

Team Tortuga

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Off-Season Recovery

Danish philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard, one of the founders of modern existentialism, said there must be a major reversal or shock to lead to any kind of progress, whether the progress of humanity or the progress of the individual. His theory was that something decisive always occurs by a jerk or a sudden turn. These progress-inducing reversals, shocks, or turns – called “evolutionary drivers” by some anthropologists – occur in animals when evolution forces major changes in a species.

On both a large and a small scale it becomes evident that low points precede high points. Because highs and lows are progressively cyclic, the reverse is also true: A peak comes before a valley, a high precedes a low.

The Elliott Wave Principle illustrates the one-step-back and two-steps-forward philosophy, a way of thought endorsed by many other great thinkers. What Kierkegaard refers to as high points, Elliott calls advancing waves; what Kierkegaard describes as a low, Elliott points out is actually a constructive correction. Both doctrines agree that the downward turn is necessary to give impetus to the upward swing, or “Schwinnnnnng,” as Wayne and Garth might proclaim.

All of which is to say that the down period, or off-season allows the

body and mind to recover from many months of training and racing, thus allowing for improved fitness the following year if, IF, one retains the fitness earned in the season just past.

It's Only December

Don't let the calendar fool you. By now, most racers have had more than enough time to recover and rejuvenate from a season of racing. Yet many persist in taking it easy through the winter, losing valuable fitness that was gained through the training and racing of the season past.

If you are one who likes to quote, "It's only December," I have a message for you. While you slumber away in zone 1 or on the couch, guys from Louisville, Cincy, Nashville and pockets from Indy are cranking up their trainers with steady state zone 3 efforts, interspersed by leg-searing lunges, or perhaps strength building muscle tension sets.

One of the premiere racers in Kentuckiana, Patrick O'Donnell affirms, "I've always felt the key to a good season is to come out with a strong spring." For those of you hiding behind the gray fog of December, there are only about 80 days until the first spring race, and approximately only 65 days until Schabobebe.

Even Chris Carmichael advocates maintaining intensity through the winter in order to retain fitness gained from the previous season. Furthermore, maintaining a minimal amount of intensity through December will fend off any further weight gain you may have experienced to this point in the off season.

The path to the podium is a difficult road, marked by sacrifice and

commitment. If you strive for the podium in 2006, that path begins today.

So Ya Wanna Make the Podium

More and more fitness experts are advocating the incorporation of core strength into conditioning programs. If you look closely at Lance Armstrong in 1999 and compare that to the Lance of 2005, you will notice a metamorphosis from a thin, climber type to a ripped, bulging, beast of an athlete. Lance was quoted in a 2004 *Outside Magazine* article as querying, "Does anybody have any duct tape? I'm ripped."

Your first step to the podium begins with shedding excess weight and developing the six-pack abs prominent in so many of today's top athletes, including Mr. Armstrong. In addition to abs, your core routine should also include low back, hip flexor, glute and oblique strengthening exercises.

All power emanates from the core. You can spend all winter doing muscle tension intervals, but if you have a weak core, your legs will be empty by the end of the race when it matters most.

Elite athletes train the core muscles every day because they realize the muscles of the trunk and pelvis are responsible for maintaining the stability

of the entire skeletal structure. Furthermore, a strong core leads to greater maximal power and more efficient use of shoulders, arms, and legs. Upper body strength will enhance your climbing ability, not to mention your sprint power.

A strong core will also help prevent low back injuries and unnecessary pain. According to Charles Stelk, MPT, in his article *Core Strength*, found at www.trackshark.com, "Strong abdominals provide the foundation for training and strengthening every other muscle group."

If you have not been doing so already, incorporating a core strengthening routine into your workout will have you sprinting, climbing and time trialling faster than ever when 2006 arrives. To strengthen your core, begin with simple exercises such as sit-ups, abdominal crunches, back extensions and leg raises. If you are not certain how to perform these exercises, ask Chris Kroll or myself for some instruction.

Once you learn proper technique, emphasize quality over quantity and work up to multiple sets gradually. A strong, stable core will set the tone for maximizing strength throughout the rest of your body.

For those who have been training, there is a weekly computrainer TT race being held at Nebo Ridge Bike Shop located at 106th and Michigan Road, just north of Indy. If you are interested in the TT details, email me at altrdstats51@yahoo.com.