

TC COACHING · IRONMAN AND 70.3

MAKE YOUR IRONMAN / 70.3 OFF-SEASON COUNT

12 weeks of foundation before your race build. **Testing, routine, strength, recovery,** and what to do when life gets in the way.

BY TOM COLLINS · TC COACHING

INSIDE

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE

01	WHY THE OFF-SEASON MATTERS	03
02	WHAT THE OFF-SEASON IS FOR	05
03	START WITH TESTING	07
04	LOOK BACK BEFORE YOU PLAN	14
05	BUILDING THE ROUTINE	16
06	THE TRAINING WEEK	20
07	STRENGTH AND PLYOMETRICS	24
08	RECOVERY	27
09	NUTRITION AND BODY COMPOSITION	32
10	WHEN THE ROUTINE GETS KNOCKED	33
11	THE OFF-SEASON CURVEBALLS	37
12	THE OFF-SEASON MISTAKES I SEE MOST	38
13	WHAT 12 WEEKS LOOKS LIKE	40
14	FINISHING THE OFF-SEASON	43
15	NEXT STEP	45
A	APPENDIX: WORKSHEETS, RPE, TOOLS, GLOSSARY	46

Read it once, then keep it open.



CHAPTER 01

WHY THE OFF-SEASON MATTERS

THE SHORT VERSION

The races feel ages away. That's exactly why the off-season is where your season gets won or lost.

So, firstly... I get it. Your last race is behind you, the next one is months away, and a missed session doesn't seem to matter much. One week here, a skipped swim there. It all feels a long way from race day.

That's the trap. Because the races feel so far off, it's easy to treat this part of the year as time that doesn't count. It counts more than any other.

The whole season is set up in the off-season. The routine you build now, the strength you put on, the habits you practise and the gaps you close are what you carry into race season. You can't build them in May when the long sessions start stacking up.

In the last four years I've coached over 160 athletes 1:1, and the off-season is where I see the next season won or lost.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

"The race is ages away, so missing training won't matter."

The fix: treat these 12 weeks as the start of the season, not a gap before it. A missed week now is a week you don't get back.

PREPARATION WORK, NOT NUGATORY WORK

The work you do over the next 12 weeks is the foundation everything else stands on. So take it as seriously as you take race season. Not with more panic, not with more volume. Just as seriously.

And this is about more than the race. **Performance is the vehicle, lifestyle transformation is the outcome.** The routine, the strength and the habits you build now are what make you the athlete, and the person, you want to be next summer.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- Testing, and what your numbers mean
- Reviewing last season honestly
- Building a routine that works at home
- Shaping the training week
- Strength and plyometrics
- Recovery: sleep, water, steps, stress
- Nutrition and body composition
- What to do when the routine gets knocked
- Finishing the off-season ready

HOW TO USE IT

This guide gives you the knowledge. It doesn't hold anything back. Four pieces work together:

FREE

THIS GUIDE

The whole off-season: the thinking, the rules, the habits and the testing.

FREE

TOM'S FREE TOOLS

The numbers: your zones, your week and your recovery habits, done for you on tccoaching.co.uk.

$97 (ABOUT £72) · 12 WEEKS

THE TC COACHING IRONMAN / 70.3 OFF-SEASON PLAN

The actual sessions, week by week, in TrainingPeaks, with education videos from my Legacy Playbook.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE

1:1 COACHING

A specific, individual guide through your off-season and into race season.

FIRST SEASON? Racing your first 70.3 or Ironman next year? Look out for these notes. Where the advice changes for a first season, I'll tell you how.

TWELVE WEEKS, WHENEVER THEY FIT

The 12 weeks are a foundation block that comes before your race build, not only after a season ends. Start them whenever you have 12 weeks before your race build begins. **A December start finishes around late February or early March,** which suits races from roughly June onwards. Racing in spring? You may not have time for the full 12 weeks. Book a free Roadmap Call with me and I'll tell you exactly how I'd approach it: tccoaching.co.uk/apply.

CHAPTER 02

WHAT THE OFF-SEASON IS FOR

THE SHORT VERSION

Seven jobs. The first one matters most.

Most people think the off-season is about base miles. It isn't. The off-season has a lot to do, and it's tempting to treat every job as equal. They're not. Here they are in order, and in order of weight.

1

THE PRIME OUTCOME

BUILD THE ROUTINE AND CONSISTENCY

Everything else in this guide depends on it. A routine you can repeat week after week is worth more than any single session. Get this right and the other six jobs get done almost by default.

2

TEST, AND FIND YOUR LIMITER

A big outcome of the early off-season. Week 1 tells you where you are. Your results, read alongside your last season, tell you what exactly is holding you back, like swim speed or run durability, and so where the work goes (Chapters 3 and 4).

3

BUILD STRENGTH

Strength is the first thing to go in race season, when the volume ramps up for 70.3 and Ironman. A strong foundation now helps prevent injury and lets your body take, and absorb, the harder training later. It's there to protect the body and make sure that we maintain a higher level of availability for training throughout the entire season (Chapter 7).

4 **BUILD RECOVERY HABITS**

Sleep, water, steps and stress, practised now, so by race season they're ingrained behaviours rather than new things to remember when life is already busy (Chapter 8).

5 **BUILD THE AEROBIC BASE, WITH INTENSITY IN IT**

Endless Zone 2 is a thing of the past. A good rule of thumb is about 80% of your training easy and 20% hard, and that hard work belongs in the off-season too (Chapter 6).

6 **WORK ON SWIM TECHNIQUE, REALISTICALLY**

Fixing a stroke takes time and expertise. Drills on their own won't do it. If the swim holds you back, book a proper technique session with a qualified coach.

7 **BODY COMPOSITION, IF IT'S A GOAL**

The off-season can be a good time to focus on it, with a light touch. It's optional, and it never comes at the cost of jobs 1 to 4 (Chapter 9).

WHY ROUTINE COMES FIRST

Testing, strength, recovery and fitness all need you to turn up, week after week, for 12 weeks. That only happens when training has a fixed place in your life, rather than a fight for a gap every day.

Structure creates freedom. Once the routine is set, you stop spending energy deciding whether, when and what to train. You just go and do it.

MAKE IT YOURS

Jobs 1 to 4 are for everyone. Jobs 5 to 7 shift with you. Once you've tested (Chapter 3) and looked back at last season (Chapter 4), rank them for yourself. If the swim cost you most last year, job 6 moves up. If you raced well but carried niggles all summer, job 3 does.



CHAPTER 03

START WITH TESTING

THE SHORT VERSION

Test once, in Week 1, then train. Only add a test if hard sessions start to feel much, much easier, to reset your zones. What you do with the numbers is the coaching.

WHY TEST AT ALL

Testing sets a baseline. That baseline sets your training zones. And your zones mean the work that follows is done with intent, rather than guesswork.

Without them, an easy run drifts into a steady one, a threshold set becomes a race, and you spend 12 weeks training hard in the middle without really knowing why.

So you test once at the start, properly, in all three disciplines and in the gym. Then you train. That's your test for this off-season. The next full test comes next off-season.

TEST ONCE, THEN TRAIN

One test, in Week 1. Everything after it is training.



WHY NOT MORE OFTEN?

1. **Testing done properly takes a huge toll on the body.**
   Test too often and you'll miss training because of it, which is the very thing that makes you fitter.

2. **It builds the wrong expectation.**
   I train, I test, I should see massive gains. Sometimes you won't, and that's hard to take. Trust the process. Don't max out all the time.

