

**"The day of competition, is a day to enjoy, it's the time when you
reap what you sow"**

The first important competition of the year finally arrived. Now it's time to put in practice all the tears, sweat and blood of days, weeks and months of training. The physical condition that you gained so far will reap good results in this first part of the season. You must be ready to compete at a good level. Ideally, if you're going to compete in the Cozumel's Ironman you should compete this September, a good competition for you is the half Ironman 70.3 in Cancun.

The importance of not training out too hard before the competition is something that endurance athletes we all know very well. However, it is unbelievable how many stories we hear about athletes who make a final intense training and ruin all the previous work.

So two weeks of rest should be taken seriously. The objective of these two weeks is that when you're about to start the race you get the feeling that you could have done another long and intense training but right there you have the opportunity to do it. This means to lower your exercise intensity, the volume or the combination of both.

Even if your training has not been perfect, or you're a bit overtrained, lowering your training levels for 14 days is crucial to your performance.

It is the critical zone, a period which is absolutely essential to pay attention to some vital areas of your life.

Mental training, rest and nutrition are the key.

If you ever read the bestseller "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" is what the author calls "sharpening the saw" if you do the right thing in these 14 days "you'll chop down the tree in no time"

Would not it be a shame to ruin all this work for the last days before the competition? For many athletes, believe it or not, they get to ruin it because they train in a not suitable way during the last weeks before an important competition. The most common mistake is to continue training with heavy loads of volume and intensity because they believe that the condition only improves training very hard and strong. Nothing is further from the truth. The condition improves with rest and no more to say. In fact, it's the only way that once the heavy training is done it's assimilated. There are no improvements that can be given in recent weeks. Improvements have been achieved over the base period those are the ones that count. So the best preparation for a competition is taking some rest.

Not total rest, because it also has disadvantages. Several studies have shown that total relaxation may cause a slight loss of physical condition. Therefore, training the last two weeks before a competition should be between the amount of training in a normal week and inactivity. It is the midpoint between train and train nothing.

The last days before any competition can be very stressful. You have worked so hard and for so long and you've invested so much of yourself that it is quite natural that the nerves appear.

However, instead of having positive thinking and reduce stress, many triathletes just complicate their life. Some make the mistake of postponing tasks and decisions to the last two or three days, which obviously increases the nerves, rather than relax and prepare mentally for the race which for obvious reasons affects their performance in competition.

This is what we call "beginner's mistake"

Other athletes are so nervous because they will make their first half-Ironman or Ironman that they don't know how to use their time. They feel the desire to continue and continue training, another beginner's mistake. The objective of the last week is to fill our petrol tanks and not spend it.

The best way to avoid these mistakes before the race is taking your written plan for the last days and follows it literally. You should include meals, sleep hours, workout, equipment check, etc. By having this plan in hand you won't have to be constantly worried about what to do, just relax and trust in your plan.

I use this technique with my athletes. It may seem as simple as a list of things to do, but in reality is a tool that helps you to start the race physically rested and mentally focused for a great performance.

Here is an example of the last 4 days before a competition (type A) that'll take place on Sunday.

THURSDAY

6:00 A.M. Wake up, eat breakfast. This day begins the carbohydrates loading so you should make an effort to follow your diet which should consist of 80% carbohydrate and 20% from protein and fat.

7:00 a.m. 30 min of continuous relaxed swim, a session bike with very light resistance of 45 min in zone 1 and 2 (65-70%) of your heart rate.

8:30 AM Lunch, work. For those who do not work: read, listen to music, watch TV, etc.).

1:00 PM Snack and if you can take a break.

5:00 p.m. Go to the movies or something relaxing.

8:00 PM Dinner with pasta or rice.

8:30 P.M. Take some rest
9:00 P.M Go to Sleep

FRIDAY

6:00 A.M Wake up, eat breakfast. Do some stretching and flexibility
7:00 A.M total physical rest. Stay well Hydrated throughout the day
9:00 A.M Start organizing the equipment that you use for Medium or Full Ironman. Check that your bike is in perfect condition.
10:00 A.M Hydrate constantly. If the event has the service of route recognition of cycling by transport of the organizing committee and if your schedule of activities allows it is a good decision to take it.
11:00 A.M. If you can go as early as possible to register and collect your package, organize in time the logistics of the competition and avoid queues and crowds. Take a Tour of the Expo to make sure there is anything you are missing and if so you get everything ready and avoid last minute stress.
1:00 P.M Lunch or Supper
3:00 P.M Rest
5:00 P.M Watch TV with your family and friends or have some coffee or go to the movies.
7:00 P.M Have dinner with pasta or rice.
9:00 P.M. Go to Sleep

SATURDAY

6 to 8:00 A.M. Wake up, eat breakfast. If the organizing committee gives you the option to train on the swimming route go to loosen only for 15 to 20 minutes to recognize the place.
8:00 A.M. 30 min bike very smooth to prove that everything is in order, jogging immediately after 10 to 15 minutes very gentle.
9:00 A.M. Hydrated throughout the day. Breakfast.
10:00 A.M. Rest
11:00 A.M. If you did not go to register the previous day, that was the ideal, then go and pick up your package. Quickly review the Expo and not stay standing and walking longer than necessary.
1:00 P.M. Lunch
2:00 P.M. From this point Depending on the delivery schedule of bicycles and bicycle bags, race and special needs (bags only for the Ironman). Register your bike at the corresponding time as early as possible to go to bed. While being in the transition area accommodating your bike, pay attention to the location, set a key point or a signal to give you make you easier to find it very quickly the day of competition. Visualize where you're going to go swimming and where you're going to run once you have taken your bike.
5:00 P.M. Organize what you need of the equipment you're going to compete with, prepare your food and your hydration.

6:00 P.M. Dinner and hydration. Rest

9:00 P.M. Bedtime.

SUNDAY

4:00 A.M. Waking up, breakfast, hydrate and dressed to compete.

5:00 A.M. Depending on start time, go to the place of competition.

6:00 A.M. Arrange your space, your equipment, food and drink in the transition area.

For the Ironman deliver your special needs bags to volunteers.

6:30 A.M. It is very likely that you're very anxious for this morning. This will cause digestive problems like you can become a nervous wreck. Try to relax. Listen to your music. Think about all the reasons why you're competing and feel grateful to life for having the opportunity to be now in the place that you want and for which you have worked for so many months. Your first goal is about to be realized. If you feel it, dedicate your career to a cause or a particular goal you thought.

7:00 A.M. Start of the competition. Keep your pace, focus, drink and eat according to plan. When the day turns difficult again, think of all you've done over the last two weeks to "sharpen the saw". All training, nutrition and mental preparation will help you to compete by helping you to achieve the best you have for this great day. To give your 1% more.

Nelly Becerra

"Imagine yourself approaching the top of a mountain, feeling a growing internal alignment with the rhythms of nature. In the flow, the zone, you round the last bend in the path and see the peak before you. Then you notice someone standing there, smiling at you with bright, clear eyes-a master of daily life. You walk right up to the master, filled with gratitude. As the master's face comes into focus, and you realize that the master is you"