

Got Power?

At what point am I “ready” for a power meter?

While power meters have historically appealed to highly skilled athletes (who typically have some cash), their application is as relevant, if not more so, to athletes at a lower level of experience. The key is to ensure you understand how to utilize them effectively in your training and racing. I foresee power meters becoming as common as GPS pace in running, which is now the norm for many runners.

Make the data relevant: There is certainly a learning curve that comes with using power in cycling. To gain some specificity in training I would suggest frequent field tests, which provide insight into power you can maintain relative to heart rate and perceived effort. These can act as benchmarks for progression and even help monitor fatigue.

Avoid the pitfalls: Don't use a power meter as a measure of success or failure, or approach each training set as a chance to better yesterday's watts. I see many athletes ignore how training *feels* and become a slave to the numbers.

Used within a smart plan, a power meter is one of the best learning tools—it can help you avoid mistakes and steepen the learning curve. For me, the sooner the better!



BY MATT DIXON



As a coach, how do you approach telling an athlete to lose weight?

This is, of course, highly sensitive but achievable. For endurance athletes, a restrictive diet seldom yields positive results, especially as their usual inclination is to restrict calories during and following workouts. This is highly corrosive and stressful, and always leads to disastrous results. In fact, when working with athletic people on improving body composition, the normal prescription often involves getting them to eat a little more (at the right time) and train a little less. Taking them away from a high-stress environment often helps the body find a natural balance.

It's critical for coaches to approach the subject as a part of the overall plan, in the vein of education, versus singling out weight as a specific problem. It's seldom an exclusive issue, and normally a result of some global bad habits. How direct you are as a coach is highly dependent on personality, and any good coach cannot have just one style of communication and feedback. This is the art of coaching. 🗣️

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What is more important for Ironman: cycling fitness or running fitness?

This is a tough question to answer as, for an Ironman, you need to have a high level of general fitness to perform well. It's true that your running performance (off the bike) will somewhat depend on how much the bike took out of you, so solid cycling fitness, as well as proper pacing, is key. It's also true that fitness gained on the bike translates better to running than any running fitness does to the bike. For this reason, much of your focus should be making the bike leg as strong as possible. But it would be silly to deemphasize running. However, one element of running that is generally overvalued is the long run. Some long runs are needed, but completing a two-hour-plus run every week is not necessary or beneficial. It is more important to run frequently, with plenty of pace-specific (or above) intensity.