3. **Blocks have different jobs.**
   It's rare to progress in all three disciplines, four with strength, in any single block. A test that shows no change across the board makes you question whether you've progressed at all, and you miss the progress that has happened.

4. **Some progress doesn't show in a test.**
   Twelve weeks of aerobic base work builds durability and endurance: the ability to go further. FTP, threshold pace, CSS and strength numbers measure your maximum sustainable output, so you wouldn't expect them to jump.

So: test when you start, then once each off-season. In this guide, that's Week 1. That being said, there is one exception. If sessions that used to be hard start to feel much easier, your zones are probably out of date. That is the time to add a test and reset them.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Testing too often, and chasing the numbers.

The fix: one test each off-season. In between, judge progress by how sessions feel and how consistently you're turning up. Only add a test when hard sessions start to feel much easier.

THE PROTOCOLS

HOW TO TEST

Each test in full, so you can do it on your own. Tools on my website do the maths for you.

RUN THRESHOLD TEST

30-MINUTE TIME TRIAL

Warm-up drills first: leg swings, air squats, good mornings, lunges, bounces on your toes.

1. Warm up: 8 minutes at RPE 4.
2. Strides, five rounds: 20 seconds hard at RPE 9, then 40 seconds easy at RPE 4. Accelerate over the first 10 seconds, then hold the hard effort for the last 10.
3. Recover: 2 minutes at RPE 5.
4. The test: 30 minutes at RPE 9, the fastest pace you can hold evenly for the full 30.
5. Cool down: 5 minutes at RPE 3.

- Your **average pace for the 30 minutes** is your threshold pace. Wearing a heart rate monitor? Your **average heart rate for the 30** is your threshold heart rate.
- Pick a flat, repeatable route with as few interruptions as possible, such as road crossings. Use the same route next time so the numbers compare.
- Do it alone, and let the first five minutes feel too easy. Going off hard, or chasing someone, is how people fall apart at 18 minutes.

↗ **Run Threshold Calculator** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/run-threshold

↗ **Pace & Speed** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/pace

BIKE FTP TEST

20-MINUTE EFFORT

1. Warm up: 5 minutes at RPE 3.
2. Activation, five rounds: 30 seconds hard at RPE 9, then 50 seconds easy at RPE 4.
3. Prime: 5 minutes at RPE 6.
4. The test: 20 minutes at RPE 9, the maximum power you can sustain for the full 20. Don't go out too hot.
5. Cool down: 15 minutes at RPE 3.

- **Your FTP is 95% of your average power for the 20 minutes.**
- **Turn ERG mode off.** You set the effort, not the trainer.
- Got an FTP you're trying to beat? Keep it in mind, but the target is still as hard as you can sustain for 20 minutes.
- No power meter? Use heart rate and RPE to guide your effort. Ride the same bike and set-up each time.

↗ **FTP Calculator** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/ftp-calculator

↗ **Heart Rate Zones** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/heart-rate-zones

SWIM TEST

CRITICAL SWIM SPEED (CSS) · 1250M

WARM-UP

200m front crawl. Rest: 30 sec
3 × 50m: 25m easy, 25m hard
100m front crawl. Rest: 60 sec

MAIN SET

400m time trial: record the time
Rest: 4 min
200m time trial: record the time
Rest: 1 min

COOL DOWN

200m, change stroke every 25m

- **CSS is the pace you should be able to hold for a 1500m effort.** Put both times into the calculator and it gives you your CSS pace per 100m.
- Pace the 400 so you can hold it. Both swims should be your best for that distance, ideally in a pool with a clock.

↗ Critical Swim Speed tccoaching.co.uk/tools/css-calculator

FOUNDATIONAL STRENGTH ASSESSMENT

IN A STANDARD GYM

An early read on where your strength work should go. Record every score as you go (in TrainingPeaks, in the Post-Activity Notes), with left and right written down separately.

WARM-UP

5 to 10 min bike or row, then 2 rounds:
W1. Air Squat × 10
W2. Bodyweight Reverse Lunge × 5 each side
W3. Band Pull-Apart × 10
W4. Glute Bridge, 2 sec hold × 10
W5. Bird Dog, 2 sec hold × 6 each side
W6. Side Plank, 20 sec each side
W7. Dead Bug × 8 each side

PLYOMETRICS

P1. Pogo Hops 3 × 6, easy and low
P2. Countermovement Jumps 2 × 5, submaximal, quiet landings

A. Trap Bar Deadlift: 3RM
Ramp sets: 8 easy, 6 moderate, then attempt a 3RM. Rest: 3 to 5 min between ramp sets and attempts

B. Single-Leg Leg Press: 3RM each leg
Ramp sets: 8 easy, 4 moderate, then 3RM each leg. Rest: 2 to 4 min between legs and attempts

C. Single-Leg Hamstring Curl: 3RM each leg
Ramp sets: 6 easy, 4 moderate, then 3RM each leg. Rest: 2 to 3 min between legs and attempts

D. Bench Press: 3RM
Ramp sets: 8 easy, 6 moderate, then attempt a 3RM. Rest: 3 to 5 min between ramp sets and attempts

E. Pull-Up: max quality reps
Strict, band-assisted or on the assisted machine. Record the assistance used and total reps. Full hang at the bottom, chin clearly over the bar, controlled lowering, no swinging or kipping. Rest: 2 to 3 min

F. Front Plank: max hold
Rest: 2 min, then a second attempt only if the first ended early for a reason other than fatigue

COACH NOTE

Treat this as a high-quality strength capacity test, not a grinder session. We want clean reps and reliable data. Keep transitions efficient, but don't rush the heavy attempts: take full recovery so the 3RM numbers mean something. Prioritise movement quality throughout, especially trunk stability and lower back position as you tire.

WEEK 1

LAYING OUT TEST WEEK

Four tests in one week only works if they're spaced so each one gets a fair go. The rules:

- At least one easy day between the run test and the strength test.
- Bike and run tests never on the same day, or on consecutive days.
- The swim test can follow an easy day.
- Until your results are in, train by feel, using RPE.

EXAMPLE **ONE WAY TO LAY OUT TEST WEEK**

DAY	SESSION
Mon	[KEY] Run: 30-Minute Threshold Test
Tue	Easy day: Swim or Bike, easy by RPE, or rest
Wed	[KEY] Bike: 20-Minute FTP Test
Thu	Easy day: Run, easy by RPE, or rest
Fri	[KEY] Swim: CSS Test
Sat	Easy day: Bike or Swim, easy by RPE, or rest
Sun	[KEY] Strength: Foundational Strength Assessment

[KEY] = this week's priority sessions. Every session has a job, but if life gets in the way, protect these first.

MAKE IT YOURS

Move the days around your week, as long as the rules hold. If your pool is only open on certain days, place the swim test first and build the others around it. The Weekly Planner does this for you.

↗ **Weekly Planner** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/week-planner

↗ **RPE Explained** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/rpe

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

YOUR ZONES

Your test results set your zones. Each zone has an RPE (effort out of 10), so you can train by feel when you don't have a device, or when the numbers and your body disagree.

RUN: % OF THRESHOLD SPEED

This is a percentage of your threshold **speed**, not pace. A higher percentage means faster. The Run Threshold Calculator turns it into paces for you.

