

Noble athletes like to get sweaty

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I began writing this column five miles into a 16-mile bike ride on my weekly bike-run triathlon "brick" session about 7 a.m. Thursday.



Triathletes term putting two segments together simultaneously a brick. After I finished my bike ride, I ran 3.4 miles.

I was headed north on CR 224-A into a 25 mph wind pedaling hard to maintain 10 mph. On the way out south, I cruised between 18 and 20 mph.

Last Saturday, I fought a 35 mph wind and weathered a hard rain with the drops pelting my skin and falling on my helmet like hail on a tin roof.

Motorists who saw me probably thought either, "Man, he's dedicated," or "Man's he's stupid."

So am I dedicated or stupid?

Neither. I'm disciplined.

What distinguishes the successful marathoner or triathlete or 5K runner from the wannabe is discipline. To develop discipline and commitment to running or any sport, remember the acronym **SWEAT IS NOBLE**.

First **SET** goals, whether those goals be running or walking a 5K, finishing the grueling 26.2 miles of a marathon or taking on the triathlon challenge.

Second, **WORK** out a weekly schedule. Your peers who have a successful exercise regimen can help you, you can get a coach or you can find a reasonable schedule in numerous books or magazines and on the Internet.

Third, **EVALUATE** your time and limitations. If you are working 60 hours a week, and have a family to care for, you won't have time to train for a marathon, so settle for walking or running a 5K. If you are a genetically challenged, mediocre athlete like me, settle for finishing a 5K less than 30 minutes or just finishing a triathlon or a marathon.

ADJUST for contingencies or emergencies. If you must travel, carry your running gear with you. If you have a meeting scheduled at the last minute, work out at noon or when you get home.

TAKE time off only for personal emergencies.

INFORM others of your commitment. Let your boss, significant other, spouse and family know your goals and the importance of maintaining your schedule and regimen. Most likely,

you will gain their support and admiration for your efforts.

SEEK the company of others. Join the running club or running groups. Belonging to a club or a group reinforces your commitment, and belonging to a group will get you on the road when you know others are expecting you to show up.

NEVER make excuses. When I woke up Tuesday, my back was so stiff I could hardly walk. I went out and ran six miles and felt 100 percent better. We all have our aches and pains, particularly as we age. Inclement weather is no excuse to skip a workout. Some runners stick their head out the door and see rain and skip their runs. I run no matter the weather, with the exception of severe lightning. I ran in our rare Christmas snow in 2004.

However, don't **OVERDO** it. Know the difference between pain and an injury. Pain and discomfort usually go away with the workout; an injury should be diagnosed and treated by a professional.

BE flexible. Many times I have been on the street at 4:30 a.m. to adjust to a full work day. Switch to a Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday schedule if Monday-Wednesday-Friday doesn't work.

LOG your workouts. An exercise or running log gives you a sense of accomplishment and shows your progress.

EVALUATE your progress toward your goals and revise your schedule or goals accordingly. Be realistic and accept who you are and what you can reasonably and physically do.

SWEAT IS NOBLE! Hit the road and build fitness and character.

Bill Shaw's running column appears every other Monday in *The Facts*.