



How to Plan for Next Season

Reflect

- ✓ Did the season go as planned?
- ✓ Were there any mistakes made? How will you correct those next year?
- ✓ What went really well?
- ✓ How did you set yourself up for those successes?
- ✓ Did you peak and taper at the right times?
- ✓ How was your nutrition plan during your races?
- ✓ How quick and smooth were your transition times?

Choosing Races

- ✓ Time of year – when is easiest for you or when did you perform best?
- ✓ Climate – do you race better in cooler temperatures?
- ✓ Terrain – are you a strong hill rider? Do you prefer trail runs?
- ✓ Swim – Ocean? Lake? Pool? Distance? Some sprint races have shorter than the standard 800-meter swim
- ✓ Distance – are you looking to stick to the shorter races to get faster? Are you ready to tackle the half or full iron distance?

Weakest Link

- ✓ Swim
 - Technique – the off-season is the perfect time to work on perfecting your swim technique. Shorten your swim sessions, add more frequency and consider getting some swim lessons and/or joining a masters swim program
 - Speed – if your technique is already pretty good, you may need to work on getting faster. Change your workout structure to add shorter intervals with more rest. Doing repeats of 25s, 50s or 100s at a high intensity will help improve your speed.
 - Endurance – you can get through a 400 or 500 pretty easily, but then when you are asked to swim longer, you become fatigued and start swimming much slower. Slowly bump up your yardage to just slightly over the distance you will be swimming in your event. Use the rule of periodization – build, build, step-back by weeks. Be sure to limit the increase in total distance or time by about 10-20% each week.



✓ **Bike**

- Handling skills – are you comfortable taking things from volunteers at aid stations while on the bike? How are you at cornering or doing a hairpin turn? If your bike handling skills are not up to par, this could be costing you time in your races. These are skills that need to be practiced outdoors, so the time to work on these are at the end of your season or very early in the spring as soon as the weather is warm enough to get outside.
- Hills – we could all use hill work to make us more powerful and efficient. Hill repeats are a great way to improve your climbing skills. Find a hill that takes about 90 seconds to climb. Your recovery is riding back down the hill. Start with 5 repeats and add one repetition each time you ride. This is a workout that can be done once a week.
- Speed – to develop speed on the bike, add in an extra ride with high intensity intervals. High intensity is anything that goes above 100% of threshold (or FTP). If you do not train with power and do not know what your threshold is, consider this a full out sprint. Start with five 30-second efforts with 90 seconds rest. You can then increase the number of repetitions, increase the length of the effort, decrease the amount of rest or some combination of this.
- Endurance – if you are training for a long-distance event, endurance is critical for a strong performance. In the off-season, it's really not necessary to do extra-long rides, but rather, focus on the 90 minute to 2-hour mark and try to slowly increase your intensity at that length of time. That increased intensity will also help you be able to go longer at a lower intensity when it's time to get racing.

✓ **Run**

- Injuries – if you sustained some injuries during this season, it's important to make sure you allow yourself the downtime to heal. More importantly, work on strengthening the areas that contributed to that injury in the first place.
- Speed – it's no secret that track workouts will help you with running speed. However, they are very taxing on the body, so most coaches believe that track workouts are something to be done in-season only. The way to help improve your running speed is to do some strength training to further develop your muscles and start trying to slowly decrease the pace of your long and tempo runs.
- Endurance – unless you are training for a very early-season event, the distance of your long runs should decrease on the off-season. This is a time for rest and recovery. However, you can do some strength training and technique work to help you become a stronger, more efficient runner come next season.