


YOUR TRAINING ZONE

Endurance Sports Performance

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Lactic acid is a natural byproduct of metabolism. During exercise, the harder we workout, the more lactic acid our body produces. At lower intensities, our body is easily able to clear the lactic acid from our blood (aerobic exercise). As intensity increases, the blood lactate levels begin to increase. Eventually a point is reached where the lactic acid being produced and the lactic acid being disposed of by our body are equal. This point is called the Lactic Threshold.

TRAINING ZONES

Recovery-This is a low intensity workout that allows our body to rejuvenate following higher intensity workouts or periods of difficult workouts. The intensity of this workout is usually at the lower end of Zone 1.

Zone 1-(aerobic endurance) Zone 1 workouts are the foundation for endurance athletes. In this zone, endurance is developed and maintained. The intensity of Zone 1 training is often described as conversation. These workouts are usually measured in hours, and lactate production is low enough to allow the athlete to remain comfortable slightly beyond their endurance base.

Zone 2-(intensive endurance) Zone 2 is where lactate begins to accumulate in the blood. It is also known as the gray zone because it is neither aerobic nor anaerobic. The intensity of zone 2 workouts is too hard for an athlete to build aerobic endurance and too easy to for threshold training. Athletes that spend the majority of their training time in Zone 2 plateau in their athletic development. Zone 2 workouts are used during the prep or competition portion of the training season.

Zone 3-(Lactate Threshold) this is the second most important training zone for the endurance athlete. Lactate threshold training helps the athlete build tolerance to higher levels of lactic acid, develops the body's ability to remove and process lactic acid, and aids in converting fast-twitch muscle fiber to slow twitch characteristics.

Zone 4-(Anaerobic Endurance) Zone 4 workouts stimulate the growth and development of the fast-twitch muscle fibers, while stressing the body's ability to tolerate and process lactic acid. Zone 4 workouts require extended recovery time, and should be limited in volume because they can lead to overtraining and injury.

Zone 5-(Power) Zone 5 workouts have limited value for most endurance athletes. The exception to this rule is those athletes that lack the development of muscle mass or fast-twitch muscle recruitment for speed. Power workouts require maximal effort for several seconds followed by long recovery periods.

To properly and accurately identify your training zones a lactate blood profile test is performed. It consists of a gradual exercise test, initially starting easy and progressing to hard. Each stage is interrupted by a small finger tip blood sample drawn under the direction of a physician.

The information obtained from the lactate profile evaluation gives an individual their own unique zones based on pace and HR. The zones can then be used to develop your training program either by yourself or a coach of your choosing. For more information contact us at yourtrainingzone.com.

This is an example of the type of improvement you can expect when training with an experienced coach. This athlete is ready to start race specific training for an upcoming marathon.

