

The importance of rest

By David Glover

Have you ever said to yourself, "I'm really tired, but my training plan says I need to run a hard five miles...should I run today?"

I think the natural tendency for many triathletes (myself included) is to go ahead and do the workout. "It's in my schedule" or "I'll lose fitness if I don't do the workout" are typical thoughts that have run through my mind in the past.

Yes, it's true that stopping all workouts will hurt your fitness, but will taking a day off here or there make a difference?

Let's take a step back.

I like to keep things simple. I think of performance as a function of two components: (1) Training and (2) Recovery.

Training stresses your body in order to stimulate the adaptations that will enable you to perform longer and faster; however, it's the recovery time (i.e. sleep and rest) that enables the adaptation to take place. As soon as you fall asleep, your body's recovery systems begin repair the physiological damage done during the day. Recovery can also take the form of "active recovery" or very light, easy workouts designed to provide blood circulation and help speed up the healing process.

Not surprisingly, as training stress increases, the need for recovery increases as a counter balance. Consequently, too much training with inadequate enough recovery leads to nasty situations like fatigue, injury and over training, which will ultimately hurt your performance far more than missing a workout or two here and there if you feel tired tired.

So, if you're telling yourself, "I feel really exhausted" before the start of a workout then you have already answered your own question. Take the rest or at least lower the intensity and come back refreshed for the next day.