

GOING THE DISTANCE ENDURANCE



Over the past ten years, endurance training has seen a turn around that will have athletes sighing with relief, and yet new training regimes still enable them to reach for Gold.

When I was in the Army Physical Training Corps, I was accustomed to punishing long distance 12hr force tabs a day carrying over 65 pounds of kit of weight non stop. There were lots of times that I felt run down, and on the verge of total exhaustion.

The story today however is different. Long gone are the gruelling distances of medium-high intensity work. Instead, endurance athletes today are being subjected to relatively shorter, higher intensity sessions of work.

So how can it be possible for athletes to do less training in order for them to achieve maximum results?

The real problem is that high-quality endurance work is a double-edged sword, it can lead you to your highest-possible level of performance, or it can destroy your ability to perform.

Doing too much hard training can devastate your muscles, harass your hormonal system, and implode your immune system. Strenuous training must be balanced optimally with rest and recovery in order to reach peak performance.

Unfortunately, identifying the right balance of hard work and recovery is the most difficult part of serious training. If your training programme has too much recovery, you won't be able to carry out enough quality work to reach your peak. If your schedule has too little recovery, muscles won't be able to repair themselves properly after workouts. With too little recovery, performances can actually worsen instead of getting better.

Similarly, even with adequate recovery in between sessions, you can still 'over train' your body and produce the same negative effects of inadequate recovery. Coaches and athletes now adhere to the 'more intense/ shorter burst' training theory in order to build the athletes anaerobic capacity. With shorter sessions per day, recovery times are increased allowing structural proteins repair within muscles, restoration of energy-producing enzymes, the refilling of carbohydrate fuel stores, and the balancing of endocrine, nervous, and immune systems, which are all fatigued during training.

Whatever your sport, it is worth examining specific programmes that detail anaerobic training techniques. Not only will you feel better and more likely to want to achieve your targets, but your body will thank you as well.

“Training smart, not just hard” is definitely the way forward