



Continuous Strength Training For Endurance Athletes - Introduction

We have all heard about the importance of strength training for swim, bike and run performance. But there are many factors which deter us from including a strength structure into our training schedule:

Knowledge – What to do and why? If you aren't used to training in a gym or studio environment all those machines, heavy balls and giant elastic bands can seem a little strange. Also, there are thousands of variations in training methods; which exercise? How much resistance? If any. How many sets? Number of reps? It can all get a little complex.

Time – As triathletes we are pushed for time already training for 3 sports, so adding a fourth element may seem like too much to squeeze in. Do you carry out a session on the same day as a bike or a run? Or set a day aside? Or replace a swim, bike or run with a strength session?

Fatigue – Lifting weights can hurt. If you are performing a movement you are not used to, or generating a force greater than your muscles have done before, you can end up with delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS). This can last for a few days and impact on future training sessions.

So with all these potential negative aspects to strength training, why do all the top performers swear by it? Carrying out 3-5 sessions per week?

Answer – They train smart.

They enter into a preparation phase, getting the body's muscles, tendons and ligaments ready to take a load. They establish movement patterns to improve flexibility. They introduce resistance gradually, so as not to incur big fatigue. Sport-specific training only, athletes will only perform exercises relevant to their sport, not throwing heavy weights around if they are not needed. Scheduling is also important, if you do intend to lift heavy do so at a time of year when training volume is low and you aren't racing, to allow the muscles to recover fully.

Within this program we will work through all 4 stages of strength training; **Phase 1 – Preparation (Out of Season) 4 weeks, Phase 2 – Muscular Endurance 5 weeks, Phase 3 – Maximal Strength 3 weeks, Phase 4 – Maintenance.**