



What's up? Training question here....I just got done reading Phil Maff's book "Training for Endurance".

In it, he states that he doesn't recommend **any** weight lifting during the base phase because **any** type of lifting is anaerobic by nature..... and goes on to say that he doesn't recommend lifting in general to most endurance athletes because training time is best spent on more specific; run, bike, swim, etc. type workouts.

What's your take on this? I know you have people lift during the base phase unless they are pretty muscular most times. What are your thoughts behind this rationale? Any feedback would be appreciated. Like I said before, I like to know the "why" behind everything! Thanks for helping with the learning process!.....BG

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Hey BG.....great question. Let me take a stab @ it, here.

In your question, you pretty much allude to the reason for lifting in base phases when you wrote "*unless they are pretty muscular most times*". I'm going to assume that you're referring to an individual's natural abilities.....and limiting factors. [Strengths and weaknesses.] Simply put, often we use weight-training as method of ADDRESSING an athlete's limiting factors.

.....but, I don't do it w/ everyone.

Now, @ first glance, one might assume that an athlete's limiting factors are weaknesses in the area of:
-physical ability
-technical ability
-metabolic ability

However.....the truth of the matter is that most of your athletes lead pretty full lives and work hard to fit the training in. Because of that, it could be assumed that an athlete's "*limiting factors*" could also include:
-training time available (job, family, commute,other responsibilities)
-lack of complete recovery (due to other stress causing variables (job, family, commute,other responsibilities)

My opinion is that Maffetone's "never-lift-in-a-base-phase" makes a very dangerous assumption that most triathletes have adequate training **time** each week for all 3 tri-disciplines given their goals.....or even that every athlete is balanced in all 3 disciplines. In my experience, this is **rarely** the case.

So BECAUSE the only opportunity for BIKE training (for an athlete who may have a muscular strength limiter) may come on the weekend (due to work).....we can use weight training, that's typically more time-efficient in terms of strength gains, as a tool.

Let me offer real-world examples:

****1st**--an athlete who I will **NOT** have lift in the base phase (and NEVER lift in MS phases)= **Eric Wilson**, 245lbs, former college lineman, has 45 to 90minutes to train per day. Target race is sprint distance. Strength is NOT an issue for Eric!! Every minute of his training time should be spent honing in his aerobic metabolism.....and, physiologically speaking, threading the oxygen carrying & lactate removing capillary beds through his CURRENT muscle tissue mass.

Therefore, we have **more** to gain by using the time elsewhere & NOT weight-training.



Coach-Athlete Q&A

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

****2nd--two athletes who we DO have do resistance training in the base phase (and stay longer in the MS lift phases)=Lori & Lisa James, the "twins" (though that's their maiden name, now that both have married), both are 105 lbs, good runners, proficient swim mechanics, limited on the bike not because of heart-rate, but because of muscular strength and the ability to turn the pedals in larger gears for longer durations. Target race is sprint to half-IM distance. Fantastic aerobic metabolisms (just look @ 'em). Weight training isn't going to adversely alter their obvious ability to tap into, and use, % bodyfat as a fuel.....but it will mean a larger fear size for longer durations @ the same rpms'.....netting greater average speed @ less muscular "cost".**

Therefore, we have **less** to lose and more to gain by weight-training.

So, the short answer is: It really depends on an athlete's "physiological limitors" and their "time/life-limitors".

In reality, Maffetone advises against weight lifting in the BASE phase because of the role of any anaerobic work in DE-training the metabolism.....at the time when the metabolic-system is being primarily developed. BUT.....for some athletes (actually, very many) the metabolism isn't as big a limiting factor as their lack-of-training-time induced sub-par muscular-strength is. {As an athlete, I'm actually a classic example of this: World-class metabolism.....novice strength. "Know thy self", right?}

Make sense?

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And there is another reason that I've not even touched on why weight training is beneficial in the BASE phases. As Jackie Miller will attest (and can explain more thoroughly).....the role of weight training need not be strictly devoted to anaerobic work NOR "strength-only" gains.

There is several other components to resistance training:

- muscular group balance
- connective tissue strengthening
- core & pelvic stability
- plyometric explosiveness
- proprioceptive body-awareness
- etc.....

Note that nearly all of the above benefits, in some way, deal w/ injury prevention as well as performance. Jackie has wonderful exercises & lifts that hardly qualify as "anaerobic" and are pretty far from what Phil Maffetone defined as traditional "weight training" when he wrote "Training for Endurance".

In short, what we call "weight-training" looks less and less like what Phil knew it as just a few years ago.

Hope this helps.

Sonni Dyer