



## 7 great ways to diversify your training routine

By Calvin Zaryski

As an endurance racer for more than 30 years, I know keeping the motivation from season to season can be challenging. Even as a triathlete, the same old swimming, biking and running gets stale. Here are a few activities that can recharge your batteries and add some much-needed diversity to your training patterns. Changing your routine can build new motor skills and strengthen your mental toughness and satisfaction as an athlete.

When you choose to diversify your training, start slow, seek professional guidance and keep it fun. My aim this year is to try fun events such as obstacle runs and cyclocross and to dabble in group circuit training. It's going to be a good year.

### **Orienteering**

Trail running with a twist offers so many benefits. Humans naturally connect well with nature and silence.

Add in some map reading and cerebral effort and you have a winner. Variable terrain offers amazing fitness benefits, great agility and coordination with total mental focus on being in the moment. Ankle, knee and hip strength will benefit without the impact forces present in road running. Throw in some friendly competition and pressure and you have a great sport.

### **Golf**

Golf is not for everyone, but it does get you to slow down, walk a ton and learn the mental game of skill and consistency. Often nine holes are enough, but make sure you avoid the snack bar and liquor shack. Take caution not to over-swing or become too concerned about shot distance, but rather relax on each shot minimizing any potential torsion injuries. One great shot per hole is a huge success and you will find enjoyment. Take to the driving range for lessons and learning but only hit a small bucket of balls to avoid unnecessary soreness.

### **High-Altitude Hiking**

Challenging your body in an environment that is 4,000 feet higher than your habitat is a great way to elicit massive cardio respiratory training. This type of activity also conditions the body to accommodate impact forces, particularly in the lower body. Add a heavy pack and ankle weights and you are in for a great non-competitive training session with moderate to high heart rates. Allow yourself to focus on time spent moving at altitude and vertical gain. Make sure you carry safety equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Take an experienced hiker or guide or complete a backcountry adventure course. You may even want to try a via ferrata, (see story on page 42.)

### **Tennis**

This racquet sport is a lifestyle activity that has many benefits for multisport athletes. With so much explosive change of direction and rotational movements, those small, and likely underdeveloped muscles get a great workout. But take it slow when starting out and try to convince your neighbour's son to be the ball boy. For fun, try playing every second set with your non-dominant arm and maybe avoid those overhead serves to ensure more rally play and fun.

### **Obstacle Course Racing**

By entering into these events that offer running through a course and completing obstacles, you may find yourself appreciating your overall run fitness, but also laughing at your agility and body strength. These events tend to ignite the fun in your racing and eliminate much of the pre-race anxiety. There is also usually a mud pit somewhere along the course and maybe even a fire log jump! (See mud run workouts on page 24.)

### **Group Conditioning Classes**

These sessions offer tons of body conditioning and coordination development outside of your regular motor patterns. However, make sure you do not overdo it! Most of us are highly competitive and often group leaders and peer pressure will push us to injury. These sessions should be attended once or twice a week, starting conservatively and learning proper technique. Training with a certified, well-educated and experienced instructor is a must. If done correctly, this newfound body fitness will be the secret weapon in your endurance race season.

### **Soccer**

Any sport that forces us to run fast on grass, run long and use both feet is a winner. The side-to-side change of direction develops many of our under-developed muscles. Often endurance teams will play some friendly soccer to warm up or develop cardiovascular fitness. Just don't overdo it on your first outing. Warm up and be cautious with all-out sprinting. Channel your inner World Cup star with Brazil 2014 in play this summer

and enjoy training with others.

*Calvin Zaryski is 2014 Triathlon Canada Head Coach for the ITU World Championships in Edmonton and a six-time World Triathlon Age Group Champion. Coach Cal is the endurance director at WinSport Canada Olympic Park.*

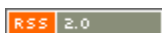


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