



This newsletter is brought to you by windy weather, sourdough pizza, and examining growth.design case studies. If you enjoy it, I'd be grateful if you could share with one or two others!

Comparison

I've been thinking about this a bit, as the media pits elites against world records and Strava convinces me to compare myself this week to myself last week. I've decided comparison can fit into categories as do goals: outcome-based and process-based.

Outcome comparisons: Time to repeat the segment you ran last week. The same race that you did 5 years ago. Ranks reported as overall, gender, age group.

Process comparisons: More empty gel wrappers. More empty bottles. More time spent running vs hiking. Fewer GI issues. Better time management. More hellos. More self-belief.



Comparison is all around us. Some would say it's a bad thing. I'd say it depends, as with most things. Take the positives. Strive for outcome goals but know they aren't everything. Don't judge mistakes. Learn and iterate on the process. Try for better execution next time. The outcome does not reflect on you as a person. You're amazing as you are, without any changes :)

Coaching snapshot: menstrual cycle and training!

"How do you manage the physical and psychological symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) as they relate to training? Should you actually adjust training on those days? Are there any warning signs of larger issues to look out for? Sometimes I feel just so tired and like my legs are made of lead."

I almost didn't answer a female athlete-specific question on here because my audience is not all female athletes. However, there are takeaways from this discussion that I think are relevant for all athletes. Also it's great to just be informed on the various experiences of people you inhabit the world with.

Note: I'm referring to a natural menstrual cycle, one that is driven by innate hormonal changes rather than as a result of birth control. Some of the physical and psychological symptoms athletes could be experiencing, particularly in the luteal phase (right before menstruation, when progesterone levels are high) and the first day or two of the period include: increased fatigue, self-doubt, back pain, nausea, bloat, breathing rate, body temperature, cramps; decreased motivation, focus, sleep. I'd say that tiredness and heavy legs are within expected symptoms, as long as they resolve with adequate rest. Things that could indicate the need for further evaluation: fatigue that does not improve within a few days (could for example and commonly be a sign of anemia); abnormally heavy or painful bleeding; irregular or lack of periods.



This is a photo of triathlete Emma Pallant-Browne bleeding through her suit during the run section of the 2023 PTO European Open. Her response to this comment was, "to edit it means there is something wrong with it" when it's a major marker of female health and a reminder of performing on a tough day.

It's hard to give blanket advice on how to manage training in relation to symptoms because it really is very individual-specific, and even within an individual symptoms can vary month to month. There is very little evidence on this topic, and much of it is low-quality (e.g. small sample size, improper measurements of cycle phases). That being said, overall there has been no indication that, on a population level, menstrual cycle phase affects [endurance](#), [power](#), or [muscle growth](#). The problem with small sample sizes is that overall there may be no conclusive differences, but at an individual level there might be. If you know that there are certain days you'll want to be easier or rest, you definitely can schedule the rest of your training around that. On the other hand, maybe give yourself the chance to do an interval session or even race when you feel crappy. Control what you can -- sleep, hydrate, fuel well for it. It could be an opportunity for you to explore what you can do on a tough day!

Reply to this newsletter or [email me](#) with questions, and I'll answer one in a few weeks!

Let your friends know that I'm taking more athletes! Send them to my [website](#) to submit an inquiry or just pass along my email. Thank you so much!

Chocolate cookies!

In [last week's newsletter](#) I shared my chocolate protein cookie recipe. This week I have a regular old chocolate cookie one. Both only require 1 egg!

Ingredients: 8 tbsp butter, 300g sugar, 9 oz chocolate, 60g milk, 1 tbsp water, 1 egg, 240g flour, 60g oat flour, ½ tsp baking soda, dash salt, additional chocolate chips (I like white).

Melt half the butter with the chocolate and water. Mix together the remaining butter and sugar. Add in the melted chocolate. Mix in the egg. Mix in the milk. Mix in the flours, baking soda, and salt. Finally, mix in the chocolate chips. Bake at 350°F for about 15 minutes. Enjoy warm and melty!



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Hi from Ramona!

A reminder to fuel your training with cake, The Feed orders/gels, and burritos. Sending more snuggles and purrs this week!

