
JUMP FEET FIRST Into Improving Your Triathlon Performance!!

To finish a triathlon is an achievement. To better your time on your second event is both impressive and exciting. **It is human nature to try and improve as you continue to compete.** However, this instinct can lead to pushing your body too hard, resulting in injury. There are a few things you can do to reduce the risk of this occurring.

Firstly, don't rely on your body to tell you that it is struggling. To start with, when you are first starting out on a training program, the chances are that most parts of your body will be hurting and it is very difficult to distinguish between "normal" pain and pain that will cause issues down the track. If you are noticing a pain that continues from session to session or is getting worse, then you may need to have it assessed.



Secondly, and arguably more importantly, there is a lot that happens in your body that you are not aware of. **We get approximately 1000 messages to the brain every second and we are aware of only 50.** As such, by waiting for your body to tell you that it is breaking down, i.e. with pain, you are really waiting for actual damage to occur. This means a longer and generally more expensive recovery time.

Start taking notice of how your body is moving during your training sessions. If you are fatiguing quicker in one leg than the other during your ride, you may be putting more pressure through one foot/leg. If you are noticing one stroke is stronger than the opposite side during your swim, you may have an imbalance caused by a leg length discrepancy. These occurrences are very common and are very easy to fix once they are identified.

To have an efficient walking style is ideal in anybody but particularly in an athlete. This means that your body is using the minimal effort to get the maximum effect. As your training program increases, general fatigue is normal but, if you are not moving with a stable platform, your body will be working harder than it needs to and the risk of injury from overuse becomes high.



Check your shoes. Are they wearing more on the outside of the heel or around the big toe joint? Is one shoe more worn than the other? Are you wearing the shoe that is right for your foot? Don't buy a shoe on the recommendation of a friend as their feet will, more often than not, move differently to yours and therefore, what works for them, may not be the best for your foot.

The human body is an amazing machine. Its ability to overcome problems and inadequacies is nothing short of a miracle. Having said that, this very compensation, can over a prolonged time, create different issues that cause more and more problems.

Make sure you know how your body is moving and whether you need to work to improve its symmetry and strength. Ignoring the stability of your feet is like cycling with one flat tyre - you can make it to the end but at what cost to the bike?

Authored by Jill Hunter, Principal Podiatrist who spearheads the Perth Integrated Health Podiatry Team. The Podiatry Team helps Triathletes to improve their feet biomechanics and injuries to increase their triathlon performance and day to day life. For more information or for an appointment with one of our Podiatrists please call 9240 5266 or email jill@pihc.com.au. Please quote Champion Lakes Triathlon.



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