



The Heart of the Matter -
More Than Just a Watch
by Keats McGonigal

A recent posting on the USA Triathlon Coaches' forum makes it abundantly clear that most athletes do not take full advantage of their heart rate monitors. Many athletes wear heart rate monitors during training and racing in order to monitor their heart rate, but simply knowing your pulse rate at one period in time is only the beginning. An athlete might know that their current heart rate is 143 beats per minute or that they averaged a heart rate of 152 for a particular workout. These are only useless numbers without a standard to base the heart rate on. Are 143 and 152 good or bad numbers? It depends on what an athlete is trying to accomplish during that period of time or particular workout.



In order to start using a heart rate monitor properly an athlete must know their heart rate zones. The zones provide a heart rate range by which athletes can monitor their intensity levels during workouts. By knowing specific target heart rate zones an athlete can maximize their training time by training within the desired heart rate zones in an effort to reach their full potential. Once an athlete is

aware of their zones, knowing their heart rate is 143 during a workout becomes valuable information as they try to keep their heart rate between 135 and 145 for a specific workout.

There are a number of tests athletes can perform in order to determine their heart rate zones. Some are simple and completely free while other tests provide more advanced information and can prove to be expensive

During this off season, take the time to learn more about your heart rate zones. There are several athletes within the club that have experience with different heart rate tests and training methods. Ask around and find a method that works for your individual goals. Talk to different athletes about which tests they have used and liked and then choose what matches your expectations. One great resource for athletes is Total Heart Rate Training by Joel Friel. In his literature, he clearly explains the need for training zones and how to use a heart rate monitor. The time it takes you to learn about a heart rate monitor and your training zones will pay off when training becomes more effective and goals are reached as a result.

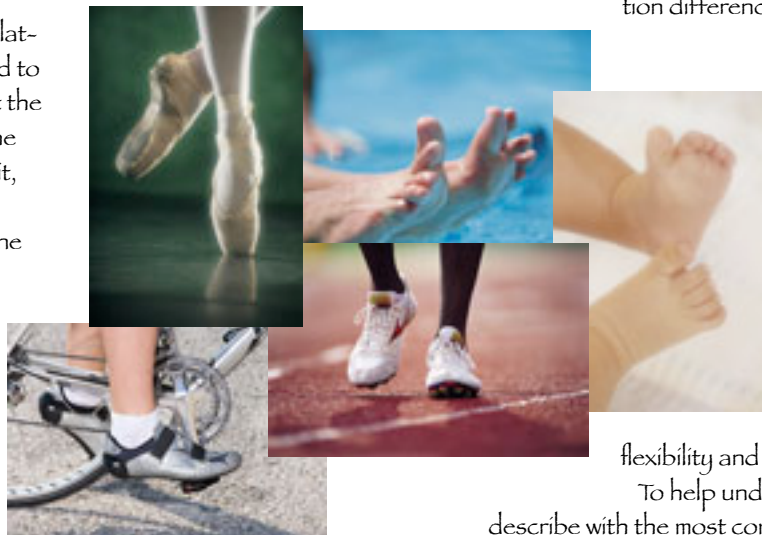
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Your Feet: A Source of Power Loss?

by Leslie Trotter

So there you stand...sporting the latest tri gear from head to toe. Yup, you've got the latest Giro helmet, the sleek Sugoi body suit, the Kestrel dream machine with aero wheel set, the flight deck, the titanium pedals and carbon soled shoes. You're technically advanced in every possible respect. Or are you?



What if I told you that a large number of triathletes have an insidious power loss as soon as they hop onto their bikes and start pedaling?

A very common and seldom addressed area where cyclists lose a significant amount of power is the foot. I recently had a "doctor heal thyself" moment when I was being fitted for my new bike. Part of the assessment was a thorough examination of my feet which demonstrated faulty biomechanics (of course I knew this being a foot doctor, but I was living proof of the old adage about the "cobbler's children going without shoes"!). Subsequently, I use custom made orthoses in my cycling shoes. That and eliminating some of the rotational 'play' from my pedals has resulted in a noticeable power increase according to my Computrainer. When I push, I can see and feel the full thrust going straight down from my hip to the pedal.

For years I have treated primarily runners for mechanical problems of the foot because they arrive at my office with 'hard' symptoms: heel pain, knee pain, shin pain, hip pain, etc. In cyclists; however, especially if the only symptom is power loss, the biomechanics of the foot are largely overlooked. As a matter of fact, most cyclists would never experience the feeling of 'power loss' until they had something to compare.

