Even if the snow doesn't fly soon, all that's needed at the Weston Ski Track are temps below 32 degrees because the ski track has snowmaking! In addition to snowmaking, the Weston Ski Track also offers the following:

- *Groomed trails for traditional track and skate skiing.*
- *Warming lodge.*
- *Night skiing Monday through Thursday until 9 pm.*
- *A 2 kilometer, lighted loop for night skiing (same 2 kilometers with snowmaking).*
- *Equipment rentals.*
- *Traditional track and skate ski lessons.*
- *Snowshoe trails.*

Great Brook Farm State Park, Carlisle

www.greatbrookski.com

Great Brook Farm State Park in nearby Carlisle offers a more rustic cross country ski experience. Although Great Brook depends on mother nature for snow, you can enjoy night skiing by lantern light! Great Brook offers:

- *Groomed trails for traditional track and skate skiing.*
- *Warming lodge.*
- *Night skiing Tuesdays and Thursdays from sunset to 9 pm on a 1 mile loop lit by lantern light.*
- *Equipment rentals.*
- *Snowshoe trails.*



Philadelphia Marathon – November 21, 2004

Race (a.k.a Participation) Report by Maura Mulligan McCrann

Back in August I decided to run the Philly Marathon with hopes of a qualifying time (3:40) for Boston (and because it was taking place on my 34th birthday... how fun!). Training was going well through early October, then I got married (yay!), and went to Hawaii (double yay!!) for a honeymoon. As my new husband would gear up in the 85 degree afternoon heat to go for his run, more often than not, I opted to sip frozen drinks by the pool instead. A great decision, but not without consequences! I decided that a sub 4 hour marathon, rather than a 3:40 was still possible if I jumped back into training once I got home. Well, needless to say, that didn't happen. The week after I returned I finished up at my old job and started a new one, and found myself exhausted from the whirlwind month of changes that had just happened. In retrospect, I should have given myself a few months of downtime this fall, as I know we all need "off" time in order to stay motivated. Training for a marathon was the last thing I wanted to do, and given that I view running and triathlon as something that is supposed to be fun, I opted to not run more than 2-3 times a week... for SEVEN weeks.... Forget 4 hours, I was worried about finishing at all!

As marathon day approached I again had to reevaluate where I stood going into the day. I had done about half of my training, yet I had friends racing, and coming to cheer, so I still wanted to participate. I decided to go and view the race as a long training run. Low heart rate, slow steady pace, and see how far I got, hopefully finish in about 5+ hours. Of course I told myself that I could drop out at the midpoint if I felt bad.

We woke at 6 am and pulled on our race gear while Patrick went out to buy us bagels. By 7:15, we were headed to the race start. It was great to know so many people racing - Sue, Matt, Chris, Andrea, and Mariana - and to have a cheering crew as well - Patrick (our race day Sherpa, carrying dry clothes, Fuel Belts, gels, fluids, you name it!), Robin, Rex, and Alyssa.

The weather was perfect, high 50's and overcast and the gun went off at 8 am. I started, as always, too fast. I was running about 9 minute miles, but knew this would be hard to maintain over the course of the day, so by mile 7 I slowed to 10 minute miles and fell into a pretty steady pace. I had seen Patrick and gang at mile 6 and was enjoying seeing so much of a new city. The course was great so far, pretty flat with a big climb at mile 10 as we headed into a park. It was beautiful, as the orange leaves were still on the ground, and there were a lot of people out cheering. As I approached the halfway point, my feet and legs were really starting to feel the lack of training. I hit mile 13 in about 2:03, but knew I had some decisions to make. Miles 14 and 15 have us run back past the start, heading out in a new direction, so if I was going to bail out, I needed to do it then. I told myself, "Maybe you should stop when you see Patrick and just cheer the rest of the day, you got in 14 decent miles." As I approached mile 15, I saw Rex and Patrick cheering. I stopped briefly, to give Patrick an update on my aches and pains, and get a few motivational kisses ☺ I knew that I could not just DNF (even though part of me really wanted to) so I waved goodbye and ran off down boathouse row. During any race, when I feel like quitting would be so easy, I remember hearing Peter Reid (Ironman World Champ) speak a few years ago following a season where he DNF'ed several races, and almost gave up the sport. He said that once he quit that first time, it was so much easier to do it again when he was having a bad day, or was in pain. I always remember that and remind myself that unless my health is at risk, I need to complete what I start, for the mental victory if nothing else.

