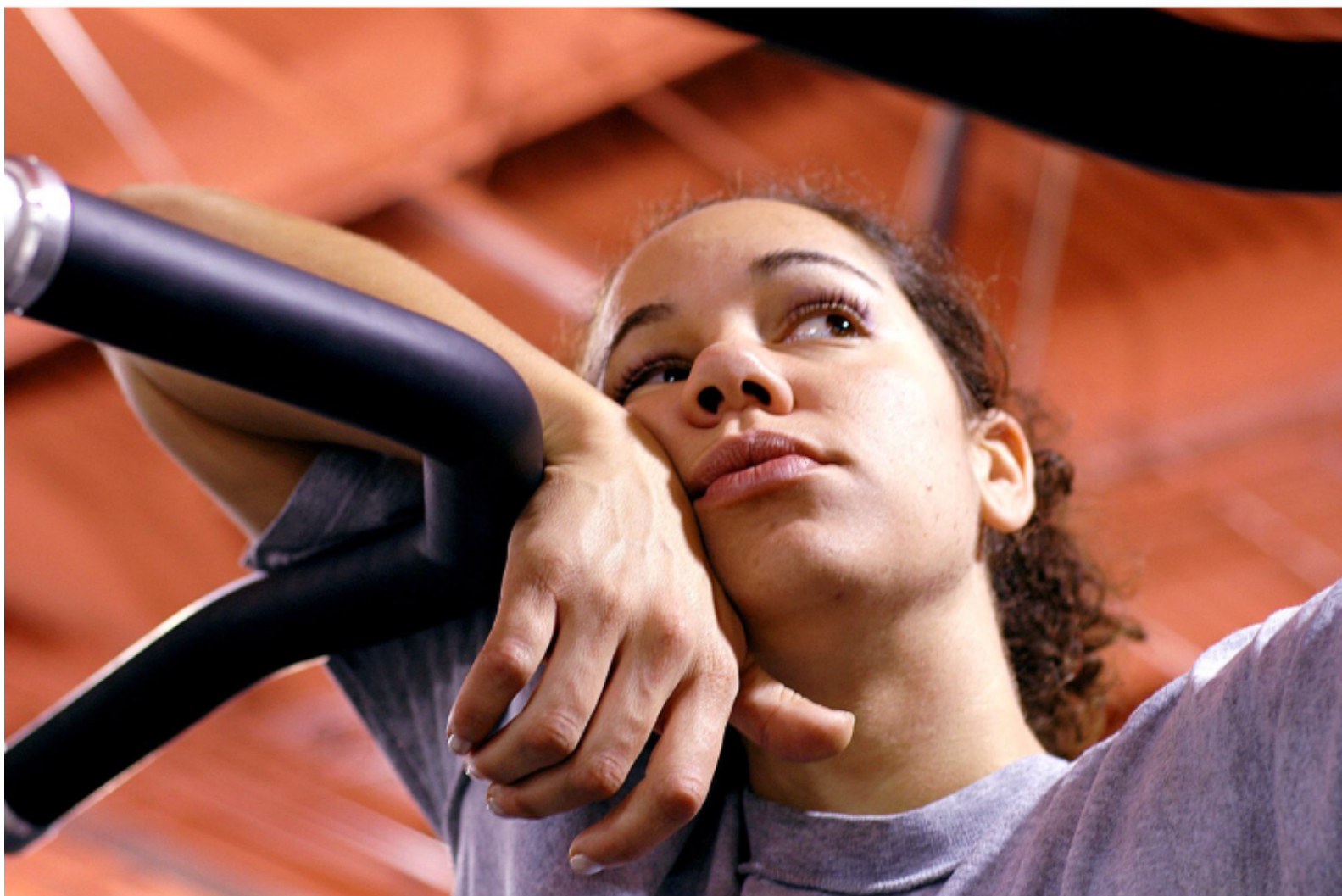




Winter Motivation

By Joan Scrivanich

Unmotivated. We've all been there at some point. The winter months can be a drag on triathlon training when you live in an area that's cold and icy. Combine that with shorter daylight hours and having your most important race of the season completed months ago, and it can be very difficult to find the motivation to get outside to workout, drive to the gym, or even get off the couch.

Psychologists define motivation as "the process of starting, directing, and maintaining physical and psychological activities". Various theories have been developed to help explain and understand motivation. They range from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which lists both biological and social needs in the order that the need is to be satisfied in our lives, to intrinsic motivation, which explains that behaviors are performed because they are personally rewarding.

Both motivation and the lack of motivation are complex subjects and the causes don't really fit nicely into one category and can even vary drastically from one person to the next. But even without knowing the reason for being unmotivated, there are things you can do to get through it and looking forward to training once again.

First, look back at the past year. If you've been training year round without a break or any off-season, you may just need some downtime. If this is the case, take a couple of

THE HEAD GAME

weeks off followed by a couple of weeks of unstructured training. Then use the next month or so to get back into training regularly.

This is a great time to participate in something other than your main sport, like snowboarding, surfing, or strength training. The mental and physical break from consistent training along with a change in the types of workouts you do will leave you refreshed.

If you've already had time off and are still having difficulty, then here are some things you can do that will help:

- Remind yourself you'll feel good once you start moving. Tell yourself that you're just going to exercise for 10 minutes and then see how you feel. Once you're warmed up, you'll more than likely want to keep going.
- Buy new exercise clothes or equipment. Whether it's a funky designed swim suit, a running jacket that will withstand a polar vortex, or the newest GPS and heart rate monitor, the excitement of testing out your new gear may just have you counting down the time you get to go outside or to the gym to test it out.
- Have a workout buddy or join a group. Even a virtual Facebook group could help give you the kick in the butt to get out the door.
- Find inspiration by reading blogs, listening to music, or reading a book.
- Hire a coach to do the planning for you and to hold you accountable.
- Sign up for a race so that you have a goal you're aiming for.
- Make your goal public, either by telling friends and family, posting it on Twitter, or blogging about it.
- If you're not motivated to swim, bike, or run, do anything to stay active & moving. Mix things up by trying and learning something new. Here are some options:
 - X-C skiing is an excellent complement to running because of its aerobic and endurance benefits.
 - Zumba isn't just an aerobics class; it's great for improving your mood. How can you not be happy when dancing?
 - Yoga is helpful in aiding flexibility and relaxation.
 - Pilates is excellent for improving core strength.
- Strength training should already be a supplement to your training, but is especially useful to focus on during the off-season. If there's a day you have no motivation to get out, it may seem more doable to do a 30 minute strength training session at home than leaving the house.
- And finally, give yourself some flexibility and try not to stress over your situation. Try your best to stay positive. You can do it!

ABOUT JOAN

Joan Scrivanich is a USA Triathlon and USA Track & Field Certified Coach as well as a Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist. She holds a Master Degree in Exercise Physiology from Columbia University and has been an endurance athlete for over 20 years. Find out more about Joan at www.RiseEndurance.com and follow Rise Endurance at www.twitter.com/RiseEndurance and www.facebook.com/RiseEndurance