ZONE	% THRESHOLD	RPE	FEEL
Z1	75 to 80%	1 to 3	Recovery
Z2	80 to 90%	3 to 4	Easy aerobic
Z3	90 to 95%	5 to 6	Tempo
Z4	95 to 100%	7	Threshold
Z5	Above 100%	8 to 10	VO2 max

BIKE: % OF FTP

ZONE	% FTP	RPE	FEEL
Z1	Under 55%	1 to 3	Recovery
Z2	56 to 75%	3 to 4	Easy aerobic
Z3	76 to 90%	5 to 6	Tempo
Z4	91 to 105%	7	Threshold
Z5	106 to 120%	8 to 10	VO2 max

SWIM: FROM YOUR CSS PACE

ZONE	PACE	RPE
Easy	Slower than CSS	1 to 4
Tempo	Just slower than CSS	5 to 6
Threshold	Around CSS	7
Fast	Faster than CSS	8 to 10

READING YOUR RESULTS

WHAT EACH RESULT TELLS YOU

BIKE: WATTS PER KILO	Your FTP divided by your body weight. It's the number that decides how a climb feels. As a 70.3 reference: recreational athletes sit around **2.8 to 3.8 W/kg**, competitive athletes **3.8 and above**.
SWIM: YOUR PACE AGAINST RACE DISTANCE	Take your CSS pace and ask one question: does it get you through your race swim calmly (1.9km for a 70.3, 3.8km for an Ironman), in a time you'd be happy with? If not, the swim is a strong candidate for your limiter.
STRENGTH: LEFT AGAINST RIGHT	More than about a **10 to 15% difference** between sides on the single-leg tests is worth flagging to a coach or rehab specialist. Inside TC Coaching, Gaz McNamara at Plug In Rehab leads on this, with me across it.
STRENGTH: AGAINST YOUR BODY WEIGHT	Which areas are strong, and which need work. This shapes what your strength sessions focus on (Chapter 7).
BENCH, PULL-UP AND PLANK	These tell you whether some foundational upper body and core work needs to come first.

THE LINE BETWEEN THIS GUIDE AND COACHING

You now know how to test, and what your numbers say.

Turning them into your weeks, your sessions and your progression is what The TC Coaching Ironman / 70.3 Off-Season Plan and 1:1 coaching do.

MAKE IT YOURS

Write every number down on the My Test Results worksheet in the appendix, left and right separately, with your zones from the tools. You'll need them in Chapter 4, and to compare against next off-season.

CHAPTER 04

LOOK BACK BEFORE YOU PLAN

THE SHORT VERSION

Your last season is your brief for this off-season. Where you fell short tells you where the work goes.

Before you plan a single session, look back. Honestly. Not at the race photos and the medal, but at where you fell short.

Your test results from Chapter 3 tell you where you are now. Your last season tells you what that cost you on race day. Put the two together and you know where the off-season work goes.

THE HONEST LOOK BACK

WHICH DISCIPLINE?

Swim, bike, run or strength. Where did you lose the most time, or feel least in control?

WHICH KIND OF FITNESS?

Top-end speed, holding threshold for longer, or going long and still having something left at the end?

NIGGLES?

What kept coming back? Calves, knees, back, shoulders. When did they start, and what was happening in training at the time?

MISSED WEEKS, AND WHY?

Count them, and write down the reason for each. Work, family, illness, injury, or training too hard the week before.

Be specific. **“My run was bad”** doesn't help. **“I held pace for 8km, then fell apart”** does, because it points straight at a kind of fitness.

HOW IT SHAPES YOUR OFF-SEASON

A limiter isn't just your weakest discipline. It's what's weak within it, and that's where the work goes. These are starting points, not rules.

YOUR LIMITER		WHERE THE WORK GOES
Swim speed Slow for the effort you put in	→	Technique and efficiency in the water. Three or four swims a week, plus a technique session with a qualified coach.
Bike power Your FTP holds you back	→	Intensity work, such as threshold intervals.
Bike endurance Power fades in the last hour	→	Long Zone 2 rides. They're easy, but don't underestimate the impact they have on the body.
Run durability Held pace, then fell apart	→	Time on feet and strength.
Top-end speed Any discipline	→	VO2 max work.
Niggles all season	→	Three or even four strength sessions a week. Durability and injury resistance become the off-season focus.
The run is your strength	→	You can drop to one run a week, or less run volume, and put the time where you need it.

NAME YOUR LIMITER IN ONE SENTENCE

Put your test results next to your look back and finish this sentence. One limiter, not three. Not "the run", but "my run durability, because I fell apart after 8km".

My limiter is ..... because .....

FIRST SEASON?

No last season to look back on? Use your test results, and be honest about which discipline feels least comfortable. Then ask what within it: the speed, or lasting the distance. That's usually your limiter.

MAKE IT YOURS

Fill in the My Last Season worksheet in the appendix. Your limiter decides your session mix in Chapter 6, and how many strength sessions you do in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 05

BUILDING THE ROUTINE

THE SHORT VERSION

Structure creates freedom. A fixed routine is the gold standard, [KEY] sessions give it flex, and a good week is about good decisions as much as ticked boxes.

STRUCTURE CREATES FREEDOM

A routine removes the decision-making. You're not deciding every morning whether to train, when to train and what to do. It's already decided. You just go and do it.

That matters more than it sounds. Every decision is a chance to talk yourself out of it, and in the off-season, with the race months away, that's an easy conversation to lose.

BUILD IT IN THE WEEKLY PLANNER

The Weekly Planner on my website does the fiddly part for you. You enter:

- Your commitments: work, school runs, pickups, and which days each applies
- The sessions you want
- Your wake and bed times
- “Doors open” times: when the pool and gym are open
- A buffer for travel and changing
- A recovery day and your preferred time of day
- Max sessions per day and the minimum gap between them

Then click **Build my week**. It places the hardest-to-fit sessions first (usually the swim, because pool hours are fixed), only puts outdoor rides in daylight, and tells you plainly when a session won't fit and why. **Routine** mode gives you a repeatable template. **Training Windows** shows every gap in your week by length.

↗ **Weekly Planner** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/week-planner

THE CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

Most of the people I coach are busy parents and professionals. A routine only works if the people around you, especially at home, understand it, and there's give and take.

- Share the family jobs, like school pickups and after-school clubs, across the week, so your training doesn't fall on one person's goodwill.
- Show them the plan. When they can see the week, it stops being “you disappearing to train” and becomes part of how the house runs.
- Agree what gives when something comes up, before it comes up.
- At some point you'll have to choose between a social occasion and a session. It's much easier when the people closest to you are already on board.

> Have the conversation before the off-season starts, not halfway through the first bad week.

A FIXED ROUTINE, WITH FLEX

A fixed routine is the gold standard. Same sessions, same days, same times. But life needs some flexibility, and that's where [KEY] sessions come in.

[KEY] SESSIONS

The priority sessions of the week. Every session has a job, but if life gets in the way, protect these first.

- Most weeks carry 2 to 3 of them.
- If everything is key, nothing is.
- When the week starts to go out of shape, move things around to get the [KEY] sessions in, following the moving rules in Chapter 6.