The second part of the course was even better than the first half, we ran along a river, an out and back section, where we got to see all the runners heading back on the last 6 miles. I see Andrea running strong, she is at mile 22, I am at 18. She is on target to break 3:40 (a goal I know she wants to hit). Right behind her is Mariana (and Alyssa, who joined her for the last 10 miles). They yell to me and I keep shuffling forward. About 1.5 miles later I see Robin who is running the last 11 miles with Sue. Sue is running strong though looks like she is in pain. I am in awe of her ability to still be running. At mile 20, is the turnaround, just 6 miles back to town. Right after the turn, my quads start cramping and I stop to walk for a bit. Although frustrated to have cramping in my legs, I am shocked by how well I have done so far given my lack of



preparation, and I take a minute to remind myself of this and of the gift of a healthy body, which, although slow, is able to be out here running a marathon. I try running again, but spasms in my quads worsen and at mile 23 I resign myself to walking. It is 4 hours into the race and my standard race songs randomly enter my head, "Take Me Home Country Roads" and "The Gambler" (yes, these are the tunes that always come into my head while racing... odd!). A mile later I hit the last water station (mile 24) and a radio is on, blasting "The Gambler"! Now THAT is odd, but makes me laugh. I decided to try to run the last 1.5 miles, as this walking stuff is taking way to long. I am thankful again that I am almost finished, as I see runners coming the opposite way, just hitting the 15 mile mark. The pain in my quads has not lessened, but I keep up my slow run toward the finish line. The crowds are great, cheering like crazy for all the finishers, and I hear the announcer shout Maura Mulligan McCrann (first race with my new name ☺) as I cross the finish line at 4:41. Not the race I originally hoped for, but a great day nonetheless!

Philadelphia Marathon

Race Report by Andrea Baumgartner

During one of my first long training runs, I started to have problems with my left IT band. For the last two months, I was getting a sports massage almost every week hoping to be healthy for the race. It was getting a lot better to the point I thought it would not bother me at all!

Unfortunately, I started to feel my left IT band/knee around mile 3 of the Philadelphia Marathon - but thankfully, it wasn't too bad! But each mile the pain increased....

Unlike the rest of the marathoners that got to enjoy, appreciate, like, or dislike the landmarks that we were running through, I barely remember the course. It could have been the most beautiful course or the worst one... I don't remember it! I was only concentrating on staying in the middle of the road, because going to either side of the road really made my leg hurt. All I could think of was to look for the mile marks, keep my heart rate in check, try to maintain my pace, and again, find a place in the road that did not hurt my leg (up hill felt better, down hill hurt like hell!).

Miles 13 through 20 were the most painful miles. I was trying to stay strong. I was talking to myself the whole time. "I am strong!", "Nothing hurts!", "My legs feel great!", "Keep moving", "Move forward!", "Don't stop!". That was all I thought about from mile 13 to mile 20. During those miles, I was not sure if I was able to finish the race. I thought that if the pain kept increasing at the rate it was, there was no way I was going to be able to finish. But I tried to keep those thoughts away!

At mile 20 I met Mariana, and felt like I just wanted to cry! I asked her if she had Tylenol or a pain reliever. She didn't have anything.

But shortly thereafter, everything changed! Perhaps it was the excitement of realizing that I still had time to qualify? Maybe the street was more even? All of a sudden, my IT band was not hurting anymore. I started to feel fast and strong. It was relative to the other people (a lot of people were slowing down, walking, vomiting, etc.). But I was feeling a lot of energy.

