I signed up for this race back in December hoping that I would have a good solid race before my final build to Lake Placid. However, sometimes life throws you curveballs and you just need to change your plan. I decided a month ago after my knee/hip issues started that I would drop down to the aquabike. I didn’t really want to, but I decided to be smart and not do anything stupid… like run a half-marathon with an injured leg.

The week before the race I managed to come down with a nasty cold (again). I succeeded to do absolutely nothing last weekend in order to get rid of the cold. It helped, but my nose was still pretty runny and I pretty much lost my voice. I hadn’t been in open water yet either. Luckily, one of my co-workers offered (okay, maybe I bribed him) to kayak for me Thursday night so I could try on my wetsuit and get in the water for a bit of swimming. This week was pretty crappy weather-wise. Lots of rain so the lake was freezing. It was also windy and choppy. I lasted a whole 7 minutes in the water. Yikes! Hopefully race day will be much better!
I headed down to Massachusetts on Friday night and stayed at my coach’s house. I got to see her herd of puppies. They are completely crazy and lovable at the same time! I had a pretty good night of sleep. Going into this race I wasn’t really nervous. At this point, mentally I was considering this more of a training day than a pure race. The ultimate goal is Lake Placid so I treated this as a day to a) complete my first real open water swim of the year, b) get nutrition timing down, and c) work on pacing throughout the bike course.

Pre-race:

I got up at 4:15 and had a quick breakfast of a bagel with cream cheese and applesauce. No issues with breakfast going down. Guess I really wasn’t that nervous. Got in the car and turned the GPS on. Had issues with the GPS losing satellite the entire drive to Freetown. Awesome. I made it with plenty of time. Got my race packet. Racked bike. Set up transition. Felt like I was missing everything since I didn’t need my running shoes. Took Azul (my bike) for a quick spin. Used the porta-potty. Put on the wetsuit. Quick warm-up in the lake. Water temperature was about 60 degrees. Waited about 40 minutes until my swim wave went off.

The Swim:

I was in the last wave with both men and women aquabikers and the relay peeps. I seeded myself in the semi-middle third row back. The gun went off and so did we. I found open water pretty quickly. I didn’t have any major issues of anyone swimming over me or kicking me. I kind of wish that they did in a way so I could “practice” for Lake Placid! The first third of my swim was rough. I couldn’t settle in. My stroke was horrible. I’m sure I looked like a dying fish out of water. Finally, I was able to settle into my swim stroke and was making my way towards to first turn buoy. It felt like it took forever to get there! As you got further out into the lake it got a bit choppy. I made the first turn and headed for the second one. I could see that I was passing a few people in the previous waves so I was feeling okay about my swim, but I knew that I was slow. Before I started the race I set my watch to beep every 10 minutes during the swim so I had an idea of the time. The second beep went off shortly after I rounded the first buoy. I made it around the second turn buoy and started to pick up the pace towards “home.” The third beep went off and I knew I was looking at a 40+ minute swim. Definitely very slow for me, which I was slightly bummed about. However, I guess that’s what you get when you haven’t swam open water since last August. Finally I made it shore!

Swim: 42:02 (2:00/100 yards) 5/12 AG; 20/49 OA

T1

Did my hair. Did my make-up. Just Kidding. I had a hell of a time getting my wetsuit off. It took forever. Best part of it was the fact that I managed to strain my left calf muscle while taking my suit off. Awesome. An hour later…

T1: 3:53 min
The Bike

The course is a two loop 28-mile course that is relatively flat with some rollers. It was a pretty course with views of lakes and nice houses. It reminded me a lot of Pumpkinman and a little bit of the Maine Rev3 course. It took me a bit to settle into the bike. My head was still a bit cloudy from the swim. The first couple of miles had a bunch of turns so it wasn't very fast, but I did manage to pass a few people right off the bat. I concentrated on staying in my power zones and riding the course smart and consistently. My goal was to do the first loop a bit easier and then pick it up for the second loop. About 10 miles into the course I passed a woman and she asked if I was on my second loop. I laughed and told her I was only on my first loop. She said “oh, you have a pointy helmet so I thought you were on your second.” Thanks for thinking I’m super fast lady! I just might have to wear my aero helmet from now on. Ha! Shortly after that I came upon two tom turkeys trying to cross the road. Both were running around in the middle of the road like deer in headlights. Great! Luckily, they moved quickly to the side of the road and I was able to pass them without coming to a complete stop. At this point I started to play cat and mouse with an older woman named Shirley. This would go on throughout the entire ride. I would pass her and then she’d get a second wind and pass me only to have me pass her later on down the road. Great fun and a great motivator! Around mile 15 or so we came up to a road between two lakes. Just as a came around the bend a flock of Canadian geese and baby geese were trying to cross the road. Seriously! Turkeys and now geese! I kind of made a “no no” sound to get them to stay on the side of the road so I could pass and one of them hissed at me! I didn’t think Geese could hiss! Yikes!

