

Hello All!

So. I don't know about the rest of the team, but this month has totally flown by! First, Thanksgiving, and now, the holidays! I was so busy – I almost forgot about the newsletter, if you can believe it. This month's newsletter is going to be a bit more low key than usual. I've picked a theme of 'Getting to know you', and have asked a few of our members to write a little bit about their background and triathlon experience.

I feel that over the past few months, everyone has gotten to know me pretty well... so I won't subject you to more of my ramblings....but – I have gained a lot of inspiration and enjoyment from the articles our teammates have submitted.... I think I'm going to make this a monthly feature! We will be hearing from Monique, Western Mass member Sabine Didier, our secretary and assistant bike coach, Mariana Pargana, and get a little bit of humor from Heather Shand! Also, Will and Jason from Tri –Hard have given us some more 'tri-wisdom'.

I'd also like to wish everyone a happy, safe and fun holiday season. See you next year!

Cece

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# Thoughts on Ironman training

**Monique Lappas**

I thought I would dedicate this month to sharing my ideas and philosophies about how I am approaching my Ironman training race preparation (only 115 days away!).

1. Before I make the decision to 'skip' a morning practice by just turning off the alarm, I have to put 2 feet on the floor. 9 times out of 10, this is all I need to do to talk myself into getting up.
2. If I have had less than 6-7 hours of sleep, I don't even consider doing a morning workout. I am usually too tired to get much benefit from it, and it just makes my day very long, as I try to stop myself from falling asleep at my desk.
3. Dogs make great running companions, particularly as it gets dark so early now. I feel a lot safer running with my pup.
4. I (rather, my coach) make my workout flexible enough so that if I have to miss a workout for some reason, I can usually get it in at some point during the week.
5. I am not rigid with my 'rest day'. Mine is suppose to be every Friday, but due to different commitments, I have often switched my weekly workouts around to have the rest day on the one that makes most sense for my other commitments.
6. If you are ever stuck for something to talk about, telling someone you are doing an Ironman can usually prolong the conversation for at least 15 minutes. This is a great strategy for when a senior partner at your company stops to chat with you and you realize you have nothing to say, and it is much more interesting than the typical comments like: 'I think it is meant to rain tomorrow'.
7. If you are going away for the holidays, call around different gyms to see if any of them have pools or workout facilities in the area (A Yahoo yellow pages search for health clubs will bring up a bunch in the area that you are going to). I was fortunate for the 4 days over thanksgiving to be given a 4-day pass for FREE to a great health facility in Avon, CT. I spoke to a very nice receptionist who organized the whole thing for me. It sure beat having to pay \$15 for a spin class at one of the other clubs in the area, plus, they had a pool, so I didn't have to miss that week's swim!
8. My Computrainer is a lot of fun to bike on. It also showed me that my pedal stroke was not very efficient and I realized that as soon as I stop thinking about my pedal stroke, the efficiency of it drops by about 15%. (If you want to come over and play on my computrainers and look at your own pedaling efficiency, then let me know!).
9. Ironman training is TIRING!
10. A glass or two of wine at a Christmas party is not going to make or break my Ironman ambitions
11. Most importantly, I am having a blast training through the winter. I am usually a bit of a hermit in the wintertime, and having an Ironman in April keeps me active. I stay relaxed about the training and what I can and can't do, or fit in. I know that I am not going to win my age group or qualify for Hawaii, so try not to let it interfere with other important areas of my life too much.

