

# HUDSON VALLEY TRIATHLON CLUB

## **Recovery is Key**

By Mark Wilson-Triathlon Coach

Have you ever wondered why you are so tired all the time and are unable get motivated to train day after day? Are you cranky often? Are family members complaining about your lethargic presence? Are you extremely sore from workout to workout? Lastly, are you unable to perform well in your workouts? If you said “yes” to any of these questions, you may be lacking the recovery needed to properly rebuild your body for the next training session. Nutrition, rest and hydration are major factors in any athlete’s program for success, but have you examined yours carefully? If better recovery meant better results, would you consider re-vamping your plan? Thought so! Let’s take a look at some possibilities.

Nutrition is probably the number one reason why triathletes fail to reach their potential. You have heard it so many times before, “Eat your fruits and vegetables, they’re good for you.” Well, it’s true! However, as serious athletes we need more than that because the nutrition coming from the modern-day food supply is lacking the abundance of vitamins and minerals to support our activity level. So, what do you do? One thing you could do to assist your body is to end your consumption of simple sugar carbohydrates (sucrose, fructose, glucose and dextrose) and replenish with complex carbs (maltodextrin). Doing so will offer your body better fuel for long-term athletic and health benefits. Another suggestion is to be sure you have adequate protein in your diet. Yes, carbohydrates are the major fuel source for athletes, but after 1 ½ hours of training/racing the body needs some protein and you don’t want it to be your own muscle! Your pre (3 hours), during and post (immediately) training/racing meals should have some protein available for optimal performance. The ideal ratio of carbs to protein for exercise lasting more than 2 hours would be 8:1.

Rest is an important recovery “technique” because it is the most beneficial time for your body to heal and rebuild for the next training session. It is also critical to note that once your body is very fit the number of hours of sleep you APPEAR to need at one time tends to shorten, to as little as 4-6 hours. However, please know that even though you may not be asleep for the entire time it is still vital for your body to be “horizontal” for 7-9 hours or more during intense physical training periods for maximal recovery benefits. Many athletes do well on the shorter cycles with an afternoon cat-nap, whereas others feel the need for the long extended sleep periods of up to 10 hours. Regardless, getting the proper amount of rest is crucial for your race and training performance.

Hydration can make or break you; too little and you fry, too much and you bloat! It is advantageous for athletes to drink water throughout the day (80-100 ounces) for basic hydration needs. In order for you to stay well hydrated during training and racing (depending on climate conditions, of course) the recommended intake is 16-24 oz. per hour. This will keep your body cool and “running” properly. If you were to put in less than that you may lose too much sodium in your sweat. If you were to put in more, you may create a state called dilutional hyponatremia or water intoxication. Reaching this

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stage of over-hydration is very damaging to your body due to electrolytes being washed from your blood stream. Common symptoms are swollen hands and feet as well as a “sloshy” feeling in the stomach. It is impossible to get in as much as is being lost. The important step here is to hydrate properly pre, during and post workout/race to maximize hydration needs.

Recovery is the part of the training plan that can be overlooked, but is the one piece that can single-handedly make your season enjoyable or miserable. It’s your choice; improved nutrition, rest and hydration lead to improved athletic performance! See ya out there.

**Mark Wilson is a full-time triathlon coach.** He is the Founder/President of the Hudson Valley Triathlon Club ([www.hvtc.net](http://www.hvtc.net)). He is a USAT Level II Certified Coach & Pose Method of Running Level II Certified Coach. You may contact him by e-mail [mark@hvtc.net](mailto:mark@hvtc.net) or phone 845-679-8602.