I kept moving and soon Melissa passed me like a rocket! I skipped the bottle exchange at mile 18 and kept plugging along. Soon I passed by transition and headed out for my second loop. I picked up the speed and started focusing on passing anyone I could. At this point the headwind picked up again. It was there on the first loop, but definitely picked up a bit more on the second. This time I passed both mile 10 and 15 without any birds trying the cross the road. I did see a turtle at one point. Around mile 45 or so Shirley and I started playing cat and mouse with a man named Craig. Right around this point the bike traffic started to pick up a bit and becoming a bit of a cluster-f**. The roads were a bit narrow and there were cars trying to pass. Things got a bit slow. At this point I was getting frustrated and finally when I had a chance I just put my head low and hauled ass by about 10+ cyclists. Shirley and Craig were long gone at this point. I passed the bottle exchange again and knew I had roughly 10 miles left. At this point I picked it up again. I passed a bunch of people knowing that I didn’t have the run. In the final miles I saw the elite men heading to the finish of the run looking strong. Then I saw transition and was done. It was a nice feeling knowing I didn’t have the run now. But, I sort of missed not being able to run…. 

Bike: 3:11:56 (17.5mph) 6 AG; 29 OA

Overall, I felt good during the race. I was a bit disappointed with my time overall. I was slow, but I haven’t been training much in my half-ironman zones. That coupled with my cold, I did the best I could on that day. I was just glad that I didn’t have any major coughing spells during the swim or bike. Looking at the results afterwards there were a lot of slow bike times. I was really hoping to go sub-3 on the course and it is definitely within my capability. I think the headwind played a role in the slower times. I compared how I did in the aquabike to my age group for the Half and I would have placed well there if I didn’t have my knee injury. But you never really know. I did accomplish my goal of the day – to have a good solid ride. My VI for the ride was 1.09, which is really really good for me! I was happy about that. My legs felt good at the end, minus the calf strain. Now, onwards to my final build to Ironman Lake Placid!

Overall: 3:57:48.6 6/12 AG (Women under 44); 10/28 Females; 26/49 Overall
Muscle Imbalances – What You Need to Know!

Posted on June 12, 2013 by kmichaud87

In order to fully understand muscle imbalances, let’s first look at normal muscle function. There are three types of muscles in the body: smooth, cardiac, and skeletal. We, of course, are investigating skeletal muscles — or the muscles that move our bodies through the swim, bike, run movement patterns. Normal muscle activation is a combination of contraction and relaxation of muscle fibers. The technical terms are called facilitation (contraction) and inhibition (relaxation). When muscles contract, they get tighter and do more work. When muscles relax, they do less work and allow their opposite muscles to contract better. Muscles in the body generally work in pairs.

Let’s use the examples of your biceps and triceps. Let’s imagine that you are sitting on a bench with a dumbbell in your right hand about to do a set of biceps curls. What happens when you move your right hand towards your shoulder? Place your left hand over your right bicep. In the rest position your biceps is pretty relaxed. The same with your triceps. Neither should feel tight or loose. Just relaxed. Now move that dumbbell up towards your shoulder and do a biceps curl. Now feel that biceps in the top hand position. Feels pretty tight now doesn’t it? The biceps muscle is contracting to pull the dumbbell towards your shoulder. Now feel the triceps. The triceps muscle should feel loose because it must relax in order for the biceps to contract. Now lower the dumbbell to the start position. The biceps muscle should be relaxed (loose) and the triceps contracted (tight). The same thing happens as you are running. As you lift your leg to propel yourself forward, your quadriceps (front of thigh muscles) must contract to lift your knee forward and the hamstrings (back of thigh muscles) must relax. When the muscles are balanced in the body, they have the right combination of inhibition and facilitation during movement.
If muscles lack the right combination of inhibition and facilitation during movement muscle imbalances can occur. Muscle imbalances may lead to injuries, biomechanical inefficiencies, and wasted efforts. Muscle imbalances can also occur due to poor static posture, joint dysfunction, and myofascial adhesions (think “knot” in muscle). These altered length-tension relationships between muscles may lead to altered muscle recruitment patterns (altered force-couple relationships). This is caused by altered reciprocal inhibition. Altered reciprocal inhibition, defined by NASM, is the process by which a tight muscle (short, overactive, myofascial adhesions) causes decreased neural drive, and therefore optimal recruitment of its functional antagonist.