EXAMPLE **HOW A [KEY] SESSION LOOKS IN A PLAN**

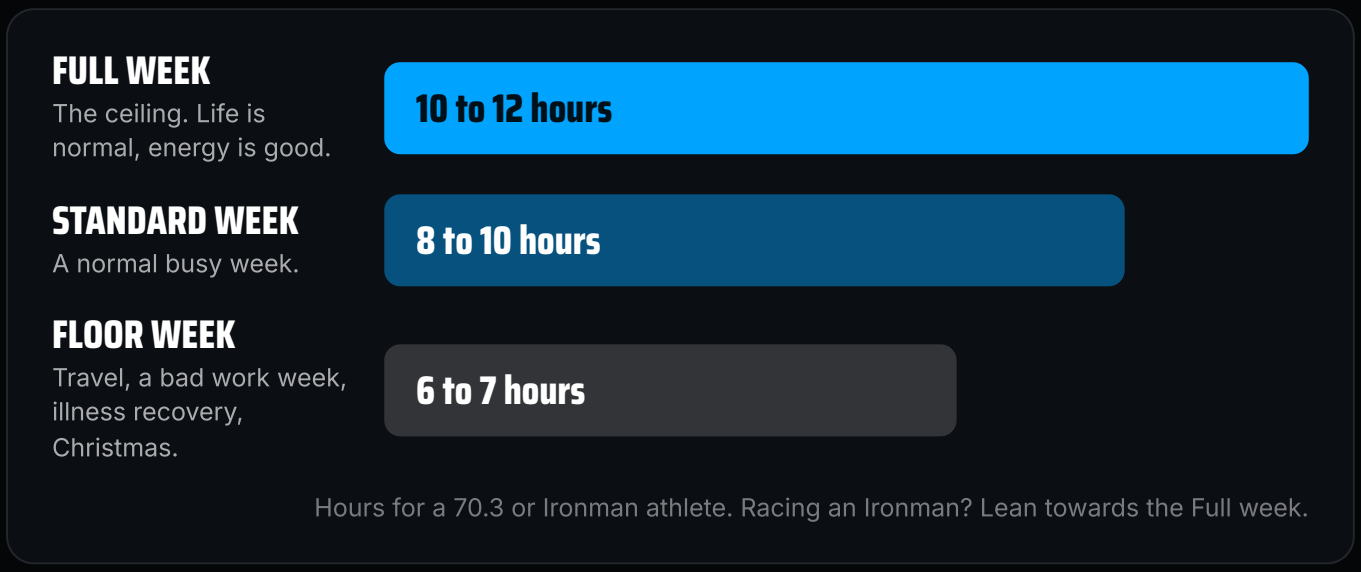
[KEY] Bike: Threshold Intervals

Run: Easy Z2

SET YOUR FLOOR AND YOUR CEILING

THE THREE-TIER WEEK

Not every week looks the same, so don't plan as if it will. Build three versions of your week before the off-season starts.



Hours for a 70.3 or Ironman athlete. Racing an Ironman? Lean towards the Full week.

THE RULES

1. Set your own floor and ceiling. The floor is never below 5 hours: five sessions of an hour, or seven of 45 minutes.
2. Every week should hit the floor. **A floor week is a successful week.**
3. Never more than two floor weeks in a row without a conversation about whether the plan fits your life.
4. Build all three in the Weekly Planner before the off-season starts, so on a bad week you're not planning from scratch.

> Plan for the life you have, then hold yourself to it.

MAKE IT YOURS

Write your three weeks on the My Three Weeks worksheet. Your hours might be 5 to 6, 6 to 8 and 8 to 10. The numbers are yours. The principle is the same: know your floor, and hit it.

WHAT A GOOD WEEK IS

A good week is all the training done, and good decisions made along the way. If that can't happen, it's a week where the [KEY] sessions were protected.

Good decisions count. Shortening a session instead of skipping it. Going to bed instead of watching one more episode. Moving the long ride to Sunday when Saturday fell apart. **A short session logged beats a perfect session missed.**

RAMP IN

A note for beginners and anyone coming back, not a rule.

Going all in and trying to fit every session in, when you don't have the time, is shooting yourself in the foot. Start at your **Floor week** in the first week, and add a little each week, so by the end of the first month the full routine is in place.



Share of the full routine, weeks 1 to 4. Be OK that it takes a month to get into the swing of things.

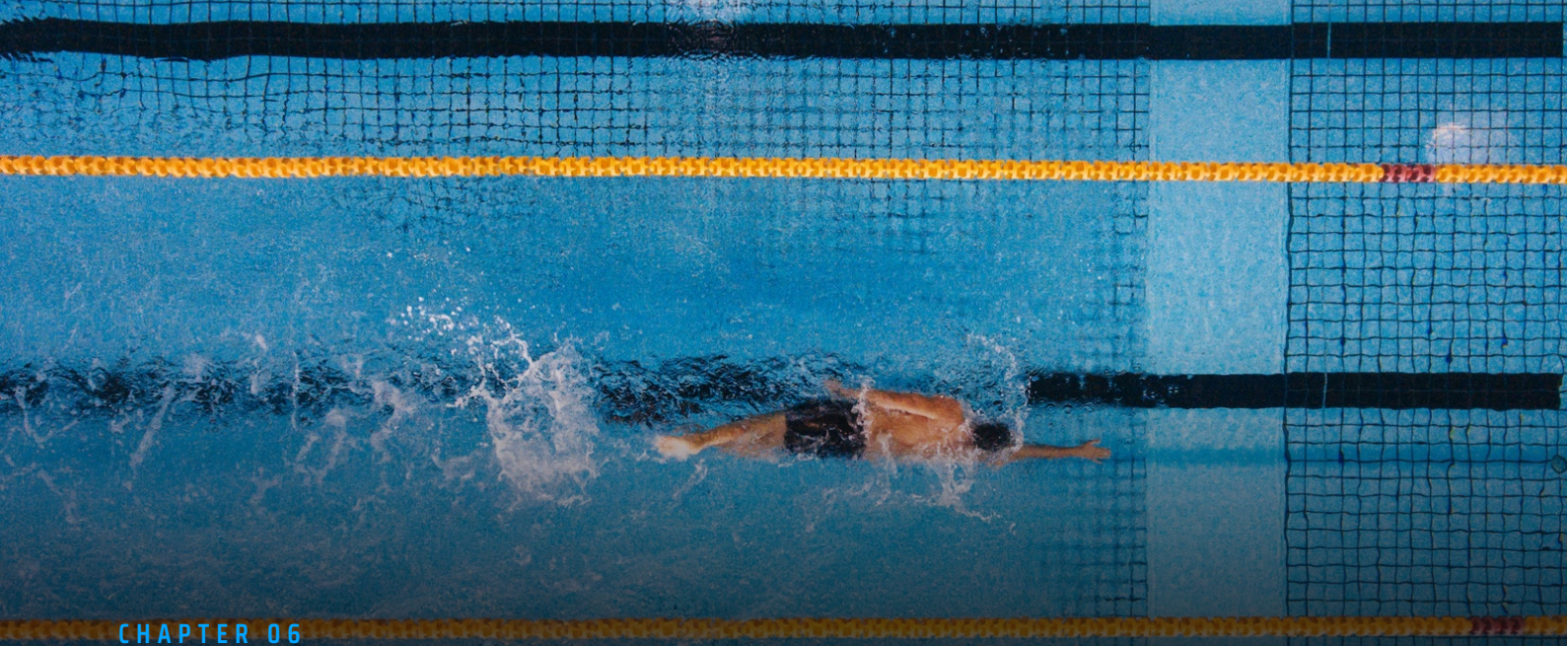
THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Going all in, then burning out or falling off.

The fix: ramp in over the first month, and judge the week by the floor, not the ceiling.

