

## RUNNING FOR TRIATHLETES – 10 QUESTIONS

### 1. How often do I need to change my running shoes?

Every 200-300 miles, before you see wear on the sole. If you are training for an Ironman distance tri, you will probably need to change shoes 2 or 3 times before race day. If you are training for a sprint distance, you may be fine with just one new pair of shoes at the beginning of your training season.

### 2. Blisters are making me not want to run!

Blisters are often caused by poorly fitted shoes or from friction between the foot and the shoe material. Simple remedies for blisters include: getting a shoe that fits well, wearing socks made from a more technical fabric than cotton to prevent moisture buildup and/or using a lubricant on high friction areas.

### 3. Socks or no Socks?

When it comes to comfort while training, we suggest wearing a performance running sock made of synthetic material like polypropylene, or dry fit or some similar material. Training time is too important to interrupted by what may be several days to let blisters heal. On race day, you have to ask yourself: "Do I want to sacrifice some comfort for a little more speed?". If you toughen your feet with occasional runs without socks during training, you might find that during a race, you can take one less "to do" out of transition! Although you can improve your overall time by going sockless, we have a firm saying: "Nothing new on race day". If you haven't tried it in training, don't do it on race day.

### 4. Shin Splints what are they and how do I fix 'em?

Doctors have described shin splints as the literal tearing of connective tissue from the bone. Not very pleasant, but do not despair, you can be running pain-free if you follow some simple steps: When you feel moderate to severe pain – stop! Call it a day, or go for a bike or swim. If you feel the same pain for two or more workouts, consider yourself injured. A knowledgeable physical therapist will be able to give you treatment and advice on how to get rid of the symptoms and re-strengthen the muscles. P.R.I.C.E = Prevent – stop running for a few days, Rest – rest your injury; swim and bike instead to maintain your fitness, Ice – ask your doctor about ice therapy, Compression – you have to be diligent about stopping the swelling; studies have shown that Elevating your legs once a day for 10 minutes promotes better recovery and prevents injury!

### 5. Why do my legs feel so heavy when I get off the bike and then go running?

Losing the heaviness that the legs feel off the bike is the key to a great run. To do this it helps to know what causes it. There are 2 main reasons why the legs go south after the bike: Most of your blood has been shunted to your quads while you ride (vasodilatation)— which means the blood that pools in these muscles is still there when you start the run. This awkward, heavy feeling stays until the blood drains from this area and balances out to the rest of the running muscles (hamstrings & calves).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is a neural one. Your legs have been informed continually to pedal, and they have settled and grooved themselves in that pattern of sequential firing. Suddenly, in T2, they are required to bear your full weight many times over in a completely different pattern. Untrained, your legs take a long time to adapt and premature fatigue sets in. Your running ability has been switched off (de-facilitated) and needs to be switched on—facilitated. That is where good training comes in.

### 6. Are there any benefits to running on grass vs. pavement?

There are benefits and pitfalls to both. For example, running on grass will add a softer cushion to every footfall, but some runners with poor ankle strength will find the uneven surface taxing. Pavement running allows for better traction and faster times, but is much harder on the joints.

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## **7. How important is the long run?**

That all depends on where you are in your training phases, and your overall objective in regard to race distance. Most triathletes are constantly trying to balance all three disciplines and finding time to run is difficult. However, as you build your base fitness in your training, we recommend doing at least one longer run per week. This can be up to twice your race distance for Sprint and Olympic distances. For \_ and full Ironman races your runs can up to 90% of race distance. Note: quality running is a staple of regular training, and with proper planning and optimal recovery you might have several of these runs per month, during high volume training.

## **8. Should I run in the rain?**

Why not? Be careful about how you insulate your body from the weather so you can regulate your temperature as you run. Be sure to wear a rainproof jacket that also breathes. Also, be careful of slick surfaces and avoid puddles, there might be a pothole under there!

## **9. When racing, is it OK to urinate while running?**

The decent and legal course of action will have the athlete stop at a portable bathroom to satisfy this need. However, we know that sometimes when nature calls and you are in the thick of competition, you just have to go! I'm sure men and women have their own technique, but all I can recommend is that you have some fresh water at the ready to hide the evidence.

## **10. How do you get rid of that sharp "stitch" pain in your gut?**

There are numerous causes for abdominal or intestinal region discomfort. The most common symptom is the "runner's stitch" that you feel just below the ribs and deep inside your core area. Doctors feel this is largely due to the internal organs trying to hold onto their positions as you pound away on the pavement. The best thing you can do is to stop running and massage the area with some deep expansive breaths until the pain goes away. Then resume running and gradually come back up to your pace.

## **11. My big toenail is turning black- what's happening?**

Your shoes are most likely the culprit here. When your shoes are too small or your runs have been on variable terrain causing your foot to shift forward, your big toenail usually bares the brunt of this and gets blistered under the nail. If that blister hasn't popped already the sterilize a lance and drain it. That sounds painful but if done carefully you wont feel a thing. In most cases the black toenail will fall off and a new one will grow back over time – fun stuff!