

Whether you are swimming, biking or running (and for that matter skiing - but we are happy to now concentrate on those lovely spring activities!); whenever you are dealing with a repetitive movement there are a few strategies to help you stay on task. I like to refer to this as a blend between rhythm and form - and it is key to keeping your pace and staying focused and on task.

It does not seem to matter if you are swimming 100m or 1000m there is a point in the distance that your form starts to break as your effort increases and your rhythm changes and you find yourself "off" pace and a little off-focus. I like to refer to this as going into "LALA" land, but it really is more than that. I think the key to overcoming this comes from finding a strategy to keep your rhythm steady and your form will follow and you have something to keep you on focus

In looking into this Chris and I came across a few great articles. One link I would like to share with you is a 5min podcast with Dr. Lois Butcher-Poffley, a former professional dancer who is now a sport psychologist.

In this particular podcast they discuss the use of music to establish rhythm and how it can effect sport performance.

For those of you who come to my masters swim workout you have heard me discuss the importance of form. Is your elbow high? Are you rolling from the hip? Are you finishing your stroke?

You will also hear me ask you- are your strokes/length the same at the end of your sustained effort as they were at the beginning? Do you know what the sound of your hands entering the water actually sounds like at a sprint? At a longer sustained effort?

This also applies to running and cycling. In running during your long run do you maintain the same foot strike rate? Is your stride length steady? I often refer to this as pitter patters. In cycling I find it comes more from the rhythm of my knees as the terrain changes can I keep a steady cadence allowing myself to push through the discomfort in ways that I did not know I could – rather than focusing on the discomfort. Being in “the zone” ,being efficient and staying on pace.

Dr. Butcher Poffley refers to the beat of the bugs bunny congo line to help a punter learn a new skill, repeating the sound to establish the movement. Find what works for you. Is it a particular song? A beat? Counting,? Then pay attention to your rhythm. So that when your volume starts to increase and your effort builds and your body starts to fatigue you can use rhythm to allow yourself to stay steady, on pace and on task.

<http://www.podiumsportsjournal.com/2009/08/02/what-coaches-and-consultants-should-know-about-music-and-rhythm-in-sport-performance/>

Now get out there and play!