The best analogy I can think of would be the sensation difference between cycling with a cycling shoe versus using a pair of running shoes. The running shoe allows the foot to flex in all of the wrong places thereby interrupting the transfer of power from your leg to the pedal. Your power is dissipated into the flex of the shoe. As equally inefficient as wearing running shoes for cycling, uncorrected faulty foot mechanics creates similar area of flexibility and power loss.

To help understand this concept better, I'll describe with the most common foot problem, the functional pes plantus (or "flat foot"). During running, this flattened posture allows the foot to adapt to the terrain and provide shock absorption, which if not excessive, is beneficial. While cycling however, there is no need for the foot to perform either the role of adaptation or shock control. Ideally, the foot should be aligned neutrally with a firm contoured base of support. A good foot/orthosis/shoe alignment translates to an improved hip-knee-ankle relationship and is very noticeable in the flexion/extension path of the knee.

A properly aligned foot allows the knee to trace an ideal up and down motion...almost a straight line. A foot which flattens inward during the pedal stroke causes that same point below the knee to sketch an oblong circular path.

To make a long explanation short, what I'm suggesting is that triathletes consider a proper examination of their foot mechanics. A properly designed custom made foot orthoses could be one of the best investments to improve your cycling this season! My only caveat is to ensure that you consult with a foot-care professional with specific training in the fabrication of sports orthoses (i.e.; pedorthist, orthotist, or podiatrist). Ask to see their lab facility and the plaster cast of your foot to ensure that you are getting a custom device. If they can't show you either...run (or cycle) away!

Simple Turkey Pesto Wraps submitted by Virginia Knight

What you will need:

- 4 whole wheat tortillas (burrito size)
- 1 - 8 oz. tub of light cream cheese
- 3/4 lb. sliced deli turkey
- 1 - 7 oz. tub of pesto with basil
- Small bag of fresh spinach or baby spinach



Directions:

Spread cream cheese on tortilla. Place two layers of turkey on surface of cream cheese, overlapping. Spread pesto sparingly on turkey. Place one layer of spinach greens on pesto. Roll up tortilla tightly and cut into 1/2" slices. Place toothpick from top to bottom to keep roll from sliding around. Refrigerate until ready to serve, as the oil in the pesto will ooze! Four prepared tortillas cut-up result in appetizers for 8-10 people. Delicious!

If you were at the Fitness Fanatics shopping night, you probably enjoyed this appetizer, thanks Virginia!

My Cinderella Story by Michael Bergquist



In one way or another, we've all wished we could experience our own Cinderella story. I finally snuck into the ball on July 28th. The 2.69 million U.S. troops were reduced to five men and women to compete in the Military World Games Triathlon in Mumbai, India. For a couple of weeks, my life would be as close to that of an Olympian as it will ever be. Everything from the actual trip to loads of gear were free. They catered to our every need and even paid us our wages during the trip. I was living the dream!

Athletes from all fourteen U.S. teams met in Pennsylvania. Experiences ranged from former Olympians to athletes selected in a roll-down. It was an in-your-face reminder that triathletes are just a small part of the big picture of athletics. The atmosphere was a humbling opportunity to meet other athletes at the top of their sports.

International elite triathletes travel a lot, so the trip gave me a good sample of what they go through in order to compete. My trip from home would take around forty hours, consisting of four flights and a long bus ride. Packing for the trip, lugging gear, multiple security checks, and customs, followed by the unpacking made the trip a two-day ordeal with one more day to recover.

We arrived at 1:45 a.m. local with a heat index of about 100 degrees. With five men and five women, they simply paired the odd ones out together, which meant that Rachel Beckman and I were room mates. After a little convincing that it wasn't okay, I was paired with our public affairs/photo journalist. That worked in my favor as I ended up with the most photos and articles! My first day there ended with a 1.5 mile run to keep my streak of 1,381 consecutive days running.

Cinderella (cont'd)

We had a Games Village, decorated with banners and lights with everything you can imagine from catered meals to entertainment and laundry service. Whatever we wanted, they'd try to provide. They made the athlete gym available 24/7 so I didn't have to run in the dark. The experience from the opening parade to the closing ceremony fireworks was complete with everything you see in the Olympics. Just to be there was the greatest honor for a military athlete. We all stood proud as each team left their weapons behind and brought the message of friendship through sports. All together, there were around three dozen Olympic qualified athletes. Despite having won a baker's dozen of races this year, my race resume had no place in our conversations, so I simply listened in amazement. On the other hand, I wore national team apparel and was treated just like everyone else.