THE WEEK ON A PAGE

Print the My Week on a Page tracker from the appendix, one for every week. Tick off your training and your habits. By Week 12 you have 12 pages of proof that you were consistent, which is exactly what you'll need in Chapter 14.



CHAPTER 06

THE TRAINING WEEK

THE SHORT VERSION

80/20. Easy genuinely easy, hard genuinely hard. Time per discipline set by your limiter, and an hour of proper strength twice a week.



INTENSITY: 80/20

A good rule of thumb: about 80% of your training easy, and 20% hard. Intensity can start from the first week after testing, across all three disciplines.

Nothing is off limits in the off-season. What you do depends on what would benefit you most, which is what Chapter 4 was for.

EASY GENUINELY EASY, HARD GENUINELY HARD

Easy sessions go by heart rate and RPE, not pace or power. If an easy session creeps up into the middle, it's no longer easy, and it takes something away from the hard session that follows.

Threshold sessions aren't a max-out effort like VO2 max work. If they start to feel grey-zone easy, your threshold is improving, so push it a little. And if sessions that used to be hard now feel much easier, that's the time to retest and reset your zones (Chapter 3).

Be disciplined about keeping the recoveries between efforts genuinely easy. That's what teaches the body to clear lactate and recover while it's still moving.

↗ **Heart Rate Zones** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/heart-rate-zones

↗ **RPE Explained** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/rpe

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Endless Zone 2, with no intensity at all.

The fix: endless Zone 2 is a thing of the past. Keep about 80% easy, and put real intensity in the other 20%, from Week 2.

THE SESSION MIX

A rough order for a week:

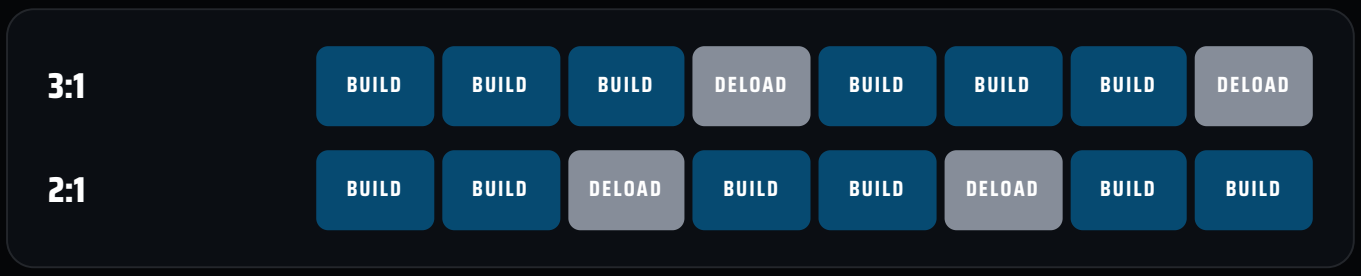
2	2	2	2
SWIM	BIKE	RUN	STRENGTH

- Adjust it by your limiter (Chapter 4). Think in **total time per discipline**, not just the number of sessions.
- **At least one swim every week, always.**
- Female athletes can map their cycle phases and adapt training around them with the Menstrual Cycle tool.

↗ **Menstrual Cycle** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/menstrual-cycle

DELOAD WEEKS

A deload week is a lighter week that lets the training land. The work you do builds the stress. The deload week is where you absorb it.



- **Standard: three weeks building, then one deload week.**
- Beginners, and athletes over 50 coming back into the sport: two weeks building and one deload, then repeat, may be the way forward.
- It's not a hard and fast rule. Listen to your body, look at how training is progressing and how you feel, and check you're looking after the recovery side (Chapter 8).

REST DAYS

You can train for a 70.3 or an Ironman without a single day off. A well-rounded programme that you can repeat over and over doesn't require one.

That being said, if you need a day off for logistical reasons, take it. It will help. Either way, **keep at least one genuinely easy day** in the week.

MAKE IT YOURS

If you're over 50 and coming back, or new to the sport, try 2:1 for the first block and see how you feel. If you're recovering well and progressing, 3:1 may suit you better from the second block. If your recovery habits slip, expect to need the deload sooner.

THE RULES BEHIND THE FLEX

MOVING SESSIONS

When the week goes out of shape, these are the rules for moving things around.

1. Hard sessions need about 48 hours between them. Never hard on consecutive days in the same discipline.
2. Long ride and long run not back to back without an easy day between.
3. No heavy strength the day before a [KEY] or long session.
4. The swim can go almost anywhere. It's the least stress on the body.
5. Spread your swims through the week.
6. Move a session a day either way before you drop it.
7. Put [KEY] sessions on your most reliable days.
8. Use the Weekly Planner's Training Windows to find the gap.

↗ **Weekly Planner** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/week-planner

BRICKS

Bricks can go in towards the back end of the off-season, with the run off the bike kept short and easy. There's no need for intense brick work yet. At this point the stress may be more than you can take.

SWIM TECHNIQUE

If the swim is holding you back, book a technique session with a qualified coach. Fixing a stroke takes time and expertise.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Trying to fix the swim with drills alone.

The fix: drills practise what a coach has shown you. On their own, they rarely fix the thing that's actually wrong. Get eyes on your stroke first.

MAKE IT YOURS

Work out your most reliable days on the My Reliable Days worksheet, and put your [KEY] sessions there first.

CHAPTER 07

STRENGTH AND PLYOMETRICS

THE SHORT VERSION

Lift heavy, twice a week, for an hour. The bike and the run won't make you strong.

WHY NOW

Strength is the first thing to go when race-season volume ramps up. The long rides and long runs take the time, and the gym is the session that quietly disappears.

So the off-season is where you build the foundation. A strong body is better at resisting injury, and better at taking the harder training later and actually absorbing it.

> Strength is there to protect the body and make sure that we maintain a higher level of availability for training throughout the entire season.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Skipping strength, and expecting the bike and the run to make you strong.

The fix: building muscle and strengthening joints needs a significant load put through the body. Cycling and running can't replicate it. You have to lift.



HOW OFTEN, HOW LONG, HOW HEAVY

HOW OFTEN

2 A WEEK

As standard. If niggles kept coming up last season, three or four a week, with durability and injury resistance as your off-season focus.

HOW LONG

ABOUT AN HOUR

Long enough to take your rest periods properly and lift with the right intensity, rather than rushing through.

HOW HEAVY

RPE 8 TO 9

Proper strength training, heavy, by RPE. Muscular and strength endurance have their place, but to get strong, you lift heavy.

WHEN

NOT THE DAY BEFORE

No heavy strength the day before a [KEY] or long session.

WHAT IT'S FOR

Your strength work in the off-season has four jobs:

DURABILITY

The ability to keep holding form, and keep absorbing training, as the hours build.

SINGLE-LEG STRENGTH

Swimming aside, triathlon is done one leg at a time. Your test showed you the gap between sides.

EXPLOSIVE POWER

Force produced quickly. It shows up on climbs, surges and every running stride.

PLYOMETRICS

Jumping, bounding and skipping. More on the next page.



This guide doesn't prescribe the sessions themselves. What you lift, and how, depends on your Foundational Strength Assessment. That's what The TC Coaching Ironman / 70.3 Off-Season Plan and 1:1 coaching are for.

DON'T LEAVE OUT PLYOMETRICS

Not everyone needs high-end plyometrics. But even low-end work, like skipping and small hops in your warm-up, increases tendon stiffness and strengthens your joints.