Let’s look at an example of this. A majority of people work 9-5 desk jobs in front of a computer. Thus they tend to have tight hip flexors, or ilopsoas muscles. Tight psoas muscles decrease the neural drive and therefore the optimal recruitment of gluteus maximus (your butt muscles). The gluteus maximus muscles are the prime movers for hip extension and an important muscle in running. According to a 2006 study in The Journal of Experimental Biology, the gluteus maximus works primarily to keep the torso upright during movement and it is involved in decelerating the swing leg as it hits the pavement. Since the glute is a hip extender muscle, it also functions to extend your hip-joint as your foot pushes off the ground to propel your body forward. Weaknesses in the gluteus maximus can lead to compensation and substitution by the synergists (hamstrings) and stabilizers (erector spinae). This can ultimately lead to potential hamstring strains and lower back pain.

According to one study, over the course of any given year approximately two-thirds of runners will have at least had one injury that has caused an interruption to their training. For those training for marathons, the rate as been recorded up to 90% of runners. The most common running injury involves the knee. The most common running related knee problems are patellofemoral pain syndrome, iliotibial band (IT-Band) syndrome, tibal stress syndrome (spin splits), and plantar fasciitis. Guess what? These common running injuries are overuse injuries generally caused by muscle imbalances!

Some researchers and sports medicine professionals have argued that triathlon, as a multisport event, causes less overuse injuries than single sports, because of the more even distribution of loads over the body’s muscular system. However, triathletes still suffer from a high degree of overuse injuries. One of the most common is actually lower back pain. Triathletes tend to be over-developed in larger muscle groups, such as the quadriceps, hamstrings, and shoulders. Triathletes tend to be weak in the smaller stability muscles, such as the lower back, core, adductors, and abductors. Again, these muscle imbalances are caused by movements that we do in each sport. For example, many triathletes, especially if they come from a cycling background, will be overdeveloped in the quadriceps region, but have these tiny, underactive hamstrings. This is a muscle imbalance caused by cycling. Runners are very weak in the hip stability muscles, such as the gluteus medius, tensor fascia latae (TFL), and adductor complex, which leads to weak lumbo-pelvic stability and the potential development of common running injuries. The sport of triathlon is conducted in one plane of motion – the sagittal plane. We rarely move in the frontal and transverse planes. Many of the hip stability muscles are targeted by movements conducted in the frontal and/or transverse planes.
Muscles can be divided into two types: postural and phasic. Postural muscles are used for standing and walking; whereas, phasic muscles are used for running. During the gait cycling of running, there is a double-float phase during which both legs are suspended in the air— one at the beginning and one at the end of the swing phase. Running biomechanics requires efficient firing patterns from the postural muscles while the phasic muscles do the actual work of propelling the body forward. Since the postural muscles are constantly activated in the body to fight the forces of gravity, these muscles have a tendency to shorten and become tight. The postural muscles that tend to become chronically tight in runners are: gastroc-soleus, rectus femoris, ilipsoas, tensor fascia lata, hamstrings, adductors, quadratus lumborum, piriformis, and satorius. Phasic muscles typically may remain in an elongated or weak state. Common phasic muscle that have a tendency to be weak or become inhibited in runners are: the tibialis anterior, vastus medialis, long thigh adductors, and the gluteus maximus, medius, and minimus.

So, key points from this post:

- Muscle imbalances are caused by the lack of the right combination of contraction and relaxation of paired muscles
- Common triathlon and running injuries are generally caused by muscle imbalances, mainly in the lumbo-pelvic region
- Postural muscles tend to become short and tight; whereas phasic muscles tend to become weak and inhibited
- Stretch your psoas muscles!

Now, how do you identify muscle imbalances? Well, I did a post a while ago on why functional movement screens are important. Go read that! Or go see a sports medicine professional, such as a chiropractor or physical therapist. This is especially important if you are dealing with a common running-related injury. Then find yourself a good personal trainer to help set you up on a good strengthening routine to correct those imbalances. Remember, I am certified to help you correct muscle imbalances. Of course, you should always seek permission from your doctor before starting any new exercise routines. Stay tuned next week on some good hip stretching and strengthening exercises to help you prevent those pesky running injuries.

- Happy Training!