The differences between our culture, living conditions, climate and way of life were apparent in many ways. The average income of India is 97 cents/day. People live in squats made of things we take to the dump. Trash is everywhere and pollution clouds the air. Day and night, starving mothers and children sleep on the same sidewalks they walk while begging for money or food. Taxis flood the congested roads. Lanes are ignored as motorists, walkers, bikers and people pushing carts or walking cows turn three lanes into five. I'm convinced some of the best drivers in the world live there as I braced every few seconds for an accident that never happened. Schedules were ignored in favor of doing things as they got around to it, which was usually an hour or two late. They'd clean my room at all hours of the day or night, just coming in whenever they pleased. The temperatures were so hot that my feet got burned walking on the pool deck. I can't imagine what it's like during the hotter months of the year. The tap water and fresh food supplies are contaminated too. Simple pleasures we take for granted here, like ice water, are things that millions will never experience. Their food is more soupy spices than whatever they put in it. I tried everything, which is tough for a person who prefers food absolutely plain.

We had free travel and guides to anywhere we pleased. I did everything I could, from shopping in the market to seeing the sights. Prices weren't set, so we'd negotiate every sale. Merchants tried to show us everything they had in their stand, regardless of how useless it was. They knew we could afford anything they had, but didn't understand that most things just didn't interest us. Food was cheap, but over-eating would be a waste of what little money they had. It was rare to see someone overweight. I always had crowds following me since I would give away food or money often. As an American athlete competing in their World Games, we were treated with applause wherever we went. I was outclassed as an athlete, so I tried to make up for it as an ambassador.

The race course started with a swim in the Arabian Sea. I found a picture of the beach we'd start our swim from in a post card booklet. The local guide told us to never swim there. As it turned out, the beach was basically a dump and the waters were littered with trash and polluted with sewage. The remains of human bodies offered to vultures at the Tower of Silence are washed into the Arabian Sea. Is that a body of water or a water of bodies? The bike course was five flat loops. There were dips, bumps, raised sections of concrete and numerous other little accident or flat tire causing obstacles. During the practice round, more than a dozen athletes flattened and at least two athletes wrecked. One accident was right in front of me, nearly taking me out. The run course was two loops on the same road along the beach. It would be hot and humid which is my kind of race.

On race morning, we headed out to the race sight. It was just a beach when we saw it the first time, but on race day it was the second most impressive triathlon production on record for me. We had pillar swim gates for each country, a roped off two-loop swim course, a carpeted beach with individual bike racks with our flags and numbers on the top, giant air conditioned tents for medical, massage, gear, and media, stadium-style VIP seating with exotic decor and awnings, regular stadium-style seating, a giant projector screen t.v., fences and hundreds of armed guards lining the entire course and about two dozen armed guards surrounding the transition area. Needless to say, we felt safe and our bikes weren't going to be stolen. Each athlete had several checks to verify identity, the only thing missing was the retina scans!

Cinderella (cont'd)

For nearly three months, I was well aware just how lucky I was to be a part of this race. I knew I was outclassed by some of the best athletes in the world. Statistics show that 25% of medalists here go on to win medals in the Olympics. On the other hand, when it comes to race day, I don't care who you are because I'm racing! I'm a fiery competitor, but must admit my primary concern was my health. On the third day in India, I started to fall ill and got worse every day. My swim times seemed off by about 9% as I struggled with fatigue, cramping, chest pain, nausea, dizziness, temperature spikes, sores, sore throat and pain swallowing food and water.

When it finally came time for me to race, I lined up in back of my U.S. teammates and stepped into the sea. Quickly the race was off and I was pushing my limits with plenty of room around me. The field strung out as I was off the back of the last discernible group. As I fell behind on lap two, I thought about all the lonely swims in Medical Lake to avoid another solo ITU race. With 400 meters to go, I exploded with anger and swam my way back into the pack. To my pleasant surprise, I had finished with a 21:00 open water swim without a wetsuit.

