



INVEST IN YOUR GOALS!

I'M SICK. NOW WHAT SHOULD I DO?

BY SCOTT SAIFER

Introduction

It's normal for bike racers to get sick with a cold or flu once or twice per year, just like anybody else. How you deal with being sick will determine whether an illness ruins your season or just keeps you off the bike for a few days. The most important thing to recognize when you are ill is that the highest priority should be given to getting well again quickly, not to sticking to your training plan. Training too much while you are ill will make you stay ill or perhaps get worse. It is far better to miss a few days of training voluntarily than a few weeks due to a more serious illness. The questions always are how much to back off, for how long and how to come back to full training. The answers to all these questions depend on how sick you are.

How sick are you?

Illnesses basically divide into two categories as far as training is concerned. Do you have a little snuffle, or something worse? If you have a little snuffle, you can continue to do recovery pace rides up to half the length of your longest recent training rides. You can continue to lift weights provided that you quit and go home if you start to feel worse. If you have a snuffle, continue the lighter workouts until you feel well and then for one more day. Then return to your normal training.

How long to take off?

If you have chest congestion, fever, body aches, deep fatigue or nausea, you are too sick to train. Do not ride or lift while you have these symptoms. Start to train again when you feel close to fully recovered. If you feel sick for a day or two, take a day or two off. If you feel sick for a week, take a week off. If you feel sick for a full week, it is time to consult a doctor.

How to come back?

If you miss one to three days of training, just take one more easy day and then rejoin the schedule. An easy day is done low in your endurance zone for not more than half of the time of your longest recent ride. If you feel weak on the easy day, take another easy day. Continue taking easy days or days off until you have a really good day. Then, be sure to have four symptom-free days after an illness and before any hard training and six days before racing. If your schedule calls for hard training or racing in the first four days after you return from an illness, just do easy endurance rides instead. Don't try to make up the missing days. If you missed something important like a strength test, talk to your coach or mentor about how to reschedule.

If you miss four to seven days of training, you will need six days to return to full training. The first two days of training ride or lift, whichever is called for on your schedule. If you ride, do 1/4 the length of your longest recent ride and do it at a recovery pace. If you lift, do 1/2 your normal sets and 1/2 your normal weights. On days three and four of your return, if you ride do 1/2 your long ride at an endurance pace (dropping to recovery if you get tired). If you lift on days three and four do your normal weights but only half the normal sets. On days 5 and 6, you can do 3/4 your normal long ride at an endurance pace or your full normal lifting routine.

If you miss more than seven days of training, talk to your coach about how best to schedule your return. After a longer break it may be best to delay the remainder of your schedule or do some testing to see how much you have really lost.

Can I just take time off?

Absolutely. There is no rule that you have to train through the sniffles. If your body is tired, your motivation is low, or your sickness is just getting you down, take some time off. Your coach or mentor can help you work through your illness together, working out the best way to return to training.



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When is it okay to Race again?

Don't race until you've had six totally symptom-free days, and don't be surprised if you are a bit weak the first time racing.

When will I be strong again?

It is our experience that after even a mild cold athletes are not able to race or train at their best for at least two and often as much as three weeks. After an illness don't be discouraged if you cannot race well immediately after your symptoms clear up.

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for all levels of endurance athletes.**

**Please contact 503-233-4346 or info@wenzelcoaching.com
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