

Recovery time critical after endurance event

By Amanda MacMillan, Outside

Hal Koerner, one of ultrarunning's best, once shared with us what University of Oregon track coach Bob Bowerman told athletes after a big win: "The next day, you just start again. Nobody cares what you did the day before." Certainly motivational stuff, but don't take it too literally.

Definitely take some time off, especially if this is your first ultramarathon, Ironman, or other type of extreme race. Your body needs time to recover, say the coaches we spoke with—but just as importantly, so does your mind.

"Physically we are seeking recovery on two levels—superficial soreness and deeper-level hormonal recovery," says Duncan Callahan, an Altra Running elite athlete and official coach for this year's Leadville Trail 100 (a race he's won twice). "Training for and competing in extreme long distance events is not normal and not very healthy either, and I encourage folks to look at the long term when it comes to their training and racing."

Callahan recommends his 100-mile racers take four to seven days off completely from running and training, but not from physical activity altogether; he does suggest easy cycling (think biking to the store), walking (not extreme hiking), and floating, swimming, or jogging in the water. "I encourage folks to do what they can to promote movement in a gentle fashion," he says. "This will help with circulation, blood sugar control, and any mental anxiety from taking time off from training."

After this first few recovery days, he allows his clients to resume light jogging, but no more than every other day for 15

to 45 minutes. If you have another immediate goal on your calendar, he says, you can start training again at about the two-week mark, once you're feeling 100 percent again.

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