Exiting the water, I was fired up by the prospect of actually getting to draft in an ITU race. My gear bin had been turned around, which caused a bit of panic as my competition escaped while I fumbled with my gear. I caught up a little in the quarter-mile transition area, but once on the bike, I reeled them in pretty quickly. My legs felt fantastic and the group was working very well together. We were the fourth pack on the road and quickly catching the third group. I took long pulls and contemplated breaking, but figured we had a good chance of catching the second pack by the end of the fifth loop. Just as we were catching the third pack at 1/5 laps in, I hit one of those concrete ledges, blew my rear tire and nearly wiped out. Fifteen days, more than halfway around the world, the most exclusive race of my life, an \$8,000 racing set-up and racing so well all ended with a \$5 flat.

The support crew was sent three times, but the ambulance came three times instead. They don't keep spare wheels in the back. I had never flat-tired in a race before and didn't know what to do, so I kept going on foot. At the end of the loop, I turned in my two giant timing chips, both bigger than a Garmin 305, racked my bike and headed out for the run without my bib number. As it would turn out, the double chip timing method failed miserably. There were no splits or final times. Video determined the final placing. With some rough times, I would have been somewhere in the 30's.

Following the race, we headed back to base to continue what would be one of the longest days of my life. We ate lunch, did laundry, packed bikes and gear, stuffed all our extra Team U.S.A. gear in with the stuff we brought, attended the awards ceremony and closing ceremony, got bit by a few mosquitos, grabbed a quick bite to eat, loaded the trucks, showered and hopped on the bus for a 40.5 hours return trip. In all, it was a 55.5 hours day. Like the trip there, the day ended with Amanda dropping me off on the way home so I could get my daily run in, putting my streak at 1,391 consecutive days of running.

I went in feeling like I was living the dream. It was the experience, not the race that made the trip. If not for being part of a celebration of friendship through sport, it would have simply been a major race disappointment on the other side of the planet. Despite having one of the best experiences of my life, I also left there with a new hope and motivation. Maybe I was lucky to be there. We all were in one way or another. I didn't believe I could compete with those guys, but I was right there with them and feeling great with the best part of my race yet to come. This was the first time triathlon was part of the World Military Games, which happens every four years like

the Olympics and I got to be a part of it. Next time the championships will be in Estonia. I know I won't win, but I won't be a Cinderella either.



Tune Up Your Body with Sports Massage Therapy

by Melissa Eister

You are vigilant about your training and meticulous in your diet and fueling practices. Why then, are you not committed to receiving the body work that should be a regular element of your training?

"It's amazing how many athletes don't even think about getting body-work, especially when they are in season," said Mary Owen, massage therapist with a concentration in sports therapy and myofascial release. "Regular maintenance is always recommended to athletes that are consistently overworking the same muscle groups. But during those tough parts of the year, when athletes are racing, competing and doing their most rigorous training, that's when it's most important."

"I like to compare our bodies to our cars. You have to get regular maintenance on your car. Without proper attention, they break down. Before preparing for a road trip, you take your car in to balance and check the tires, tune it up and see if it's safe for the road. You should apply the same precautions to your body. Before anything, be it a marathon, a century ride or even surfing...warming up the body, stretching it and getting massaged to make sure your body is prepared for what's ahead is beneficial and will help in the long run," Owen said.

The Best Time for a Massage

Athletes are often confused about the best time to get body work. Right before a race? A week before the big event? A few hours after you cross the finish line? Or should you wait a few days?



"Ideally, athletes should get a tough deep-tissue massage three days to a week before a race or big event."

Owen said. "And another massage the day before or morning of the race -- but this one should be focused on stretching and isometric approaches, which concentrate on breathing and relaxing while the therapist massages and stretches you."

Right after a race is a great time to get a massage. But you must make sure it's not vigorous. It should be more of a relaxing massage to calm our tight muscles. If you are in pain, make sure to ice your muscles for a few days and stretch. After three or four days of ice, if nothing is injured, this is the perfect time for a deep-tissue massage and myofascial release.

Benefits of Massage

The terms "deep-tissue" and "myofascial release" are often used together. Many think they are synonymous, but there are differences in

these types of massage. Both techniques are very beneficial to athletes.

Deep-tissue Massage: The therapist works deep into the actual muscles, trigger points and tender points.

Myofascial Release: The massage goes even deeper, concentrating on the fascia, fibers and connective tissue of the muscles, instead of the actual muscles.

With any massage -- even a relaxing Swedish massage, there's still the benefit of blood and oxygen running through the body, breaking up adhesions in the body and flushing out toxins. But deep tissue, myofascial release, sports massage, Thai massage and chiropractic work are recommended for athletes to ensure muscles are getting proper attention and spine and hips are aligned and adjusted properly.