It costs you a few minutes, and it's easy to fold into sessions you're already doing.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Leaving plyometrics out altogether.

The fix: start low. Skipping, pogo hops and small jumps in your warm-ups. Build from there if your body handles it.



INTO RACE SEASON

Strength doesn't stop when the race season starts. It changes.

NOW

OFF-SEASON

Heavy, at RPE 8 to 9. Building the foundation: strength, durability, single-leg control and power.

LATER

RACE SEASON

More specific. Lower load and more reps, moving into muscular and strength endurance.

MAKE IT YOURS

If niggles kept coming up last season, make strength your off-season focus: three or four sessions a week, with the time coming out of your strongest discipline. If not, two sessions, done properly, every week.

CHAPTER 08

RECOVERY

THE SHORT VERSION

This is the time to build the recovery habits, so that by race season they're automatic.

Sleep, water, steps and stress are the easiest things to cast aside in the off-season. They matter just as much, probably more, because the habits you build now set up the mindset for race season, when everything gets more hectic and logistics take over.

SLEEP: START WITH AN AUDIT

Before you change anything, find out where you are. Take your **average hours of sleep across the last two weeks**. Your watch or phone may already have it. If not, write down when you went to bed and when you got up, every day for two weeks.

ROUTINE MATTERS MOST

Same bedtime. Same wake time. Every day, as near as you can.

Your environment matters too: dark, slightly cold, no clutter, and the phone out of the bedroom. But the routine is the biggest thing.

Why it matters: your body regenerates when you sleep. Sleep is linked to your performance, and to your chance of getting injured. Training hard on short sleep is training without the part that makes the training work.

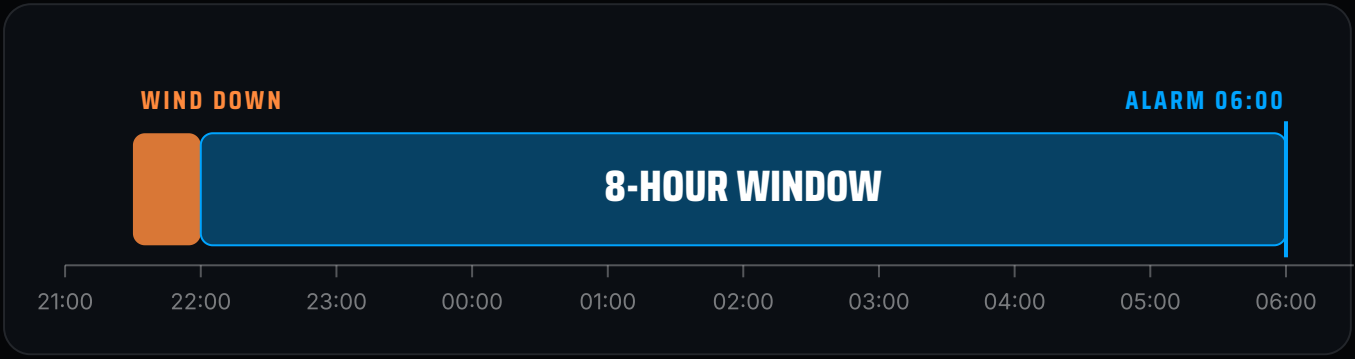
MAKE IT YOURS

Fill in the My Sleep Audit worksheet. Two weeks, the hours each night, and the average.

WORK BACKWARDS FROM YOUR ALARM

Start with your wake time and count back. Give yourself a window of **at least 8 hours**, so you have a chance of 7.5 to 8 hours' sleep.

EXAMPLE **UP AT 6:00**



Up at 6:00 but in bed at midnight means 6 hours at the very most. When you're training for a 70.3 or an Ironman, that might be sustainable, but it's far from optimal.

PLAN THE HALF HOUR BEFORE BED

The wind-down is a routine of its own. Plan it, and it stops depending on willpower at 10pm.

SET AN ALARM

On your watch or phone, for the start of the wind-down, not just the morning.

PHONE ON CHARGE

In another room.

HOT SHOWER

Part of the signal that the day is done.

SKINCARE ROUTINE

Whatever yours is. The point is that it happens in the same order, every night.

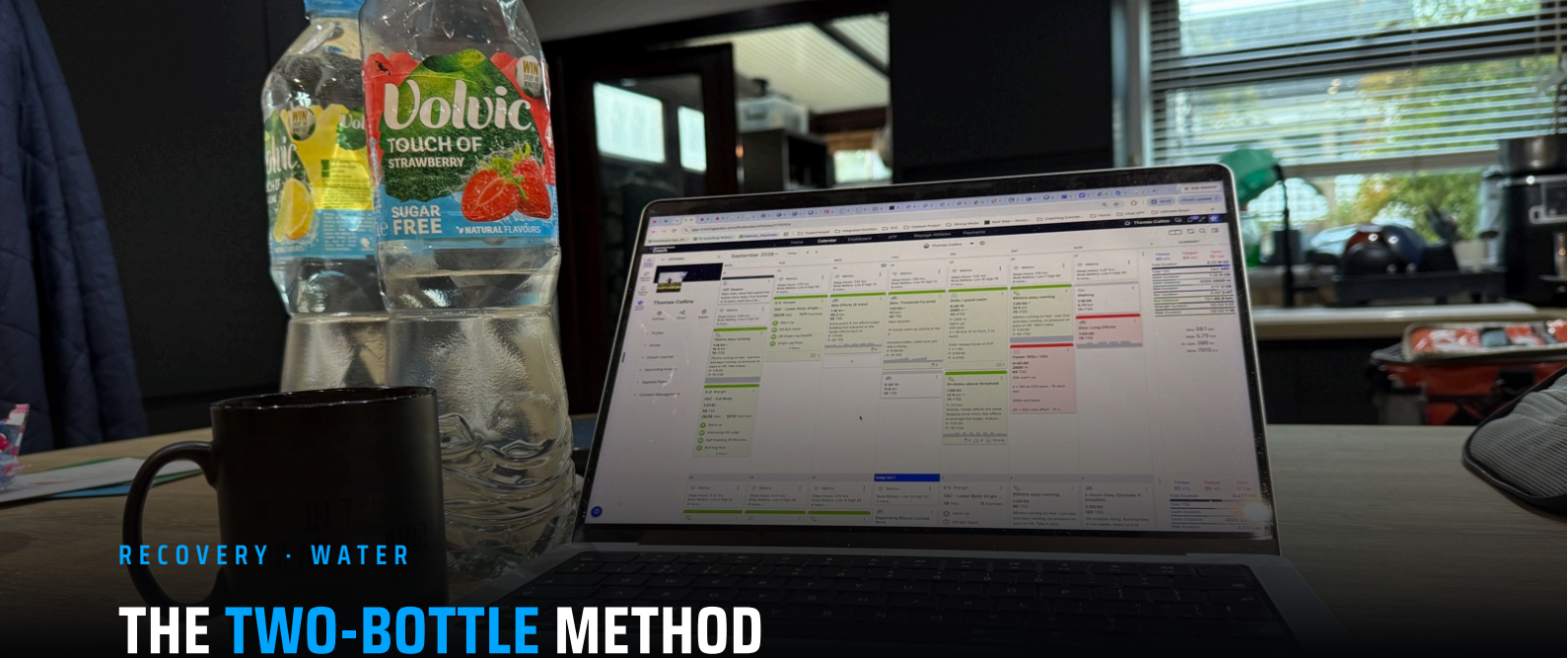
OFF SCREENS

Wind down away from them.

