



Get a winter training focus sorted.

With the days growing ever shorter and the temperature dropping like a stone it is very obvious that winter is on its way. Although many people don't like to admit it because who likes getting out of bed on a cold morning, but the winter does provide a perfect opportunity to build on your weaknesses. Now everyone has something they can improve on and the first step to developing your weaknesses is to identify them.

I have found that an individual's weakness is often the discipline or aspect of a discipline that they dislike the most. For example I don't know how many times I hear people say I hate hills or I'm just not a runner. So have a think about what aspect of your performance do you struggle the most with or where do you lose time in a race. If you are still having a problem identifying your weakness then some outside input is often a great help. People on the outside often see you different from what you do, so ask someone you trust what they think your weaknesses are. Once you have a list of what your weak points are you need to arrange them into an order of most importance and decide where your time is best spent (this is where a coach comes in handy).

Once you have identified your weak discipline or aspect strip it down and get back to basics, technique. I think that the early winter is a good time to focus on developing your technique, whether it is out on the water in your boat, on the local rugby field working on your running technique or in front of the mirror on the wind trainer. Technique is best developed using specific drills that progress over time with the goal of training your neuromuscular system into a new movement pattern. In essence you are training your body to stimulate the right muscles at the right time to produce a nice fluid efficient movement.

I suggest an intensive block of training (5-8weeks) in the early winter where the focus is on developing technique in one or two disciplines. Other training at this stage is put on the back burners where it is maintained with target sessions through out this time. During this time technique drills are carried out 2-4 times per week along with other neuromuscular training sessions and maintenance sessions. The good thing about technique sessions is that they are relatively short to being with. This is because for them to be effective you have to be fresh, and at the early stage of technique training the muscles fatigue quick as they are not use to the new movement pattern. This leads to short training sessions that give you large benefits, that's got to be good.

Following the intensive block of technique training in the early winter the amount of drill sessions done is reduce and the focus shifts to developing your endurance base moving through that correct movement pattern that your body has now developed. As a result you will develop your endurance base on a solid technique platform which will pay off later in the year.

Now I know from living in Dunedin that it can be very hard to get motivated and get outside during the colder months. However the benefits of a specific development focus during the winter should help with this motivation. There are also plenty of good races around during the winter. Pick some races to do that focus on the single discipline or disciplines you have been developing over the winter.

Another big motivator is to get a group of like minded training partners together and work on it together. It is always easier to get up in the morning if you know someone else is going to meet you out on the water or give you grief if you don't show up. The final thing is to make sure you invest in some good warm gear. A good hat, gloves, thermals, tights and jackets are essential to keep you warm during



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the winter. If you are rugged up warm it makes it a million times easier to get out and enjoy the winter weather.

I had a group of paddlers that paddled through out the Dunedin winter last year. Admittedly some mornings when the frost was on the ground next to the harbour it was hard to get going, but as long as you have your thermals and poggies on then you soon warmed up.

So don't just sit around waiting for the summer to arrive, get out the door and go meet it with a solid technique and endurance base, you will be so glad you did.

If you need help sharpening your technique and building your winter base in any of your disciplines get in contact with me at matty@one2onemultisport.co.nz and I can tailor you a specific winter programme with the appropriate technique drills and sessions to suit your needs.

Stay warm and get out there

Matty Graham