



This newsletter is brought to you by longer days, longer dinners, and longer swims. If you enjoy it, I'd be grateful if you could share with one or two others!

## Bike races!

For men, the "Monuments of Cycling" are five one-day classic road races: Milano-Sanremo (late March), Tour de Flanders/Ronde van Vlaanderen (early April), Paris-Roubaix (mid-April), Liege-Bastogne-Leige (late April), and Il Lombardia (mid-October).

Their Grand Tour races are three multi-week stage races: Giro d'Italia (May), Tour de France (July), and Vuelta a España (August).

The women compete in four corresponding classic races, one of which was just restarted this year: Milano-Sanremo Donne (late March, this is the first time it's happened in 20 years), Tour de Flanders/Ronde van Vlaanderen Women (early April), Paris-Roubaix Femmes (mid-April, for just the 5th time this year), Liege-Bastogne-Leige (late April).

For women, the Grand Tour races are three multi-day stage races: La Vuelta España Femenina (early May), Giro d'Italia Women (mid-July), and Tour de France Femmes (late July).

I used to think bike racing was boring, but it's extremely strategic and extremely fun to watch (and broadcasters also make great highlights)! For example, check out the recent [men's](#) and [women's](#) Paris-Roubaix highlights!

## Coaching snapshot: the drive to breathe!

*I heard I should be breathing out of my nose while doing easy running. Is this right?*

Our drive to breathe mainly comes from the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) in our blood. There are chemical sensors in our brain that respond to changes in cerebrospinal fluid pH that occur when our blood CO2 concentration changes. Simply: when our CO2 levels are too high, our brain signals to the respiratory muscles (diaphragm and rib muscles) to work harder; in contrast, when CO2 levels are low, we breathe less.

When we exercise, our muscles use oxygen to produce energy, and CO2 is a by-product. The harder we exercise, the more CO2 we produce. The more CO2, the higher the drive to breathe. Trying to inhibit your breathing by using solely nose breathing, covering your face (unless used to warm air in cold weather), or trying to regulate your breath, will probably just make your muscles burn more due to more CO2 build-up and force you to slow down before you pass out. Open those orifices to exchange all the CO2 you can for yummy oxygen!

Outside of exercise, there is some evidence that deep, slow, tactical breathing (also known as diaphragmatic breathing) [can improve our relaxation](#) and therefore enhance recovery.

One 2023 randomized controlled [study](#) found that breath-work, especially cyclic sighing, which emphasizes prolonged exhalations, improves mood and relaxation even if done for just a few minutes. The main takeaway here is, breathe as much as you need while exercising; experiment with some breath-work outside of training!

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!**



## Unleavened banana bread!

Using matzo meal/flour instead of regular flour makes this loaf dense (don't expect it to rise much) and moist while preserving its great banana flavor. You can also make this after Passover with leftover matzo meal!

Ingredients: 2 tbsp oil, 80 grams sugar, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 4 browned bananas (medium-sized), 80 grams milk, 2 eggs, 180 grams almond flour, 180 grams matzo meal, chocolate chips (I like white and dark!).

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter a loaf pan. In a processor, whip the bananas and eggs. Transfer to a mixing bowl and stir in oil, sugar, milk, and vanilla. Then add almond flour and matzo meal. Fold in chocolate chips. Bake for ~1 hour, until the top is slightly browned and cracks (a skewer may not come out clean). Let cool before slicing or it will fall apart!



[Recipe!](#)

## Help me grow!

As a small business, I rely on word of mouth to grow. Please share my [website](#) (ssendurance.com), [Instagram](#) (@coach\_serena326), or [newsletters](#) with anyone and/or over social media! Reach out with any questions or comments by responding to this email. Thank you all!



## Hi from Ramona!

Reminder to keep growing! In whatever way that means to you :) Sending happy growing cat vibes!