PS – Feel free to contact me with any questions at katelyn@bigskymultisportcoaching.com

References

Yup, the Colombian bombshell was right – the hips don’t lie!

Argh! My IT-Band/knee issues have migrated back to my hips again. Last week I did have some success with my running. It was far from fast, but I was able to actually get my mileage in. Last Wednesday I had my long run – 90 minutes. I wasn’t sure if my knee would hold up for the entire time and when I mentioned it to my chiropractor she suggested to split my run in half. Run 45 minutes in the morning and the remaining 45 minutes in the evening. Brilliant! I had considered running what I could outside on the pavement and then “running” the rest in the pool. The thought of splitting my run in half never even occurred to me. It makes complete sense though because you get your mileage in for the day but with a lot less fatigue and damage to the body. This is obviously very important for me at the moment due to my injury.

Yesterday at the chiropractor I asked my chiropractor what is causing all my hip issues. I had a good feeling what the root cause was but I wanted her to confirm my suspicions. The perpetrator – muscle imbalances. Just as I had predicted. Unfortunately I had the imbalances for a long time. As a Freshmen in high school I had major patellofemoral pain syndrome caused by, you guessed it – muscle imbalances. My entire swim season was ruined because of my knee problems. Months of bi-weekly physical therapy “fixed” my problems and my hips were good for a long time. However, over the past couple of years focusing on long-course triathlons, my body, more specifically my hips, have taken a massive beating by the same repetitive motions leading to the overuse injuries that I have been battling with – plantar fasciitis, IT-Band issues, and piriformis syndrome.

Over the past year I have spent a lot of time learning about the human body and movement. Working in the fitness industry as a personal trainer and coach requires me to understand the fundamental elements of human movement. Through my own research and education I have begun to understand what my own body is doing during movement and where my body is compensating because of my muscle imbalances. To be completely honest, I have known about my issues for a while now, but haven’t really focused a ton of time fixing the issue. That small crack in my foundation has now caused a major rift in my foundation causing my whole house to shift. Yikes!

So what are muscle imbalances? I plan to have a post dedicated more to this topic later this week, but I’ll give you a little tease right now. Muscle imbalance occurs when muscles lack normal muscle activity – a combination of contraction and relaxation. Triathletes tend to become overdeveloped in larger muscle groups, such as the quadriceps, hamstrings, and shoulders and weak in the smaller stability muscles in the lower back, core, adductors, and abductors. Imbalances may lead to injuries, biomechanical inefficiencies, and wasted efforts.

So yeah… muscle imbalance are not fun. Just about every athlete, especially triathletes, have some degree of muscle imbalance. All my clients have some sort of muscle imbalances too because of their lifestyles, ie. home or work environment. Luckily, muscle imbalance can be corrected relatively easy through corrective and strength exercises at the gym and/or home. We’ll discuss this later.

My little word of advice – “pre-hab” is way better than rehab so don’t forget to do your core and hip strengthening work folks!
There’s no denying it, but I LOVE to read. My bookshelf is overflowing with books. Most I’ve read, but some I have not (yet). I have a bad habit of starting a book, but when a new, more interesting book is released then I jump ship and begin the new one. So I have a huge stack of half-read books sitting on my table next to my bed just begging me to finish their half-read stories.

I’ve decided I’m growing to tackle that ever-growing book stack, mostly because I’m afraid it may tumble over on me while I’m sleeping. Somehow death by book does not sounds like a fun way to go. So without further ado here is my summer reading list…

**Summer 2013 Reading List**

1. *The Time Between* by Karen White – I actually finished this book late last night. I read the entire book within 24 hours and it was just released this past week. I discovered Karen White a couple of years ago randomly at Borders. Her book *The Lost Hours* caught my attention because it was about horses. Anything about horses tends to get my attention. I purchased it, read it, and fell in love with her writing style. She is a Southern writer and writes about the South. I’ll be honest, I’ve always thought that I should have been a Southern girl. There is something about Charleston, South Carolina that just appeals to me. I’ve ever been there, but hopefully I’ll make the trip there soon. White’s stories are easy to read and fun. A perfect beach read in my opinion.

2. *The Color of Light* by Karen White – I just picked this up this week too because I haven’t read this one by White yet. By time this blog post posts on Monday I will probably have finished this book too. Love her writing!