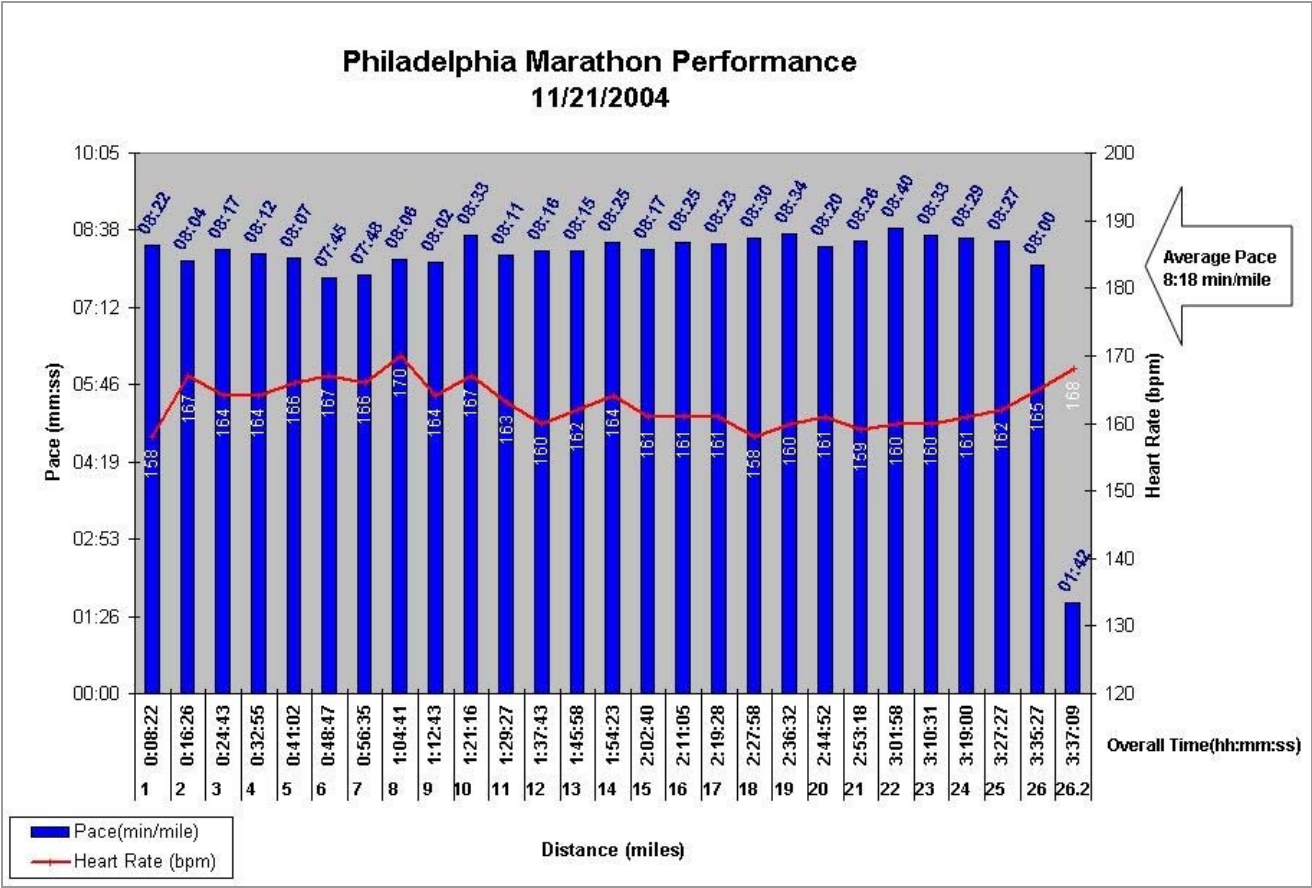
At mile 25, I saw a familiar face – Patrick. He took my Fuel Belt, gave me a small bottle of Gatorade and told me to "BRING IT HOME!" After I saw him I filled with even more energy, I felt so good, I felt like I was flying in that last mile. I was so happy and excited! For a moment, I was emotional, I felt like crying – I felt so good and excited!

Mile 20 was my miracle mile. It was the breaking point. I went from feeling that I was not sure if I could finish the race, to feeling very strong and knowing I **could** and **would** qualify for Boston!



Originally, my goal was to finish a little bit faster than what I did. Regardless, I am happy with myself because I know I gave all I had given my circumstances! After all, the IT band pain helped me pace myself and save energy for the last 6.2 miles! :)

Special thank you to everyone who supported me and encouraged me throughout my training and at the race, especially Alyssa and Patrick who were out along the course!





Chicago Marathon

Race Report by Martine Goldberg

Well it has been almost 8 weeks since the Chicago Marathon took place. Hard to believe that I even trained for 24 weeks, run and indeed finished in 4:47:16! My goal was 4:30 so I was a little off. I had wanted to run a marathon for my 35th birthday.... Well it is never too late, I did it at 48!

