

# TriCentric

E-TIP

10 tips for long course success



Dear Athletes,

A few tips for the long stuff we do... in short-ish form ;-)

Cheers,

Brandon Heflin  
TriCentric Training

## 10 Tips for long course success

70.3 and Ironman are unique. 10 ways that every Triathlete can learn to be successful in long course racing... it's not just about putting in the time but rather doing with that time what you should... not what you can.

- 1. Have a plan and train it:** Coached or self coached... it's important to have a plan mapped out that leads to your long course goal. Perhaps more important than having a plan is to train your plan. Don't overtrain it, don't train your friends plan and don't train your plan without a predetermined method for progress.
- 2. Learn to listen to your stomach:** Read any race report and you will find stories of stomach issues everywhere. In order to compete at long course events you must hydrate and fuel your body and learn how to make real-time race day decisions. A well rehearsed fueling strategy for race day is important and must be practiced over and over in training... Just as important is to know how to adapt that plan in "real time" on race day based on all of the changing factors that will come your way.
- 3. Recovery:** Without recovery you will never reach your potential. be sure to plan recovery into your training program (both active and passive forms) and take advantage of the products and services available (massage, ice, compression, fueling, etc...). By planning your recovery, you should avoid over training and reinforcing bad technique. Too many athletes rest far too little and only after they are tired. When planning "active recovery" remember... you should NOT have to recover from a recovery session... it should promote recovery.
- 4. Training Zones:** Too many triathletes train in one or two zones only!!! Learn your zones... weather its power, heart rate or PE, training your zones and learning to use each zone to gain tactical advantage on race day will pay off. Failure to do this can lead to poor performance, poor recovery and poor decision making skills come race day.
- 5. Pacing:** Learning how to pace a long course race is a must for success. Go too hard too early and you will fade significantly. For those with faster time goals, going too easy can also lead to poor performance. Pacing should be practiced in training

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and you should have relatively "fixed" ceilings for how hard you go on race day. Power meters are the best tool for this as it never lies and forces you to make good decisions. Heart rate monitors, GPS and other tools also help the pacing process but you should have sound pacing knowledge in your tool kit as well. Learn how to draft, sight and swim efficiently. Learn how to pace your bike based on the course profile with a strategy that allows you to start easy and slowly build to a pace that provides a solid run foundation. Start your run easy so you can settle into good form and fuel your body... you should be able to negative split your run if you have paced everything well.

**6. Equipment:** Go to any race and it's clear that we spend our money on gear. No need to convince you to do so... however, you will also see the wrong gear being used quite frequently. Heavy deep section wheels on bike courses with 6-7 thousand feet of climbing, \$12,000.00 bike with poor bike fit, power meters with no clue how to use them. You should invest in the equipment and the knowledge required to put it to good use.

**7. Learn decision making skills for race day:** If you have a plan for your race, there is one thing you can count on... when the gun goes off, the plan is obsolete! You should have a plan but equal importance should be given to the skill of making real time decisions on race day. This will help you to avoid racing your plan into a brick wall. This starts in training and early season races by trying new things and developing a mental library of what worked, what didn't and why. We hear it all the time... "don't try anything new on race day"... but what do you do when all that is familiar no longer works and you find yourself in limbo??? Your mental library will be your best resource in making good decisions to keep you moving forward.

**8. Don't skip the small stuff 'cause add it all up and it's big:** At TriCentric Track every Thursday we work on running technique... to do anything else would be putting the cart before the horse. The same rings true for swimming and running. Take the time in the early months of your program to focus on technique and all the little things that will add up to a huge opportunity (lost or gained.... your choice) when its time for your race prep... the final 6-12 weeks before your big race when you should be focussing on sport and race specificity.

**9. Course preparedness:** Learn the course that you will be racing on. If you don't know the swim, you are left to guess on key items come race day such as sighting, typical water conditions, distance to 1st buoy, etc... knowing the bike course and typical weather conditions is a huge factor in developing you training program and learning how to ride it come race day. The run course is also an important component to developing a program that prepares you for race day. Knowledge is king... know your race course... it's not only wise... it's your responsibility!

**10. Enjoy the bad parts... that's the good stuff:** I train my athletes to learn to love the bad stuff that happens. It starts in training... those days where everything goes wrong... learn to laugh and enjoy these moments. They are what you will be telling stories about for the rest of your life and learning that "lesson" now will help you deal with any issues that will come up on race day. Note that I said "will"... its not a matter of if you have bad moments in long course racing... it's just a matter of when, how frequent and how bad. Learn to deal with them... it starts in training.

**Bonus Tip:** Often, Triathletes train with a cycling chamois and race with a triathlon short with quick dry pad. This can cause a saddle height difference of up to 1 cm and a significant change to your bike fit. This can cause discomfort and power loss on race day. To avoid this common mistake, measure the difference between your training and racing chamois and adjust your saddle up and forward in equal distances.

*\*\*\*This is not intended to be a complete list nor does it include everything you need to know for race day. It is intended to be a snapshot of common ingredients for success.*

## About TriCentric Training

TriCentric Training is a Pasadena, California based coaching company specializing in triathlon, cycling, running and bike fit.

TriCentric Training  
[www.tricentric.net](http://www.tricentric.net)  
[b@tricentric.net](mailto:b@tricentric.net)