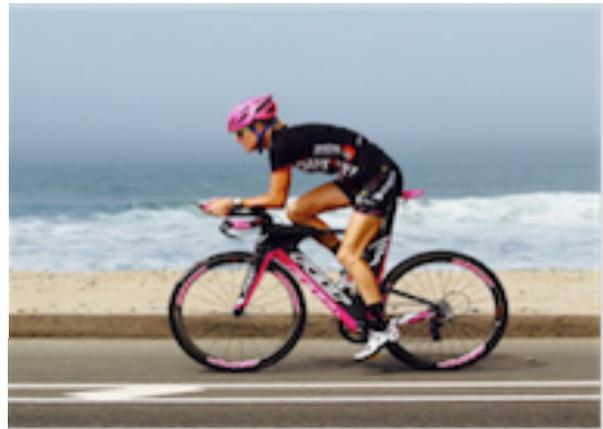




POWERED BY MICHELLIE JONES COACHING



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HITCH A COACH

Down, but not out: be smart and fit while injured

It all seemed to be going so well. You were carefully following your training plan. One day, you were running and started to feel pain in your knee or in your shoulder on the swim. You began to wonder if you would be sidelined from training and lose fitness. That doesn't have to be the case.

According to Michellie, many endurance athletes have to deal with some type of injury. Typically it's from overuse, but can be from a bike crash,

or simply stumbling at home. She said you shouldn't ignore any sign of injury. "It's extremely important that you know exactly what the injury is, so seek medical advice as quickly as possible," Coach MJ said. Do not try to diagnose it yourself; for example, stress fractures and sprains are treated differently. Stop right away if something hurts or doesn't feel right.

Because triathletes are highly motivated to work out, it can be difficult to stop

doing what you love. The type of injury will dictate whether complete rest is better than an alternative workout. "To get out the door sooner after an injury, it's best to stay on the conservative side rather than an aggressive approach," Michellie said.

In the case that you can't run, aqua jogging can be a safe alternative to maintain fitness. Leading into Michellie's first Ironman World Championship in 2005, she had a stress fracture in her hip from a

"Everytime I would aqua jog, I visualized different parts of the course to stay motivated," Coach MJ said. "I still managed a 2nd-place finish. Staying positive can be tough, but better to take the time off now, rather than have injury drag on for months."

Injury can be a great opportunity to work on weak areas in multisport. Be sure to get doctor's recommendations before moving forward. The severity of the injury will determine how often (cont.)

(cont.) and how closely you can follow your normal program. Aside from aqua jogging in lieu of running, the elliptical machine is an option. Finally, rowing is excellent for interval work.

Coach MJ said that if you were to have a track workout of 800, 2x400, 800, and 2x400 - all with two minutes recovery, it can be replicated on the rowing machine. She cautions athletes attempting to continue with strength training during any rehabilitative time period,

as some weight-bearing exercises can put unnecessary stress on the injury. "Rehabilitation should be your primary focus to speed up recovery; strength training has its place, but be sure to take a good look at your biomechanics, too, to prevent the injury from recurring," Michellie said.

-Kathy English

(Right) Use of the rowing machine is a low-impact alternative to maintain cardio fitness while injured.