CAFFEINE

This one is really important. Caffeine late in the day can wreck your sleep without you noticing. Use the Caffeine Curfew tool to find your cut-off time.

↗ Caffeine Curfew tccoaching.co.uk/tools/caffeine



RECOVERY · WATER

THE TWO-BOTTLE METHOD

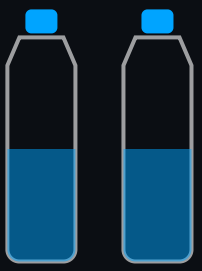
My rule of thumb is **3 litres a day**, not counting what's in your training bottles. Needs vary with body size and sweat, so treat 3 litres as a starting point.

Here's what I do, every night. As part of my bedtime routine I fill two 1.5 litre bottles and leave them on the kitchen counter or in the fridge. Over the next day I drink them. At the end of the day I can see I've had at least 3 litres.



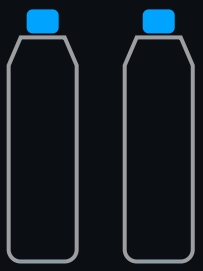
BEDTIME

Fill two 1.5 litre bottles and leave them on the kitchen counter, or in the fridge.



THROUGH THE DAY

Drink from them. Work, school run, the car, the desk.



END OF THE DAY

Both empty means at least 3 litres. Water left means it gets drunk now.

Water left at the end of the day gets drunk. It might mean a trip to the toilet in the night, but that's what changes the behaviour. You learn to drink earlier.

↗ **The two-bottle hydration standard** tccoaching.co.uk/insights/two-bottle-hydration-standard

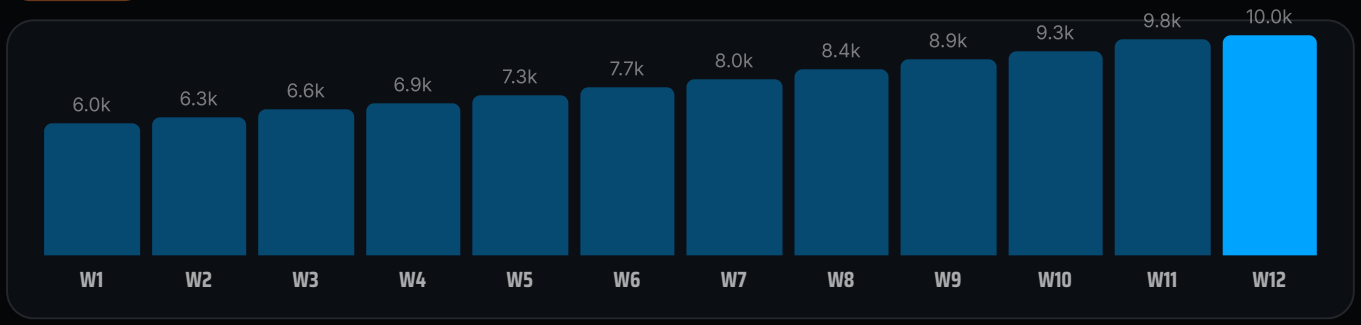
Fill them before bed.

STEPS AND DAILY MOVEMENT

There's no hard and fast rule. Audit your daily steps across the last two weeks, then add **about 5% a week** towards somewhere around 10,000 to 12,000. Moving more, outside where you can, is always positive.

It's about the behaviours: taking the stairs, parking further from the entrance, walking the kids to school. Over time they change who you are.

EXAMPLE **FROM A 6,000-STEP AVERAGE**

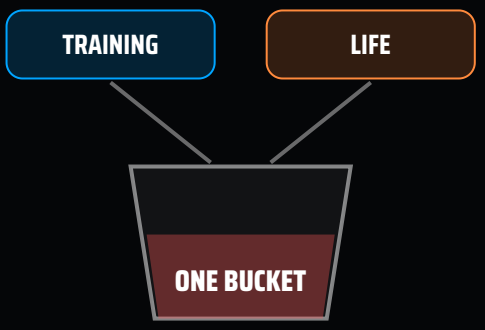


Then keep building towards 10,000 to 12,000.

STRESS AND LIFE LOAD

The general adaptation syndrome (GAS) model says physical and mental stress add up, and your body doesn't tell the two apart. A hard week at work and a hard week of training draw on the same account.

High stress affects your motivation, your appetite and your willingness to train. It can bring real dips in training and performance.



One way to balance it: the systems and processes that create structure. When the routine is set, the training stops being one more thing to decide. **Structure creates freedom.**

ALCOHOL

You probably already know this, so I'll keep it short and there's no judgement here. Alcohol means poorer sleep and recovery, less effective fat metabolism, and a body that prioritises getting rid of the alcohol over absorbing your nutrients.

WHEN YOU'RE ILL: RECOVERY IS THE MISSION

When you're ill, training stops being the job. Getting well is the job.

SLEEP
As much as you physically can.

WALK OUTSIDE
Instead of training.

DRINK WATER
Keep the bottles going.

WHOLE FOODS
Vitamins, and even more emphasis on whole, nutrient-dense food.

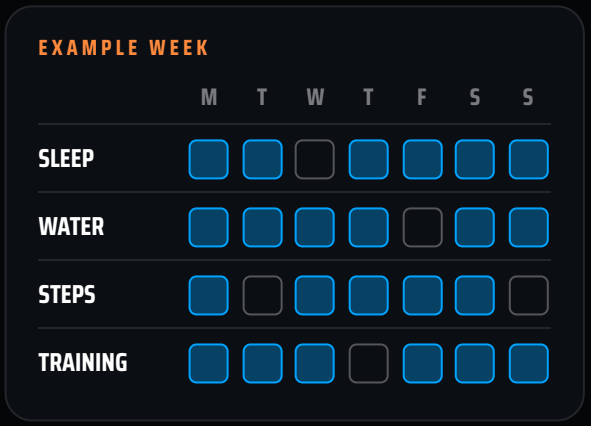
Come back easy once you're well. If in doubt, speak to your GP before you train.

TRACKING

Track your sleep, water, steps and training. Not for the sake of the data, but because it builds awareness of your patterns, and of the disruption to them.

Awareness drives behaviour change. You can't fix the Thursday you always sleep badly until you've seen that it's always Thursday.

A tick on a page is enough. You don't need an app.



The My Week on a Page tracker in the appendix puts your training ticks and these habits on one printable page.

MAKE IT YOURS

Pick one habit to start with, the one your audit says is weakest, and track it every day for a fortnight. Add the next when the first one sticks.

CHAPTER 09

NUTRITION AND BODY COMPOSITION

THE SHORT VERSION

The off-season can be the time to dial in your nutrition. Keep it simple, and get specialist help if you need it.

I'll be honest with you. Most years I put on weight over the season. I prioritise fuelling, and eating to recover, and in the pursuit of performance that can tip over into eating more than I need.

So I use the off-season to dial in my nutrition, and start the race season in the shape I want to be in.

START WITH YOUR NUMBERS

The TDEE Calculator estimates how much energy you use in a day. It's a starting point for understanding what your body needs, not a diet.

↗ **TDEE Calculator** tccoaching.co.uk/tools/tdee

GET SPECIALIST HELP

Nutrition is a specialist area. Inside TC Coaching, our Performance Nutritionist, **Adam Glover**, leads on nutrition for our athletes, with me across it.

