

Challenges of Rural Training!

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I used to look at the BTS weekly training schedule and after several heart palpitations and deep breathes I would start to plan my working week, exercise schedule and social life in whatever time was left. I used to think that was a challenge – but add the word **RURAL** and it adds a whole new dimension to challenging!! I have thought about the reasons WHY and here goes in trying to explain my new level of frantic heart beats and bottomless breathes!

Imagination:

OK – to set the scene, I am 200km from the closest gym, pool, triathlon club, health shop and well general civilization as I see it! This means conventional tri training is out the window! Mark and I have to use our imagination to get me tri fit and keep me there. So how do we do it?

Swimming: No pool within 200km, but plenty of water!! Yep I have been hitting the rivers and oceans. Both still freak me out a little. A brief review of my first swim adventure in the river: Yes it is salt water, yes it is connected to the ocean, and no it is not clear I can't see a thing –and although no-one is willing to guarantee me, apparently there are no sharks! So I don my full wet suit, slide in (I have no idea how deep this thing is) and I swim like I have never swum before. I lasted 8 minutes – that was a long 8 mins of extreme heart rates, cold



headaches, and anxiety that at any minute I could be bitten by a shark, nibbled by an eel or generally freeze to my death. Matt was kayaking beside me as I was freaking out wondering when I became such an adventurer! Alas, I survived and the murky water of the Swan river has all but become my friend and open water swimming is becoming a breeze. I now get a day off a week too, which I drive to Hobart (4hr round trip) to get a 50m pool fix! Love it

Cycling: I cycle to the end of my 1.5km drive way and I have 3 possible options. Turn Right – the highway, 35 km to the next town, on the way is a killer Noosa Hill, plenty of flat head wind riding, and bad coffee at the end! Left, I get the highway with a hill that takes 1hr 15min to get to the top and 60km to the next town. Straight ahead I get flat, flat, and more flat, no houses, no people just bush along a dead end and back with rough roads. What would you choose? Mark has built in some interesting drills to keep me riding! Big chain ring work, plenty of loong sprints, marathon rides so I actually make it to the next town for a bad coffee and racing Matt. Great thing is, with any option, I get no traffic lights, no round-a-bouts, hardly any cars, except for log trucks that is.

Running:

The closest I have come to running in the last few months is chasing the cud chewing cows away from the cottage at 1am in the morning! Unfortunately, an all terrain training run that was planned for 1.5 hours turned into 3.5 hours after getting lost, missing signs, and finally having to call park rangers to guide us out ☺ This little escapade has cost me months of running as my knees didn't quiet enjoy the adventure.



Weather:

Ah the wind, ah the frost – the joys of training in Tasmania! My first ride after moving here (the middle of winter), I wake up, get the heaters blazing, I warm my helmet, gloves, socks, and shoes, and tried not to look outside. This is Lance Armstrong's theory to get you on the road before you realize how cold, windy, scorching, snowy and everything not rider friendly it is! I step out of the cottage onto the mountain bike – EEEEEKS...has the grass turned white, or is that frost I see? We set off into town screaming 'my hands are frozen', 'I can't feel my feet', 'heck my face is numb!' I find out later it was minus 3! After experiencing this exhilarating numbness quite a few times, the wind trainer became my best friend.

As the cold started to subside, the arctic winds set in which are great for strength training. The winds here are crazy – never ending, never easing up, relentless. The day I viewed the wind as my certain enemy, I struggled to get to the end of the driveway, turned left and was suddenly attacked by a wicked side wind, swept of the road, down the embankment, and into the fence - OUCH for the ego and the chilled bones! I picked myself up, took a spoon full of toughen up and fought my way into work. These days, if the trees are looking horizontal, I opt for my wind trainer friend!



Strength:

Well with no gym in sight, our lounge room in the 1 bedroom cottage has become an exercise haven! Dumbbells, stretchy bands, swiss balls, boxing gloves & pads, ITB devices, golf balls, weights, yoga dvds, wind trainer and a chin up machine, what more could you want! So Mark has built in to my routine, plenty of boxing sessions which are great, weights



and core exercises – so I am expecting Sarah Connor arms any time soon (I can always hope!).

Kayaking also features prominently in my weekly programs. Yes it sounds so relaxing but not when you add drills, waves, wind, and trying to keep up with Matt. Great way to work on swimming strength instead of jumping in the murky water, I paddle on top of it.

Balance:

I used to love going to training, but equally love getting to work to rest my weary legs, sitting behind my desk all day revving up for the afternoon session to release my built up energy! OK, a thing of the past. I finish my AM training, straight to work, and on my feet until 9pm, serving customers, managing staff, making coffees, pouring drinks and you know the drill! Being on my feet has meant I have even had to learn how to stand properly. According to my physio, triathletes have this bizarre way of standing that is really quite disastrous for our knees, hips, back and well pretty much everything. However, I still think without training and fitness goals to work towards, I would have been crawling in my skin months ago! Its great to be busy. One thing I have not learnt how to balance is the social life. Thankfully in a town of 550 residents, there are no nightclubs calling my name or fantastic cafes with great raisin toast waiting for me to park my bike and stagger in.

So WHY do I keep going when it sounds like hell on earth?

Because it is exciting and challenging!

If life was meant to be easy and we wanted it that way – why the heck would we be doing triathlons! Next time the alarm goes off, jump out of bed, because you have training buddies, a pool, a running track, and warm weather waiting for you!! ENJOY