

# Ironmania!!

The trend has finally hit New Zealand, Ironmania is here! After not selling out in 27 years Ironman Taupo has sold out in 13 days. An insurgence from across the ditch is partly the reason, but there are still more New Zealanders signed up than anyone ever before. So what does this mean? In another 27 years are we going to walk down the street and see every second person pushing a 4kg carbon bike, wearing a full body compression suit with an Ironman tattoo?

There are 1,500 lucky people out there sitting at home. Some of them will be old hats signing up for another year, but there are a growing number of first timers signing up every year. This year the first timers make up 31% of the field, that is 465 first timers! For a first timer the initial reaction after hearing the event had sold out would probably have been wow that was lucky! I nearly missed out. Then at some stage this month when training needs to be getting under way they will wake up one morning and think, OMG what have I done! Am I really going to do an Ironman? That is when a first timer really knows the journey to the finish line has begun...

If you are a first timer, then what do you need to be doing now to prepare for the big day? How can you make a difference right now to, 'how' and for some people 'if' you get to that finish line? Here is a check list for you to go though over in the next month. The thing these tasks have in common is that they are the what most people leave until the last 8 weeks!

## **Find a coach**

As a coach every year I have athletes ask for coaching with as little as 6 weeks to go.

This is a very hard position to be in to make a significant difference to an athletes performance. Normally when an athlete contacts a coach with 6 weeks to go it is because something is going wrong and in every case they say "I should have got in touch right at the beginning".

## **Get Authorisation**

This is probably the most critical component to your Ironman success. If you have not told your partner that you have entered yet, this is the time! Take them out to dinner and break it to them gently. The support of your family and friends will be the make it or break it as the event draws closer. Involve these people in all the planing so they feel part of the journey right from the start not the opponent fighting for your time.

### **Plan your calendar from here to Ironman**

Plan your holidays, annual leave and anything else that takes up time or energy. You will need to be very organised. Plan ahead and make any changes you need to around the time your training will be at its most strenuous.

### **Get your bike set up**

Even if you do not have the bike you are going to use yet, get the one you are using now set up and prevent injury risk. There is never an ok time to train or even ride in a contraindicated bike position.

### **Do a system check**

See someone who can test your flexibility and strength and give you some pro active exercises to help prevent injury and improve general muscular conditioning. This is great for those winter days when it is pouring with rain, dark and you get home from work and just really "don't feel like it". Save that harden the up pill for later when you will needed it. Train indoors incorporating a strength and flexibility component to your session or have this as a session in itself.

### **Find a swim squad**

Swim squads often have waiting lists and are only on at certain times. Find one that will suit you later in the year and go on the waiting list (if that is what you need to do). Talk to the coach and let them know you are beginning training for Ironman so they are in the loop.

### **What now?**

Start as laid back as a palm tree on a beach. It is easy to forget the speed at which the body takes to adapt. Just because you are doing Ironman does not mean you have turned into one (yet). You do not need to do anything different to somebody training for a half marathon in 16 weeks time or a long bike ride. Put Ironman to one side and just look at the current phase of training you have planned out with your coach and do not worry about anything else!

Nearly every third person you see at Ironman will be a first timer. If you are one of those people you are about to take on a huge challenge, but you are not alone. There are 465 of you, enjoy the journey!

Silas Cullen is the founder of "Smart Coaching Limited" the coaching system designed to enable maximum performance improvement for time spent training. Silas has a proven track record of giving anyone with the desire, the tools to improve without limits. For all enquiries please email [info@smartcoaching.org](mailto:info@smartcoaching.org) or visit [www.smartcoaching.org](http://www.smartcoaching.org) We look forward to hearing from you!