So this is what it was like, really. First the training, which I mainly did alone on the Minuteman Bike Path, though I began on May 2nd in Las Vegas due to business travel. I ran on the bike path since it is slightly inclined but overall fairly flat. In other words, very similar to Chicago. Training was time for myself – reaching my goals, pushing my body, but mostly preparing my brain, really. Using the time to think, meditate even, conditioning my mind as well as my body for the event. So when D-Day arrived, I was as ready as I could get. The thing I was most worried about was the crowd in the corral since I do not like crowds.

We arrived in Chicago (my husband Bart and I) on Friday evening and stayed with friends a cab ride away from the start. Saturday I went to get my package with my number and at that point I was so psyched I knew I would have a great time. We had our carb diner with a group of women from Iowa, Boston, and one from Chicago with whom I started the race. Sunday was a perfect day for a race, perfect blue skies, 49 degrees at the start and 68 degrees at the finish.

We set off with the 10:30 mile group and got going, it felt great. For the first 3/4 to 1 mile I was with this group of women but then I got my pace and lost them. I put myself in training mode in my head and it was perfect. For a while I thought I could do it in 4:15, but it did not happen. I never struggled with my breathing during the race. The pack never really loosened up until the last few miles when it is really mind over body for most people. At the 4th mile, our friend Randy jumped in for his long run before New York and ran with me until mile 26. It was great. Another friend of his jumped in with 5 of his 7 children and ran until mile 18. The crowd was wonderful throughout the various neighborhoods and so supportive. Though my half time was almost two minutes slower than last year's Hollis Applefest, I am overall pleased to have finished. At some point in the race, I took off for a little while as I felt great, no pain anywhere, no difficult breathing but then I slowed down. I did walk every so often but not long, about 50 yards, in order not to lose the tempo. I had my Fuel Belt with me (4 bottles in all which of course I refilled a few times), as well as antioxidants, CoQ10, and ginger slices covered with sugar. Every hour I took some antioxidants, CoQ10, and a ginger slice with water. I also had two packs of Gu. I had two bottles with water and a little unrefined sea salt (to get the minerals I was losing due to perspiration back) and 2 with just water. I also stopped at each and every water/power drink stops and drank both as well as poured water on my head each time to keep me cool, which helped tremendously even though the weather was perfect.

Someone told me recently that 21 miles is as far as the body can go and beyond it is really pushing the limits. I really felt that I had nothing left and it took all my resolve and will power to finish and cross the line which I did. I recovered well overall. My feet still hurt a little and I feel I have wooden feet when I get up in the morning still. I did resume running (light jogging) the following week. I still feel like it is almost surreal that I ran a marathon and am thinking of running another one in the spring. But the pictures are here to remind me I actually did it.

My goal is to run a couple of more marathons as "stand alone" and try to reduce my time a little bit before the Ironman I would like to complete in 2006.

Simple Steps to a Better Season

Jason Gootman, MS, CSCS & Will Kirousis, BS, CSCS

Tri-Hard Sports Conditioning Systems

USA Triathlon & USA Cycling Certified Coaches

Certified Strength & Conditioning Coaches

www.tri-hard.com

Your 2004 triathlon season is over. Hopefully it was a positive season, filled with good experiences and positive changes in your performance!

We bet that at this point, you are still excited from the races you participated in during 2004 and starting to look at how you can build on that momentum during the 2005 season.

In this article, we will look at how the simple steps of resting well, reflecting on your strong and weak points, shoring up your health habits, and becoming stronger and more powerful will set you up for your best performances yet in 2005.

Resting Well

This sounds way too easy to work, doesn't it? After all, if you start training harder sooner than the competition you will have a step up on everyone else next year, right? WRONG. Regardless of how well the year went for you, when the competitive season is over you need at least a month of resting. This time may include some general exercise like hikes, aerobics classes, or coaching your kids' soccer team, but it shouldn't include "triathlon training". Resting with the same conscientiousness that you train with will help you perform better than ever in 2005. You should not think of rest as "doing nothing". Rather, you should view rest as the act of resting, an important part of the overall process of growing stronger as an athlete.

Reflecting on Your Strong and Weak Points

Reviewing your season and looking at how your strong points helped you and weak points held you back is a good practice at this point in the year. This information can help you set up an effective training program for the winter and coming season that maximizes your strong points while bringing up your weak points. This can be hard to do this since doing the things you are not as good at can be emotionally challenging. However, sometimes it is important to go straight at the things that are hard for you, and facing them head on, as the long term positive changes are well worth it! It is very gratifying to turn a weak point into a strong point!