# Member Profile: Introducing Mariana Pargana

Team Envision member and secretary/assistant bike coordinator

## How did you get into triathlons?

Back in Brazil, while most of my girl friends would bring doctor's excuse not to practice sports I would enlist myself in every single one possible. Handball was my passion early on. I also played tennis, volleyball, soccer, indoor soccer, swam and did track&field. In 1998, during a summer internship back home in Brazil after my freshman year in college I met two co-workers that were hard-core in triathlon. One of them in fact was the best master swimmer in the state. I thought to myself, this is pretty cool, I'm an ok swimmer, I just started running, I just need a bike and I can do it too. Listening to their race/training stories made me want to try it. The fall semester came by and I was playing tennis and boxing and by the spring I found out I had thyroid cancer and wouldn't be able to do any sports for a while. I was just in my best shape ever, hooked into running because of my mom, happy with my weight and body and then everything was on standby. On the summer of 1999 I was operated and for the next two years I was on and off radiation until everything was off my body on July 2001. So on the fall of 2001, I was writing up my goals list for 2002 and one of them was to start doing triathlons and get back into shape. Karen Symers and Lance were my role models... I started spinning everyday I could and running. After coming back from Christmas (and reading Lance's book) this past year I found out about TE and joined. Triathlon has been a part of my life ever since then. The rest is history.

## What is your favorite sport?

It's hard to pick one... I really like them all. Swimming is just easier for me; I have been swimming since I was little and am used to swimming in the ocean. When I get into the water the auto pilot starts and I don't even think of what is happening, just swim. I also have a passion for running. I was a 3000m runner at my high school in Brazil, and a couple of years ago got into running longer distances with my mom. What I enjoy the most about running it's the freedom it gives me. Cycling, I like it because it's challenging and new for me. I just got my bike at the beginning of 2002.

## What is your greatest challenge?

Cycling is definitely my greatest challenge since I'm new to the sport and haven't gotten many miles on the saddle.

## What is your favorite training snack?

In between workouts I like the Luna bars (toasted nuts or sesame are my favorites); while racing I use sometimes the power gel double caffeine or a GU and pre race/ long run a chocolate power bar. I also take a recovery drink after racing or a soy shake.

**What do you do to keep you motivated?**

I keep a daily journal and training program on my computer. I make sure if I'm going out for a longer workout session that I have a training partner coming along. I do a lot of cross training and when I don't feel like swimming, biking or running I just go do something else: squash, tennis, yoga, kickboxing, fencing, boxing, you name it. In addition, setting goals and training to beat them is a big factor for me. Lastly, being surrounded by other athletes with so many challenges and things going on (mothers, 50-70hour workers, volunteers, etc) that still manage to workout it's a motivator to get myself out of the door.

**What are your goals for next season?**

After not swimming for 6 years, coming back to swimming has been great. I would like to focus on swimming longer distances and getting faster during the spring. I also want to do a couple of marathons and century rides. But my major goal for the next season is to finish Ironman Florida.

## 10 Surefire Ways to Get Faster

By Will Kirovski BS, CSCS and Jason Gootman MS, CSCS

Magazines and websites are loaded with dazzling workouts, special foods or dietary supplements, and the latest technological innovations all promising faster performances. Here are ten suggestions based on science, experience, and most of all *common sense* that will improve your health and will make you faster.

### 10. Sleep more.

Sleep is our body's major daily rejuvenation process. Adequate amounts of quality sleep are essential to improving your performance. In our busy world, sleep is often the first thing to go. It cannot be this way if you value your health and if you desire to improve as an athlete. Eight hours of sleep should be the **minimum**. Nine to ten is not unreasonable. This is usually possible if you can commit to getting to bed say a half an hour or so earlier each night. If you are going to commit to all the training, you owe it to yourself to commit to the sleep. You can't have one without the other.

### 9. Eat real food.

Real, clean, whole, unprocessed food is packed with the nutrients your body needs to fuel your workouts and complete the ongoing process of tissue repair and replacement. The less food has gone through before it goes through you, the better it is. Aim for plenty of fresh vegetables, fruits, meats, fish, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Avoid highly refined foods especially foods prepared with hydrogenated oils and highly refined grain products. Also, use sports supplement foods as they were intended—as supplements—not as your primary source of energy and nutrients. Don't laugh, we've seen it done.

