

## **Maintenance and Training for the Off-Season**

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With the Triathlon Season coming to a close and the long cold winter months looming ahead, what is the tri-athlete to do with their training time? An athlete certainly does not want to lose all that they gained through their training this season. There are a couple of different avenues to pursue for the off season: concentrate on the weaker discipline and strengthen endurance performance for injury prevention.

If swimming was the weaker discipline, spend this winter working on form. This is a good time to sign up for some private lessons to perfect the swim stroke. Working on technique to obtain a proper stroke goes a long way in protecting muscles from being overworked and being prone to injury. Shoulder injuries in swimming are commonly assumed to be from over-use; however, those injuries are very likely to be from poor technique also. By utilizing a good stroke, the athlete can swim more efficiently, use less muscle power and preserve energy to excel in the stronger discipline areas.

Running might possibly be the weaker discipline. Use this time to work on an aerobic base, strength training and flexibility to empower the foot stroke. Running is a high-injury sport and close attention needs to be paid to how fast distance and speed is increased. Never increase either of these areas by more than 10% at a time. Weight training to strengthen the upper body is just as important as the lower body. This keeps the body in balance and helps to keep a good posture in line to prevent injury. Never worry about how much weight is lifted, but the technique of the workout to eliminate unnecessary injuries. Keeping a high aerobic training throughout the winter will help increase oxygen uptake and ultimately allow an athlete to run longer and help keep fatigue at bay.

Maybe cycling was the weakest area. Spend some time doing form drills once a week to improve cycling efficiency and balance strengthening. Upper body strength training will help with fatigue and managing any hills during a triathlon. Working on flexibility in the lower back and hamstrings will help with the pedal stroke and again with fatigue.

Could it be the season was a success, all of the goals were fulfilled and the season was completely satisfying? What an accomplishment! Utilize the off season in maintaining all that was accomplished and work on injury prevention for the next season. Most professional athletes have a chiropractor on their medical team to keep their nervous system in line for peak performance and avoid injury. Sports Medicine Chiropractors have experience in planning a training and nutrition strategy to help athletes succeed.

*Dr. McIntosh is a board certified Chiropractor, licensed in both Kansas and Missouri. In addition to being licensed to provide general chiropractic care, she is also a Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician, working with athletes from multiple disciplines on specific sports-related problems and a Certified Acupuncturist. She can be found on the internet at [KansasCityChiropractic.com](http://KansasCityChiropractic.com).*