Shoring up Your Health Habits

The off-season is a time when folks often think they can just let everything slide. This is not a good idea. Peak performance requires superb health. If you lose health, you lose performance. Engraining positive health habits by sticking to them year round is a tremendous way to steadily improve. For example, continue to foster good sleep habits by getting 8-9 hours of sleep each night, and getting to bed at a regular time. This allows your body-mind (you) the full opportunity to rejuvenate during this time of reduced training. Similarly, focus on eating a sound diet of minimally processed foods with the emphasis on meats/fish/eggs, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and whole grains/whole grain foods throughout the year. This gives your body what it needs to grow and stay well. Keeping a steady habit of health will help you perform stronger this coming year.

Becoming Stronger and More Powerful

Strength and power are the fundamental aspects of performance. As an endurance athlete, you don't want to spend tons of time in the gym and you want to get the most positive effect from your strength/power training workouts. To do this, focus on exercises that are done standing and utilize large movements. Great examples include all forms of squats, lunges, step-ups, and standing pushing and pulling exercises. Exercises like these elicit strength/power gains from head-to-toe and everywhere in between. Keep the repetition range of your sets in the 4-10 range and perform 2-3 sets of each exercise with enough rest between sets to perform each set well (with good form and high force production). Two or three workouts per week, on non-consecutive days are plenty, with two being ideal for many folks.

Resting well, reflecting on your strong and weak points, shoring up your health habits, and becoming stronger and more powerful will propel you into a great 2005 season! Have fun with it!

Jason Gootman MS, CSCS and Will Kirousis BS, CSCS coach endurance athletes of all levels, write for conditioning related magazines/journals, and provide educational services for private and professional groups about optimizing endurance sports performance through their company Tri-Hard Sports Conditioning Systems. Jason and Will, USA Triathlon and USA Cycling Certified Coaches, can be reached with questions or comments through their website www.tri-hard.com or via email at jason@tri-hard.com and will@tri-hard.com respectively.

Solving the Run Riddle

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“I had a solid swim, I tore it up on the bike, and then I fell apart on the run! What happened? How can I avoid this and have a strong run?” As triathlon coaches, we are approached with this question often. Athletes typically respond to this problem by running more or running harder, yet this rarely solves their problem. Better is to work smarter, not harder to solve your triathlon run riddle. Here are four ways to do just that: improve your swimming and cycling skills, improve your power, improve your running skills, and improve your overall health.

Improve Your Swimming And Cycling Skills

Poor swimming and cycling skills are often the cause of poor running performance in a triathlon. This can be difficult to grasp for those who still feel that triathlon is three different sports. In reality, we encounter a triathlon as one event, with three different locomotion patterns linked together. In any endurance event, how much energy we expend (physical and mental) during the first half of the race greatly affects our performance in the second half of the race. Consider running a marathon. If you were forced to run the first half with your hands tied behind your back and then the second half of the race with your hands free, this would affect your performance not only in the first half of the race. Yes, you would run more slowly over the first half of the course as a result of your impaired movement abilities, but even with your hands free, you would run with great difficulty over the second half of the course, because you would have just run over the first half of the course in a terribly inefficient manner, using up the majority of your stored energy. This is what happens to us when we complete the swim and bike portions of the race with great effort (and sometimes great speed), but with poor economy of motion from our underdeveloped swimming and cycling skills and therefore poor economy of movement.

If this could be the source of your running setbacks, each of the following could help you:

1. Make it a priority to patiently and systematically develop your ability to swim faster with less effort by learning to swim with good skill. The books, videos, and clinics of Terry Laughlin (www.totalimmersion.net for more information) are among the best sources of help in this area.
2. Make sure your bike fit allows to you pedal your bike with a high level of efficiency. Consider an expert bike fit by someone with experience fitting triathletes. For more information on what is involved in a comprehensive

triathlon bike fitting, visit the website of a professional bike fitter. A great place to start is www.fitwerx.com, which is run by *Triathlete* Tech Support columnist Ian Buchanan.

3. Make it a priority to learn to pedal with greater efficiency. This means learning to apply force evenly throughout the entire pedal stroke. Drills such as various forms of isolated leg training and high cadence pedaling, as well as methods such as periodically riding a fixed gear bike can all help with pedaling efficiency.