3. *The Big Book of Endurance Training and Racing* by Dr. Philip Maffetone – I started this book this past week but got interrupted by Karen White’s new book and thus put this book on hiatus momentarily. Maffetone is an internationally recognized researcher, clinician, coach, and author in the fields of endurance training, nutrition, and biofeedback. He was six-time Ironman winner Mark Allen’s coach for a long time. I’m interested in his philosophy of training and I plan on implementing some of his theories in my own training this coming Fall.
What are you reading? Any good recommendations for summer reading?

~ Happy Training!
Follow me on Bloglovin!
Posted on June 8, 2013 by kmichaud87

I've been using both Blogger and WordPress to follow some of my favorite blogs, but occasionally I miss some posts from my favorites, which makes me a sad panda. I recently found out about Bloglovin and I really love the platform. Thus I will be following my favorite blogs through their reader platform and you can follow my blog there too!

Follow my blog with Bloglovin

~ Happy Training!

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USAT Triathlon Coaching Level I Clinic
Posted on May 30, 2013 by kmichaud87

Ok, so this post is a little late. Like 6 weeks late. But, on the good news... I'm officially a certified USAT Level I Triathlon Coach! Yay!

Back in April Jen and I took a road trip down to Short Hills, New Jersey for the two-day clinic. I'll be completely honest, I was dreading the New Jersey location. I was thinking it was going to be in a super sketchy part of NJ and all the people living there were going to be right out of Jersey Shore. My worst nightmare! I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Short Hills is an absolutely gorgeous part of NJ! The streets were lined with sidewalks and trees. The houses were cute and nice. And holy heck the town was hilly! I always thought that NJ was pretty flat, but I guess not. Hence the town name of Short Hills. However, those hills were anything but short!

Day one of the clinic included lectures by all three of our presenters: Jesse Kropelnicki of QT2 Systems, John Petrush of Bay Shore Swim, and Shelly O’Brien of Icon One Multisport. The morning started off with two lectures on exercise physiology and nutrition by Jesse. I was super pumped when I first saw that Jesse was going to be a presenter at our clinic. He is one of the top coaches in the country and is someone who I highly look up too. I must admit that I was a wee bit disappointed with his lectures. Not because they were boring or

It's Official!
After lunch Joe came in and discussed strength training and cycling skills and training with us. Joe is from Long Island and was your stereotypical Long Islander. He was very interesting to listen to. He was funny, but also very opinionated. His lectures were good. However, I disagreed with him on his view of strength training. He told us up front that we were completely welcomed to disagree with him on the topic since strength training for triathletes is still a rather controversial topic. His view was that “if it ain’t broke than don’t fix it.” He generally prefers not doing traditional strength training with his athletes unless they are injured. His approach with strength training is to do it within the swim, bike, run realm. For example, run or bike hill repeats to build leg strength. I can see where he is coming from. I agree that some strength building within each discipline is important, such as running hill repeats. However, I believe that traditional strength training should be part of an triathlete (or any endurance athlete)’s training plan. I don’t mean they need to do traditional body building style training. That would actually not be a favorable way to train. Can you see Arnold doing an Ironman? That poor carbon fiber bike doesn’t have a chance…

I much prefer functional training with bodyweight and TRX. Anyway, now that I have left on my tangent I will get back on track! The last lecture of the day was on swim skills and training by Shelly. Shelly is an amazing person to listen to and just a wealth of information. She was by far my favorite person to listen to (which is a good thing because she did all the lectures on the second day). Shelly made each lecture more interactive, which was awesome because sitting in a chair for 10+ hours a day is not my thing. I couldn’t sit for much of the time and kept shifting about in my chair. Secretly, I think all that sitting played a role in my IT-band/Knee/Hip issues.

After the first day Jen and I headed back to our hotel. I headed out for a quick 50 minute run. It was a bit drizzly out, but quite humid. The main roads in the area were busy and we found out quickly that New Jersey drivers were crazy so I headed out to run around the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods were cute and situated on some massively steep hills. Holy cow was my pace slow, but it was fun to run, essentially, hill repeats. After my run we hit up the Cheesecake Factory. It was my first time! Yum yum yum! I had the salmon with mashed potatoes and asparagus. And of course, Jen and I split some Cheesecake, cause ya know it was my first time and all…
The second day was another very long day of sitting. On the second day we discussed running, sports psychology and mental training, and how to build training plans. Unfortunately, most of the time Shelly ran out of time during each lecture because she just had so much to tell us. She gave us a bunch of awesome drill ideas for running and swimming. Some of which I have been trying on my own since then and also have incorporated some of them into my own clients training plans.

