



# Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

**Ques:** One of the other guys I am considering does not write in cycling during the winter, until around March (figuring that you get burnt out on the trainer) except for the occasional easy ride when the weather is good? What is your opinion?

B.B.

**Answer:** When you understand 2 fundamental principles of Base-training (ie: done usually in the winter), you see that the bike plays a huge role in each. They are:

**#1-You MUST strictly try to maintain an aerobic approach to base-fitness.** The goal of the base is 'metabolic' in that we're trying to alter the burn-ratio of the fuels you use.....fats and carbs. At aerobic hr's, you burn (and TEACH the body to burn) fat at a higher % than carbs.....thereby sparing the carbs (called glycogen) and even USING the blood-sugar in maintaining fat-usage. This is key (ESPECIALLY FOR IM competitors!!) because each gram of fat holds 9 calories while each gram of carb holds only 4. Spending alot of time (6-12 weeks) aerobically means adjusting the 'fuel-economy' you get for the REST OF THE SEASON!! That's why it's called a "base" everything else is built on top of that.....like icing on the cake.

Now, (back to your question about the bike).....very few people can do 2 things simultaneously.....#1-run truly aerobically and #2-...for a period of time (2-3 hrs) that doesn't consistently leave them injured/sore if done 2-3 times each week. As a strategy, we'll incorporate the long-runs to come right after the bike so that we can get 3hr's @ aerobic hr while having to only to 1:30 of it while running.

Simply put, the **bike** offers the highest "Return-on-Training Investment" (what you get vs. what it cost) when the focus is on altering the "burn-ratio" (metabolism).....and it can be any type of bike for this-mtn., cross, trainer, spinning-bike, road, etc...

**#2-Neuro-musclar conditioning requires repetition.** If you're right handed, grab a pencil and write a sentence left-handed. Not too pretty, huh? Yet, those who lose their dominant hand (or dominant senses like "sight", for that matter) will (eventually, w/ alot of repetition.....over & over)....will become 'neuro-muscularly conditioned'.

'Neuro-muscularly conditioned' simply means that they do it **better**, with **less wasted movement**, and do so much **faster**. Now think about your pedal-stroke. Doing it better, w/ less wasted movement, and faster will "COST" you less energy, effort, and calories. Essentially, you'll pedal in true circles much easier by riding the bike through winter. And we even do 'neuro-pedal sessions' (w/ 1-legged pedaling) to address this further.

My coach in Belgium used to say: "You want to have a smoother pedal stroke? Do 3 things: 1-ride the bike.....2-ride the bike.....and 3-ride the bike."

There's no way I'd recommend being out of the saddle til March.....not even for a true cyclist-turned triathlete.

**Sonni**