### 8. Establish goals.

Your goals should be clear and specific. "Having a good season" or "getting better" are vague goals and provide little direction to your training. We suggest you take some time and think about what your participation in sport really means to you. Maybe write it down in a little essay. From there, determine a goal or goals that are important to you. These kinds of goals should be reasonable and possible for you, but not guaranteed. They should stretch you beyond your current physical and mental abilities. With clear goals, it is much easier for you or a coach to develop a training plan for you.

### 7. Think long-term.

No champion was made overnight. The physiological adaptations that occur as a result of training take time. When thinking about your goals and designing a training plan, it is best to combine an attitude of purposeful zeal with patience. You truly can do whatever

you set out to do. But it takes time! Trying to always achieve peak performances **NOW** leads to mediocrity at best, and injury and illness at worst.

#### 6. Do the right training for *you*.

Once you have a clear picture of your athletic goals and a roadmap for getting there, it is important that you then do the appropriate training for you at that point in your development. It is easy to get carried away with the workouts you find in a magazine or book or the workouts your friends are doing. Do the right workouts for you! In order to do this, you must be able to take an honest, objective view of yourself and do the right workouts for you at the stage you are at in your development.

#### 5. Resistance train.

A well-designed resistance training program can have a tremendous impact on your development as an athlete. Your resistance training should be multi-dimensional. That is, it should involve motions in all three planes and should involve motions at all speeds. It should emphasize multi-joint, integrated, sport speed-specific, and skill-requiring exercises. *Look for more on resistance training for multi-sport athletes from us in upcoming columns.*

#### 4. Train skills.

Swimming, cycling, and running well are all skills. You may not see them as skills like shooting an arrow or swinging a golf club, but they do require a great deal of neuromuscular communication to perform them well and they require a learning process as well. This makes them skills. It is generally accepted that swimming has a high skill component. But cycling and running do as well especially with regards to cadence. Being able to pedal and run at a high cadence is a skill, that is to say, it is a behavior learned through neuromuscular communication. You should learn to swim, bike, and run with great skill and efficiency before you attempt to go very fast through demanding, very intense metabolic work like VO<sub>2</sub> max intervals. This only further ingrains poor movement skills.

#### 3. Develop your true aerobic metabolism.

The **MOST IMPORTANT** aspect of training for endurance sports is the development of your aerobic system. Too often the term “aerobic” is used to describe any steady state activity no matter what the intensity as long as it is not a fast interval of some kind. But you are only truly developing your aerobic metabolism when you are working at moderate intensity levels and allowing your body to preferentially use fat as fuel. The benefits of training your aerobic metabolism are endless including increased digestion and absorption of nutrients, increased quality of sleep, decreased fatigue, reduced risk of injury, and most of all you will get fast as heck! (Note: You must be patient: See # 7 above). Generally speaking, the majority of your endurance training should fall somewhere between 65% and 75% of your maximum heart rate. For a more accurate

establishment of your aerobic and other HR training zones, we suggest consulting with a coach or checking out one of the well-written books that are available to athletes these days.

## 2. Cross train.

When it comes to training your aerobic metabolism, the physiological changes that occur at the cellular level do not know what activity they are doing. They just know that they need to learn to better metabolize fat as a fuel substrate. What this means is that you can certainly swim, bike, and run to train your aerobic metabolism. And, of course if triathlon is your sport, these should be the primary modes of activity for you. But performing other activities (mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, in-line skating, canoeing/kayaking, etc.) can have great benefits. They will help to make you a more well rounded athlete and provide variety in your training.

## 1. Think positive and have fun!

You can't get faster without a good attitude. If you think you can or you think you can't, you are right! Have fun!!!

*Will Kirousis BS, CSCS and Jason Gootman MS, CSCS coach athletes of all levels, write for conditioning related magazines/journals and, provide educational services for private and professional groups about optimizing endurance performance. Together they own and operate Tri-Hard Sports Conditioning Systems and are certified by USA Triathlon and The National Strength and Conditioning Association. Will and Jason can be reached with questions or comments through their website, [www.tri-hard.com](http://www.tri-hard.com) or via email at [will@tri-hard.com](mailto:will@tri-hard.com) or [jason@tri-hard.com](mailto:jason@tri-hard.com) respectively.*

# Getting to know.... Sydne Didier

The confident, self-assured part of me was a wannabe-triathlete long before I ever signed up for my first race. I talked about triathlon as a long-term goal, something I would do "someday." But secretly, a bigger part of me hoped that "someday" would never come.