Everyone at the clinic came from various backgrounds and reasons why they were attending. Some were already experienced coaches and some are complete newbies. We had a few sports doctors and physical therapists too. It was fun to talk to different people and hear their thoughts on the sport and training. USAT recently changed their criteria to get into the clinic. It used to be the first 40 people to register would get into the clinic. Now you have to apply. Over 70 people applied for our clinic and they accepted 40 of us. I’m glad I made the cut!

Here are some interesting tidbits I learned while at the clinic from the various presenters:

- There is generally a 4-16 beat difference in heart rate between running and biking (average is about 10 beats)
- It usually takes about 20-30 minutes for the heart rate to settle down after the swim
- Heart rate is important for training and power meters are important for racing
- Train movements not muscles (aka functional training!)
- When working with youth athletes (under age 10) work anaerobic first then aerobic capacity
- Develop speed and endurance together
- Develop various skill sets in each sport (i.e. drills)
- There is no such thing as a good bike and a bad run in triathlon, especially long course!

My favorite is the last bullet point. It is the one that I have been learning over the past year with my coach. If you go out too fast and hard on the bike and burn all your matches then your legs and body are toast for the run. Words of wisdom right there kids!
Holiday Weekend Wrap-up

The weather for the holiday weekend wasn’t the greatest in Maine, but it wasn’t as bad as it could have been. At least we didn’t get 3 feet of snow like Lake Placid! Saturday was a bit of a wash-out. However, I had an extremely productive day and got a lot of things checked off of my to-do list. Some of those things included changes to this website!

The biggest part of my Saturday was my first official run in the past couple of weeks. As I mentioned yesterday that I was able to run/walk 3.2 miles relatively pain-free. The first mile was good, but I got a few aches and pains afterwards that caused me to take walk breaks. But… it was a huge improvement from the past couple of weeks so I took it!

Sunday’s weather was much better. Very little rain so I hit the road for my 2:20 ride. It was definitely early spring riding weather. I had to break out the gloves, toe warmers, and knee warmers for the ride and my toes were still frozen when I got home. The skies were overcast and it sprinkled a bit. There was definitely a bit of a headwind, but nothing compared to Monday’s ride! I decided to take one of my normal routes, since I knew it would have me ending around the 2:30 mark. However, with the wind I was a bit slower than predicted. Oh well!

Some interesting things I saw on my ride:

1. A most likely drunk redneck attempting to burnout in his crappy truck in the middle of Route 25 and failing. His drunk redneck friends were in the front yard laughing at him.

2. I saw long-haired, long-horned cows in a pasture. They made me giggle.

3. I saw multiple dead snakes on the side of the road, including a giant water snake. I squealed every time I saw a dead snake even though I knew they were dead.

Monday’s weather was a thousand times better! Although I still wore knee warmers, arm warmers, and toe warmers. I was supposed to do a 4-hour ride on Saturday, but decided that there was no way I could sit my ass down for 4-hours on the trainer. Thus, I moved my long ride to Monday so I could ride outside. It was a good decision. Minus the hellish headwind. The wind was pretty nasty. There were
times when I was pushing a ton of watts and only moving about 10 miles per hour on the FLATS! It was mentally daunting at times and a few times I considered throwing in the towel. But, I kept moving forward.

I decided to ride up route 113 towards Fryeburg. My goal is to ride all the way to the New Hampshire border as my ride times progress over the next 6 weeks or so. The roads are pretty good for a majority of the way and the traffic is relatively low. The route is similar to Lake Placid although not as nearly as hilly. One of my coworkers lives in the area and told me about a really hilly route from Brownfield to Denmark that I can take to simulate some Lake Placid hills.

The ride went well. My Ironman fueling plan thus far is working well. I’ve been using Ironman Perform for my drink of choice because that’s what is served on the course. I’m not the biggest fan of it, but so far my tummy is handling it well. I’d rather not have to worry about carrying 10 bottles of fuel with me during the race. I was definitely well hydrated for this ride. I stopped twice to find a bush.

I felt good off the bike so I decided to attempt my 25 minute T-run. I was hesitant at first, but wanted to give it a go. Originally I planned just to do 10 minutes. However, my knee felt great. Or as good as off-the-bike run could be. I focused on keeping my strides short and quick. It worked because I had no knee pain! I continued for the full 25 minutes. It was no where a speedy run, but I was a happy girl!

