

## Train with a Purpose

By Rob Lockey, CSCS

Each spring, the little voice that has been locked away, endurance training, calls out for some attention. This is especially true for those folks who want to do well in events or races this summer. To find improvement among a busy life, a training plan that is specific as well as individualized, is the ticket to success. Coaching and the data from a lactate threshold physiological test can provide the important information necessary to reach your goal. Structure is what creates the environment for success in endurance training.

The base of this structure is how the workout is measured. Heart rate, rate of perceived exertion and power meters are possible devices for gauging. Participating in a lactate threshold test will bring these devices to the forefront of your program. This test allows for a snapshot of your current fitness, and a determination of training zones, for improved fitness through continuous training.

A lactate threshold test consists of a graded exercise protocol to simulate increased workload on the individual. This test can be done easily on a bike or treadmill and generally is 30-45 minutes in length. It should be completed at the end of a recovery period so that the overall training fatigue is low and can be considered part of the training.

Timing a lactate threshold test in the spring is best done around 4-6 weeks before the main event or 'A' race, so that training can be adjusted to optimize those weeks towards attaining the goals set by the athlete. If you are more than 6 weeks out from an event the test is still useful in showing areas of efficiency and inefficiency. A test also helps set up base training with regards to proper intensity and duration. It is not uncommon to see significant improvements when a training plan is structured around this test, due to the ability to make each workout specific and focused, thus removing any of the 'junk miles'. There is still time this spring to focus training with a lactate threshold test and promote improvements.

Everyone possesses the ability to improve from training; the problem comes when there isn't any structure or measurement to show success. Guidance from beginning to end can ensure your time is used properly while having an eye on the prize. Give that little voice some satisfaction of improvement over previous years, endurance train with a purpose.

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