

Doc Talk

Triathletes are Doing it Under Pressure

By John Gleddie

(Our medical director, Dr. Mark Poray, graciously gave up his column space this month so John Gleddie could tell us a about a new training tool used by some of the world's top triathletes — another new aspect to this great sport of ours!)

It has long been the athlete and coaches challenge to determine not only when to train? But also, how hard to train? The major decision making factor is **RECOVERY FROM THE PREVIOUS TRAINING SESSION**. Fatigue has been said "to make a coward of us all" but it also makes many of us injured or achieve poor training gains from working too hard before complete recovery has been achieved.

The term "FATIGUE HANGOVER" refers to the state many athletes find themselves in when the training load is too great or the recovery cycle is too short. The art of training then becomes the critical application of workload at the peak of recovery. Most amateur and some professional athletes fail to recognize the critical importance of recovery to their training regime.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Chambers have been in existence for more than 30 years, and have been used as a training tool by some of the world's best athletes. Until the mid 1980's most of these chambers were located in the Soviet Union and it has only been recently that we in North America have recognized the tremendous benefits that can be realized using hyperbaria.

Hyperbaric Chambers deliver oxygen into body fluids at a concentration greater than can be achieved by respiration (hyperoxia). Researchers have found that athletes when exposed to the increased oxygen environment recover 30-40% faster. This applies for injuries as well as training fatigue. As a result, many professional sports teams employ Hyperbaric Chambers.

To perform at your best level, today's athlete has to take advantage of every legal edge. **RECOVERY IS THE KEY**. Hyperbaria is known to increase stamina and endurance by faster recovery through lowering resting heart rate and blood pressure. Furthermore, it decreases healing time for injuries, increases tissue oxygen level, helps reduce lactic acid, scavenges free radicals, and helps to improve psychological attitude to physical activity. This treatment will not make you stronger or faster, but it will allow you to train harder and avoid over use injuries.

Can oxygen heal? You bet it can, and it has been used to achieve super performances. During a typical session an athletes lays in a chamber for approximately one hour under increased oxygen pressure. During this time, resting heart rate drops, indicating an increased relaxed state that enhances recovery. At peak training period an athlete may use the chamber 3-4 times per week. The treatments are safe an there are no negative side effects.

Dr. Gleddie is a Doctor of Chiropractic who has worked with elite and professional athletes for over 20 years. He is in private practice in St. Catherines, Ontario. His wife Martha is a regular participant in the President's Choice duathlon series.