

So your “A” Race is over.....now what?

Perhaps at the start of the season (or maybe it was at the end of last season or even the season before either way at some point)prior to your "big event" you put it out there that you wanted to do something. “Something” that was perhaps a little unknown to you.
“Something” that you thought you may not be able to do.
“Something” that you knew would take commitment.
“Something” that was BIG.

A goal.

Maybe it was your first 5k, your first Ironman, re-learning how to ride a bike. It was a goal and you took the steps to go after it.

And now...you have achieved it.

First and foremost take the time to appreciate what you accomplished. Let's face it, as adults there are very few things in life that we set a goal for and work towards. Perhaps you worked towards a degree a school. Perhaps you worked towards the purchase of your first house, or your first real job. As adults, life becomes a continuum really.

I think that is what attracts many of us to Endurance Activities. There is a finish line. BUT because there is a finish line there is also a concrete feeling of being "finished".

And then the question arises....no what?

I would like to share with you a few things I have learned from my own racing, as well as what I have been witness to as a coach, the feelings you may be experincing after your "A" event and how to channel this energy as you continue to move forward. Because remember we are never really ever standing still.

- give yourself time to recover, physically, mentally and emotionally
- give yourself time to get out of your routine
- give yourself permission to start a routine again
- activity becomes relative to what you have been doing
- health vs. performance

Enjoy your new found self - because I have no doubt that along this journey you have discovered a thing or two about yourself.

Give yourself time to recover, physically, mentally and emotionally. By this I mean, allow your self to fully absorb what you accomplished. Whether emotionally and/or physically, these emotions can feel totally overwhelming, or they can feel like not that much at one moment then feel monumental a minute later! However you experience them, is not the point. The point is that you will experience some sort of feeling, and that is what allows us to feel alive!

Physically you may feel that after the first few days you feel great, fine and you may just want to jump right back into your routine (see note below!). Honest now is the time to allow your body to fully recover. Physically your tendons, ligaments, stress hormones to name a few have worked VERY VERY VERY hard and so allowing them 2-3 weeks to REST is very important. Mentally you followed some sort of plan, where you were consistent. You gave yourself the opportunity to go after a goal and that meant thinking a lot and being accountable to that goal that takes effort. Emotionally, you put something big out to the universe and you went after it. Whether you achieved your racing goal or not you started it and it is key to acknowledge your effort.

Recovery is about absorbing and I believe getting stronger than you were before you started- physically, mentally and emotionally. You can grow from this experience.

Give yourself time to get out of your routine:

I sort of equate this to the saying..."if you love something set it free if it comes back it is yours..." and you know what – your fitness is yours so set it free! So for at least 4-6 weeks know that yes, it is good to move, but take out the feelings of "I have to". This is a GREAT time to try something new: Stand-up Paddling, mountain biking, trail running, yoga, ultimate Frisbee You want to try it do it! That is the freedom of sport! And PLEASE Sleep in on a Saturday and a Sunday more than once and have pancakes (yes they can be gluten free!!!)– YUM!!!!

Give yourself permission to start a routine again

I am a believer that humans tend to be a bit more productive when we have routine. But that routine can change and I believe it is good to change especially at the end of a very structured season. Perhaps your post "A" routine focuses a bit more on core and strength. Maybe you want to focus on one discipline from triathlon such as running or

swimming. I believe it is healthy to stay moving and rather than being committed to your goal you can now be committed to you.

Activity becomes relative to what you have been doing

So...let's face it, if you were training for an Iron distance event suddenly going for a "20 minute" run may not even seem like a workout when you think back to your long 2+ hour runs...guess what...IT IS!

As endurance athletes we can get incredibly skewed as to what a "workout means" – a 2hour ride people is NOT short. And again this is all about realizing the freedom your fitness gives you. How freeing to know that you can head out for a 30min run, enjoy a little stretch and STILL have dinner by 6:30pm. And this really does lead us into my next topic.....

Health vs. performance

There is a reason why I called my company ***Endurance Health and Fitness***. We can be incredibly fit but truly compromise our health as we work towards that goal of athletic performance. I look at the season as a BIG macro cycle where there is a time when you really do push the envelope and yes I will say it you are training to over train. (YES people that is what I call a 6hour ride on Saturday followed by 20min run followed by a 2+hour run on Sunday!?!?!?) so now you really do need to allow your body to recover (see first point) I love the equation:

$$\text{STRESS} + \text{REST} = \text{PERFORMANCE}$$

This not only is applicable on a weekly or monthly basis with days off and adaptation weeks built into your program but also very applicable to your seasonal big picture

And during this part of your season, I would slightly adjust it to read
$$\text{STRESS} + \text{REST} = \text{Health}$$

Revel in your awesomeness people! This was a quote I heard when I was working with the CCFA ½ marathon clinic and I have always love it! And keep moving because it is good for you – but it doesn't always have to be all day☺ So go PLAY people!

Enjoy, Mel ☺