If you are in active training, such as training for a marathon, triathlon or century ride, a massage twice a month is recommended, if money and time allow.

Common Problems in Athletes:

Often athletes can't identify the specific problems they are having, they just know they are experiencing pain. "Many athletes will come in complaining of aches and pains, stemming from their lower backs, but they don't realize what it is," Owen explained. "The majority of times, it's a sciatic nerve problem. A lot of people don't know the term, but they can identify the feeling and the pain. I usually know right away according to what kind of sport they're involved with and their complaint."

Massage (cont'd)

Runners:

Runners tend to have a lot of shin splints and sciatic nerve problems. "When working on runners, I usually focus on the legs, shins, thighs and hamstrings." Owen said. "I always tell them that if they aren't careful and their hips aren't balanced and aligned properly, it can dramatically change performance and alignment of your body. You could seriously injure yourself. It's important to stretch first and get aligned regularly. Wearing comfortable shoes helps too."

Cyclists:

"Cyclists are really tough to work on. Their muscles are generally tighter than most athletes," explained Owen. "And they have to be really comfortable to get a massage because their groin muscles and the inside of their thighs are what need the most work. I make sure to employ proper draping and talk them through it so they are prepared and comfortable." Draping is a technique where therapists cover the entire body with a sheet and expose only the part being massaged.



Triathletes:

Triathletes will often have many of the common alignment and muscle issues runners and cyclists have. "If I had only an hour to spend on a triathlete, I would start with their legs, get deeper work into their glutes and hips and work on their mid-back area."



Swimmers:

"Swimmers generally tend to have the least amount of pain out of the athletes I work on." Owen said. "But I always focus on their upper bodies -- rotator cuffs, traps and neck muscles -- since that is the most overused part of a swimmer's body."



Do-it-yourself Body Work and Muscle Aids:

Here are some do-it-yourself techniques to soothe over-worked muscles and relieve muscle pain:

- Tennis balls: Lay on the floor with a tennis ball, laying on top of it where your tender point is and roll around on the muscle for a few minutes, breathing deeply. You should feel a release.
- Muscle stick or rolling pin: Have someone roll it on your muscle for release.
- Stretching
- Ice
- Biofreeze: Good for acute injuries; prevents them from getting worse.
- Tiger Balm: Best for chronic and long-term injury and pain. The eucalyptus settles the muscles and produces a long-lasting effect.

"The body is an interesting thing, but unlike our cars, we're stuck with them for the rest of our lives," said Owen. "Why not take care of it now, so instead of being stuck in a wheelchair watching your grandson play basketball -- you can be on his team playing with him."

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Thank you for your valuable contributions this month --

Kathi Best: Massage article

Keats McGonigal: Heart Rate Monitor article

Michael Bergquist: World Games race review

Virginia Knight: Wrap recipe

Kerry Fisher: Feet article

Jessi Thompson: Calendar updates

Greg Gallagher: Heart Rate Monitor photograph



A Genuine Thank You to all of Our Generous Sponsors:



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**Nov-Dec. Calendar**Training Opportunities:North Spokane --

Tuesdays & Thursdays @ 5-6 am: Spin class @ OZ North.

Thursday evenings @ 7 pm: Headlamp run from the Gallagher's home in north Spokane.

Saturdays or Sundays: Possible outdoor ride, meeting location & time posted weekly on the Tri-Forum.

Races/Runs:

Nov. 22 @ 9 am: Turkey Trot at Manito Park, Spokane, WA

Nov. 25 @ : Seattle Marathon & 1/2 Marathon at Seattle, WA

Dec. 8 @ 8:30 am: Jingle Bell 5K Run & Walk at Riverfront Park, Spokane, WA

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 15 @ 6:30 pm: Tri Fusion Kids Triathlon meeting at Phaedra's house - 2phaedra@comcast.net

Nov. 17 @ 7:00 pm: Martini 101 class at the south hill Twigs Restaurant

Dec. 3 @ 7-9 pm: Tri Fusion Kids Club meeting at Kathi's house - kathibest@comcast.net

Dec. 7 @ 6:30-10:30: Tri Fusion Christmas Party at the Bozarth Mansion, bring cash for no-host bar (Tickets had to be purchased by November 14.)

Next Membership Meeting:

There will not be a membership meeting in December due to our Christmas party function on December 7th.

Jan. 16, 2008 @ 6:30: General membership meeting at location TBA