Even though I knew very little about the sport, I knew that doing a triathlon meant testing myself in an entirely new way. It meant competing—something I had never done except in the one 10K I'd run just for fun. It meant feeling confident on a bike, and swimming in open water, and potentially embarrassing myself in front of friends, family, and countless strangers.

Doing a triathlon meant thinking of myself as an athlete, which was something other people were. I hadn't been a high school athlete. (Unlike most of my friends, I didn't play soccer from the time I could walk.) I hadn't learned to swim until graduate school and then, took beginning swimming with people who were afraid to put their faces in the water. I rode an old mountain bike in the mornings before school and didn't know anything about really riding. I hadn't had a road bike since my 5-speed

in 4th grade.

It was knitting class that made me into a triathlete. I don't remember how the conversation even started but it seemed safe to out my secret triathlon desires in a tiny wool shop in Northampton. Who in a class full of beginning knitters would want to race triathlon? There was no pressure because no one would hold me to my "someday" word.

Except that someone did. I found my first training partner in a woman who said "Really? You want to do a triathlon? So do I. Want to train together?" And there was no choice. I had to say yes.

Before I knew it, I had signed up for Danskin, and two other races. And I had a training schedule. We met each morning, deciding what to do and what kind of distances we wanted to ride or run. I bought an inexpensive road bike and my first set of clipless pedals—and promptly fell over at the start of a crowded local bike trail. I learned what transitions were and practiced putting my shoes on and running back and forth to a towel in my living room where I'd laid out my gear according to a diagram in the book my training partner and I shared. Little by little, we learned the particulars of the sport.

More significantly, I learned that triathlon was about so much more than that first race. It was about the being together every morning, riding, running, or swimming, or blowing them all off and getting breakfast—which we did occasionally. It was about getting to know someone in an entirely new way. (After knitting class ended, it was months before we saw each other in regular person clothes again!) I came to rely upon our time each day and the things we knew about each other that no one else, even our spouses, knew.

Part of it became about the races. By the time of our first successes at Danskin, we knew each other well and could commiserate about how sick we felt with nerves and anticipation. I remember every detail of that first race but that wasn't the most important thing. I also remember meeting at our local pond again for training several days after. We relived the race, of course, but mostly, we enjoyed our morning together. It's been five years since that first race and because of that first summer of training and being together, I have continued to learn and develop my skills, changing training partners along the way but still relying upon the relationships to get me through athletic and personal challenges.

For me, triathlon is now about that camaraderie. It's the reason I wanted to have a Team EnVision chapter in Western Mass., because I feel like the most important things we can get from this crazy sport are a sense of personal accomplishment, a greater level of physical fitness, and the relationships that sustain us. It's what keeps me doing these races, and it's what keeps me thinking about the next "someday" challenge.

# Top Ten Reasons to do Swim Workouts through the Winter

Heather Shand

10. Misery deserves company.
  9. Group showers baby, group showers.
  8. It's better to drive to swimming in an early morning snow when idiot drivers are still asleep rather than try and deal with them at night.
  7. Where else is a holey bathing suit eaten away by chlorine considered a status symbol?
  6. It will make you appreciate swimming at Walden so much more.
  5. The subtle smell of chlorine on your skin is a natural pheromone.
  4. There's nothing sexier than the ring-around-the eye goggle suction look
  3. It's fun to watch coworkers' mouths hit the ground after you tell them you've swam over a mile already and its not even 8 o'clock.
  2. aww hell. it frickin impresses EVERYONE!
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1. There's nothing better than standing at the start of the first race of the season and hearing someone say, "I haven't been swimming in ages."