Overall, a good long weekend of training! I got a good 100 miles in over a 24 hours period. My tushy is a bit sore now. Welcome to Ironman training!
IT-Band Updates

I left off last time stating that I was going to do my first run in over 8 days. It went okay. I made it a mile relatively pain-free and then the pain started in during the second mile. That Saturday I had a client early in the morning and then headed out for my 2 hour ride. I attempted my 15 minute t-run, but made it about a minute before the pain set in and this time it set in with a vengeance. My biotech job and my gym are right across the street from each other so I had purposely brought my keys with me to stop into the lab to grab ice. On my return to the gym both my bosses were in their office looking at each other and then at me. As I approached them, one of them asked the other who was going to spank me. I then succeeded to get a lecture on how I shouldn’t run on an injured knee. Opps! I guess at 26 years old “mom and dad” will still spank me for misbehaving. Yikes!

Later that day I also got a Restore massage at Athlete’s Touch. The massage was focused primarily on my IT-band, Quads, and hip region. The therapist told me that my knee region and hip region were quite inflamed. I could definitely tell that my knee was. It was a bit swollen and sore. I had removed all my KT tape a few days prior because it was irritating my skin and I think it was irritating my knee too.

Anyway, fast forward to this week. I saw my chiropractor on Wednesday and reported back to her my failed attempt at running. She did some massage and stretching work on my knee region. She’s beginning to think that my IT-band is probably okay. We both agree that it is part of the issue, but the real issue is my quad muscles are overactive and causing all the problems. Of course, the root cause of all my issues is my right hip. Every time I go in to see her my pelvis is always twisted.

The past couple of weeks I have hit the gym hard with some rehab exercises to strengthen my hips. Lots of clam shells, lateral legs raises, mini-band work, and donkey kicks. I’ve started to slowly add in some hamstring curls and wide-stance squats to strengthen my hamstrings and adductors.

I’ve spent a lot of time icing, heating, and also self-grastoning my quads and IT-band. It’s been great fun. My boss asked me the other day
why I was “scraping” my quad muscle with Biofreeze and the handle of a butter knife. I love Graston! At least I have the proof to show my chiropractor that I listened to her advice – a few lovely bruises.

Saturday afternoon the nor’easter rain decided to take an afternoon siesta so I decided to test my knee out. I laced up my new Mizunos and hit the flat, paved trail behind my house. I walked down the giant hill to the trail and then succeeded to run. The first mile wasn’t bad. There was a little soreness, but no sharp pain like previously. I kept going. Soon enough the pain started to ease back into my knee. When it got bad I just walked. When I felt okay again then I jogged. I did this for 3.2 miles. My running was super slow. I’m pretty sure the turtle I saw crossing the trail was moving faster than I was, but I was running. And running relatively with no pain. Now that’s improvement and I will take it.

Yesterday after my 4 hour ride I decided to try out my legs by attempting my 25 minute T-run. I took my time transitioning from bike to run clothes. I started out slow and took short strides. I wore my IT-band strap this time too. Guess what? I actually ran pain-free!! Initially I was just going to try for 10-15 minutes, but I felt good and I continued the full 25 minutes. Granted it was extremely slow, but running pain-free was a blessing. I’m hoping that I am on the tail-end of this injury mishap and I’ll be back into the full swing of training ASAP. I will still continue with my icing, heating, and self-grastoning in hopes that I won’t relapse!

In other news, Ironman Lake Placid is exactly 2 months from today and they got 3 feet of snow this weekend! Seriously, what the heck Mother Nature?!

~ Happy Training!

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Lot’s of icing!

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IT-Band Woes

Posted on May 17, 2013 by kmichaud87
I spent the last 8 days swimming, biking, and doing core work. No running. Why? Stupid and annoying knee pain. I mentioned a couple weeks ago that I had developed knee pain in my right knee making running a very unpleasant chore. I managed to compete in my first tri of the season and actually place well, but not without facing the consequences afterwards. Perhaps I should have DNF? Nah....

After the PolarBear I had a 60 minute endurance run in my training plan for that Wednesday. I was feeling pretty good and really wanted a good run. I haven't had a good run in a while. The weather was beautiful out and I was pumped. I laced up my shoes, turned on the Garmin and did my dynamic warm-up while my watch was searching for the satellites. I swear my watch takes forever to find the satellites. Then it was off. My house is situated on a hill. Either way I have to ride or run down before I hit any flat-ish pavement. I took the hill easy because I knew it would irritate my quad. The hill went okay. About two minutes into the run the sharp nagging pain returned on the bottom outside of my knee rendering me to my little hobble/jump run gait. It's quite the sight to see I'm sure.