Improve Your Power

All endurance forms of locomotion are the cyclic production of powerful movements. Running is no different. It is often a triathlete's lack of power that limits him/her on the run of a triathlon. For many triathletes, years of an overemphasis on distance training slowly deteriorate the neuromuscular system, diminishing their capacity to perform power-based motions. For many who run out of steam on the run, this is the case.

To improve your power, you should incorporate power-based exercises into your training scheme. Many athletes resistance train, but do so with slow motion, machine stabilized exercises. You will be much better served to perform exercises that meet the following criteria:

1. Are done free standing and unsupported by a machine or bench as we are when we are running;
2. Have a high balance component especially exercises performed with only one leg of support (as experienced in running) such as single-leg squats, step-up variations, lunge variations, and single-leg jumping, hopping, and bounding exercises; and
3. Involve motion that is as fast and explosive and utilizes the elastic and reactive properties of our muscles as we do when we run. Examples include all forms of skipping, hopping, and bounding activities as well as medicine ball throwing activities.

You can learn more about optimal power training and how to train for power by reviewing our June 2001 *Triathlete* article entitled "Power Gain".

Improve Your Run Skills

Running is not solely a metabolic activity as many are lead to believe. Like swimming and cycling, running has a larger mechanical aspect. A lot of people have problems in the run of a triathlon, not because they have not developed the fitness to cover the distance, but because there running skills are poor and they waste tremendous amounts of energy as they run. If you have not worked to create optimal running skills, this could very well be your downfall.

Learning to run well is a fun process of reconnecting with how our bodies are designed to interact with the earth and with gravity. Doing so allows us to run in a way that takes advantage of instead of fighting, the natural forces of gravity, inertia, momentum, and the stored elastic energy in our muscles. For a thorough discussion of improving running technique and materials to help you, an excellent resource is the website of Dr. Nicholas Romonov (www.posetech.com).

Improve Your Overall Health

Many people crumble during the run not because they are a poor runner but because they are racing in a state of subpar overall health. Stated another way, they are usually chronically overstressed. A triathlon places a huge demand on the body to perform a very difficult task. To do so successfully requires us to draw upon every ounce of our physical and mental reserves. If you get to the start line of your big race, and your physical and mental reserve tanks are already half empty, it is going to be very hard for you to sustain a high level effort for the duration of the event. Usually, through strong willpower, a person in this state can “hold it together” (not a peak performance state) for much of the race, but at some point in the run, just kind of crumbles. This can be seen in DNF’s as well as dramatically slowed paces on the run compared to the rest of the race. The problem here is not poor running fitness; it is poor overall health. The problem simply shows up on the run because it is the last segment of the demanding race.

If you think this is the cause of your poor running performances, you should make it a priority to work to improve your overall health and better manage the cumulative stressors in your life. Here are some areas to work on:

1. Rest. Successful training is based around the concept of systematically applying a training stress with alternating periods of rest. A major cause of poor health in triathletes is constant application of training stress without adequate rest. Make sure that your training plan is set up in a way that allows for the necessary rest.
2. Sleep. Oftentimes, more sleep, not more training will greatly improve someone’s performance, by creating better health. Make it a priority to create great chronic sleep patterns.
3. Nutrition. Inadequate nutrition can quickly lead to diminished health which will often rear its head in poor triathlon runs. Make sure your daily diet is full of fruits, veggies, meat/fish/eggs, nuts/seeds, and true whole grains.
4. Stress Management. Making the effort to simplify your life can greatly reduce your overall stress load. In addition, deep relaxation activities can assist in managing stress.

These are some of the most common reasons why athletes fail to complete their triathlons with a strong run. As you can see, there are several other factors besides running more or running harder, that go into solving your triathlon run

riddle. It's almost always about training better, not harder. So take a look through this list and identify which of these factors may be holding you back. Then use the help of an experienced coach or the resources listed within the article to help you train better and race better!

Jason Gootman MS, CSCS and Will Kirousis BS, CSCS coach endurance athletes of all levels, write for conditioning related magazines/journals, and provide educational services for private and professional groups about optimizing endurance sports performance through their company Tri-Hard Sports Conditioning Systems. Jason and Will, USA Triathlon and USA Cycling Certified Coaches, can be reached with questions or comments through their website www.tri-hard.com or via email at jason@tri-hard.com and will@tri-hard.com respectively.