

## Why Train On Hills If I Am Going To Race a Flat Course? By Coach Daren

An athlete once asked me why, in January, I had them riding and running hill repeats if their goal race was the White Lake Half Iron in May. This was a good question, and it deserves a bit of discussion. Hill training isn't just to get us ready for racing on hills!

A season's training should progress from general to specific. The White Lake athlete will need to have 'muscular endurance' on race day – the ability to pedal and run at a fairly steady pace for a long time without fatiguing. If we go back to January this same athlete needs to take the strength and stability they developed in the weight room and at yoga classes in October, November, and December, and make it more sport-specific. Pedaling and running up hills is very much like doing a bunch of weighted lunges with the very specific muscles we will use on race day. General to specific is how we proceed.

The raw strength developed in the gym is now applied to specific movement patterns in cycling and running. Having the added resistance of gravity on hills encourages even more muscle development. It also increases the work bout duration from a few seconds in the gym to a few minutes out on a hill. We are now moving a lot closer to White Lake's needed muscular endurance time interval than when we were doing squats in back in November.

After a period of doing hill repeats the White Lake athlete's workouts would likely evolve into longer work bouts on flat courses. Again, we move from general to specific.

If your training plan includes some hill repeats early in the season...there may be a really good reason for them to be in the plan!

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