I stopped, stretched (maybe prayed a little) and then began again. I managed to jog very slowly for 10 minutes but still had that nagging pain. After about a mile I knew I needed to stop. The pain intensified leaving me in tears. I turned around and hobbled/walked myself back home crying. Yes, I fully admit that I cried. After my 18 minute mile home I sat myself down in the chair with an ice pack and my laptop. I succeeded to email my coach (while crying of course) letting her know that I could not run and I had no clue how the heck I was suppose to do an Ironman in 10 weeks! Perhaps I was being a bit dramatic, but I was very frustrated.

Not being able to run while training for an Ironman is not good. Normally I would be the idiot and try to run through all the pain. However, the past couple of years I really have learned the value of rest and listening to my body. My body was telling me to stop running and figure out what the root cause of my knee pain was. Mary quickly replied to me to tell me that I would take a full week off from running and let my knee heal. We would see how it feels the following week and slowly build my miles back up. I still have plenty of time till Lake Placid.

I saw my chiropractor again on Monday and we both agree that my knee pain is being primarily caused by my IT-band. My quad muscles are also suspect in the situation too. Along with that pesky little piriformis muscle that I strongly dislike. We’ve been taping my knee and IT-band with kinesiology tape for the past three weeks. It seems to be helping. I’ve been very religious about icing and rolling out with my foam roller, stick, and lacrosse ball. That has seemed to help a great deal too.
I think the most important aspect of healing my IT-band is rest. I’ve done some research online and most sports medicine professionals recommend anywhere from 3-10 days of rest from the problematic activity (i.e. running in my case). I’m lucky that swimming and cycling doesn’t bother my knee and/or quad and IT-Band. Tonight is going to be my first night running again. Just an easy 30 minute run. If the knee bothers me then I will stop and continue to rest again. When dealing with injuries you have to be smart. I’m going to be smart this time. Let it heal and then strengthen it. I’ve been discussing with my boss at the gym the ideal strength/rehabbing plan for my IT-band to ensure going forward I don’t have chronic issues with it. Hopefully I’m on the road to recovery!

Here’s to hoping my run goes well!

Anyone have any advice on treating IT-band issues? What’s your worst sports-related injury?

~ Happy Training!

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Sweet Taping Job

My weekend started Friday evening with the annual Girls and Gears Event at Gorham Bike and Ski. I arrived just as they were doing the fashion show of cycling clothes. It involved the models throwing out freebies to the crowd. It was a bit scary at times. Boxes of water bottles were being thrown into groups of women. I almost got smacked in the face once. The tire changing contest on the other hand was amusing. 😊
Anyway, I chatted with a bunch of friends and succeeded to purchase more Hammer gels. Seriously, my budget for sports fuel is probably about the same as my grocery bill each week. #IronmanAthleteProblems

Saturday was an early morning with a couple of clients. It was a rainy day so I didn’t mind hanging out at the gym for a while. I was tired when I finally arrived home and took a long nap. I guess all the rain made me tired. Not to mention all the job applications I have been filling out lately…. 

Later in the evening I hopped on the trainer for 1:30 ride. It was a long and sweaty ride but I was glad when it was over. Tempo work can be hard. 🙁

Sunday was another rainy morning. While I was eating my breakfast the skies opened up and down-poured. At this point I was pretty convinced that my 3:30 hour-long ride was going to be on the trainer again. Great. I postponed my ride until later in the day hoping that the weather might change. The skies were iffy so I started in on a long trainer ride. I managed to get sucked into a movie on Showtime called The Innkeepers. It really wasn’t that great but I couldn’t stop watching…

I had pedaled my way about 30 minutes into my workout when the sun broke through the clouds and appeared to be staying out. Yay! Sun! So I hopped off the trainer after 45 minutes, quickly changed and hit the open road. I honestly wasn’t 100% sure what direction I was going to head out towards. I knew my first destination was going to be the cemetery to stop by my Mother’s grave. I spent a few minutes there and then headed out towards Scarborough. My initial intention was to hit up Mitchell Hill Road for some hill training, but then changed my mind and headed out to Scarborough Beach and Old Orchard Beach. The weather was actually beautiful. 70s, sunny, with a bit of a head wind.
The beach was nice. I usually don’t ride this route often because summertime is not the time to ride out towards Old Orchard. Too many stupid people in cars and people walking right out in front of you. I prefer the skin on my body and not on the road if you get my drift. Finally I was on my way home. Overall I got in about 56+ miles in today. Couldn’t have asked for a better day. Happy Mother’s Day to all the wonderful mothers and mothers-to-be! 😊

- Happy Training!
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