

Spring training: Prepare to bike, kayak, run

Springtime in Jackson is like the beginning of the new year.

Many seem to make a New Year's resolution in hope to improve on something (how is that New Year's resolution coming, by the way?) Regardless of new resolution planning, it is preparation time for outdoor sport activities.

Common statements among outdoor sport activity enthusiasts emerge as "I want to" and end with examples like, "improve my golf drive by 20 yards," "hike, run or bike Snow King without stopping," "decrease biking time from Jenny Lake to Signal Mountain," "paddle the Snake this year," or simply "do more activities outside."

Improving "your game" is often a high desire in an outdoor town such as Jackson. The question of how one performs better at his/her sport activity is asked in recreation or competition.

Based on current research, personal training and participation experience, I have compiled ideas for the some common sports activities here in the valley. Although nothing replaces the actual activity itself, I hope to enlighten your perspective on the efficiency of movement and the idea of preparation within a particular sport in order to perform better.

In previous Training to be Balanced articles, the core has been a constant theme. Just to briefly reiterate, all

movement patterns emulate from the core, which creates a foundation for movement. The body is designed to function in balance. In the body, groups of muscles function together, not in isolation. If the core is weak, what part of the body has to work to hold it up? The legs, in particular the hamstrings, have to work double to

do its job and hold up the core, thus fatiguing the legs faster than necessary. A strong core equals more leg efficiency!

Here are just a few training ideas across a large spectrum for each sport activity:

Mountain Biking: Important components are leg strength and power, flexibility, recovery and overtraining. To better simulate the explosive pushing and pulling move-

ment of a pedal stroke and also help develop some balance and ankle/knee stability, perform exercises with one leg. Exercises such as weighted step-ups, lunges, signal leg presses and Romanian dead lifts are excellent.

If you are biking three to four days per week, mid- to high-level intensity every ride, then resistance workouts should be maintained one to two days per week with adequate recovery time between rides, but must be done to improve. If competing with a time-span of one week between events, it is best to put lifting days early in the week so that the participant has the needed 48 to 72 hours to recover.



Training to be balanced

Augie Hernandez

It is important to keep in mind that every person responds differently to training and recovery. Anyone who exhibits any decreased performance, frequent muscle soreness, and significant changes in resting and training heart rates may be overtraining.

I know flexibility can be forgotten during outdoor activities, but a yoga class twice per week, coupled with 10 to 15 minutes of self-stretching, helps those hip flexors, quads, arms and back to reduce lactic acid buildup, increased circulation, and range of motion.

Kayaking: Important components are rotational strength, flexibility and sprint power. To transition more quickly into the paddling season, flexibility work three to four times per week proves to be extremely helpful, especially when you're upside down in water. The water current can push and pull a human body in all different directions, and the range of motion to adjust becomes essential.

Sprint speed and power are important for adaptations to different water currents, rocks and falls. Training two to three days per week with quick rotational movements will help sprint and powerful rotations. Things like rotating a medicine ball side to side while sitting on the floor with feet grounded are great. Also, pulley or medicine ball diagonal chopping, partner medicine ball sideway throws or weighted bar paddling simulating the kayak stroke performed explosively helps the quick movement demands of a kayaker. Attempt seven- to 10-second intervals with five to 15 seconds rest in between. Build up to six to 12 sets.

Running: Important components are running economy and explosive training. It has been suggested that explosive resistance training may benefit the running economy. A 1999 study showed a faster 5-k run time without a change in the maximum oxygen consumption (VO2 max) after training in sprints, plyometrics and light resistance exercises performed quickly.

Positive effects within strength training (in particular explosive training and plyometric training) on distance running performance in trained distance runners have led researchers to further explore. However, the exact mechanism is unclear, the enhanced storage and release of elastic energy during ground contact is one such mechanism. Basically, the quickness in hopping and jumping during training transfers to the amount of time a foot stays on the ground when running. If the quickness is increased, the overall running is faster.

Jump rope, double knee-to-chest quick jumps, side hops over a line on the floor, or side-to-side shuffles as done in basketball help indefinitely. These can be performed in three sets of eight-second bursts with a 15-second rest between each set. Use 100 percent speed. In addition, a few times a week on off running days is satisfactory.

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