If body composition is one of your goals this off-season, keep it a light touch. It's optional, and it never comes at the cost of your routine, your strength work or your recovery.

START THE FUELLING HABIT NOW

Eat well before your key sessions, and take some fuel on your long ride and long run. It matters most in the race build, but if the habit starts now, it's second nature by then.

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Eating more than you need, in the name of performance.

The fix: fuel the training properly, and use the off-season to bring it back in line with what you actually need.

CHAPTER 10

WHEN THE ROUTINE GETS KNOCKED

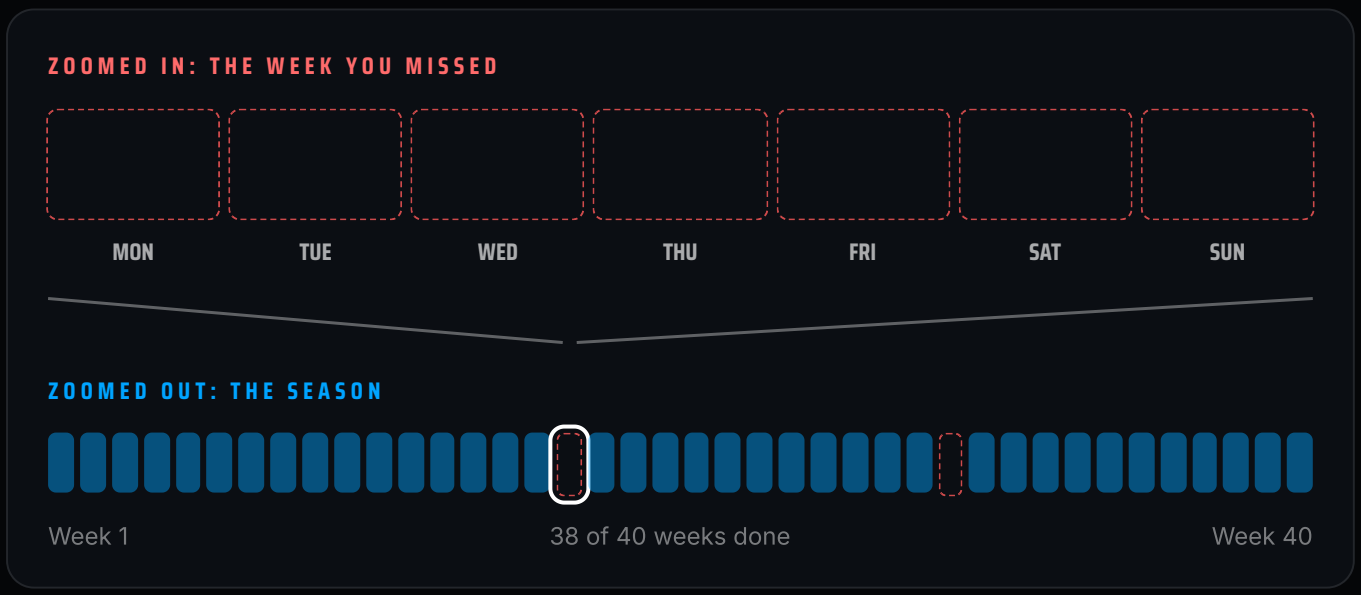
THE SHORT VERSION

Zoom out. One week doesn't matter across a season. The same week missed every month does.

Weeks get missed. Injury, illness, work, family. It happens to every athlete I've ever coached, and it will happen to you this off-season.

ZOOM OUT

Through a narrow lens, a single missed week looks like the end of the world. Zoom out to the whole season and, as long as the consistency holds, it barely shows.



THE WEEK THAT KEEPS COMING BACK

The real problem isn't one missed week. It's the same week, missed every month.



That's usually down to the systems you have in place, or to training too hard and then needing time off. **The fix: reduce the volume and intensity to protect the consistency.**

THE MISTAKE I SEE MOST

Training so hard one week that you need time off the next.

The fix: the right amount, every week, beats a big week followed by a lost one.

WHEN THE WEEK SHRINKS

THE DROP LADDER

What goes first, in order. Start at the top and stop as soon as the week fits.

1	**Add-ons and doubles**	The extra bits first.
2	**Length of easy sessions**	Shorten before you skip.
3	**Standalone mobility**	Fold it into your warm-ups.
4	**The second session in your strongest discipline**	One swim always stays.
5	**Easy volume in the discipline you're not prioritising**	
6	**Intensity sharpeners**	The short, sharp extras.

Shorten, then move, then drop. And don't stack sessions to catch up.

MAKE IT YOURS

Your limiter changes the ladder. The steps stay the same, but what sits on each rung is yours. Here are two versions side by side. Write your own on the My Drop Ladder worksheet.

EXAMPLE

TWO ATHLETES, TWO LADDERS

SWIM SPEED

1	Add-ons and doubles
2	Shorten the easy rides and runs
3	Mobility into warm-ups
4	The second run
5	Easy bike volume
6	Run sharpeners

The swims stay.

BIKE ENDURANCE

1	Add-ons and doubles
2	Shorten the easy swims and runs
3	Mobility into warm-ups
4	The second swim (one always stays)
5	Easy run volume
6	Swim and run sharpeners

The bike sessions stay.

THE NEVER-DROP LIST

However small the week gets, these stay.

- [x] [KEY] sessions
- [x] One strength session
- [x] At least one swim
- [x] Touch the bike and the run every week
- [x] Easy stays easy
- [x] Deload weeks
- [x] Sleep
- [x] Telling your coach, if you have one

> "I'd far rather know on the Tuesday than find out three weeks later."

THE LOST WEEK RESCUE

When a week goes, it goes. Here's how to come out of it.

1 CALL IT
Decide the week is lost, and log what happened.

2 SALVAGE WHAT'S LEFT
The [KEY] session, and one short session.

3 DON'T MAKE IT UP
No catch-up week, no stacking.

4 COME BACK TO THE PLAN
As written, or one notch lower.

5 PROTECT THE FIRST SESSION BACK
Easy, and it happens.

6 LOOK FOR THE PATTERN
Is this the week that keeps coming back?

THE COMEBACK SCALE

WHAT YOU LOST	WHAT HAPPENS NEXT
A few sessions	Carry on.
One week	Resume the plan.
Two weeks	Repeat the last good week, then carry on.
Three or more	Step back a week. Go by RPE and feel. Don't rush to retest.
Illness	Recovery is the mission (Chapter 8).

PAIN OR INJURY · Stop, and speak to your coach or a rehab specialist.

MAKE IT YOURS

Cut out the Lost Week Rescue Card in the appendix and keep it somewhere you'll see it. The worst time to work out what to do is in the middle of the lost week.

CHAPTER 11

THE OFF-SEASON CURVEBALLS

THE SHORT VERSION

Most off-season disruption is predictable. Plan for it now.

None of these should come as a surprise. They happen every winter. So plan for them before they arrive, not when they do.

DARK MORNINGS AND EVENINGS

Indoor bike, the treadmill, and lights for outdoor runs. The Weekly Planner only places outdoor rides in daylight.

WEATHER

An indoor bike session is not a lesser session.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Decide now whether it runs as floor weeks, or takes the place of a deload week.

POOL TIMETABLES

When they change, update “doors open” in the planner and re-run it. One swim a week is still the rule.

YEAR-END AT WORK

Have your floor week ready before it arrives.

WINTER BUGS

Recovery is the mission (Chapter 8).

JANUARY ENTHUSIASM

Don't let a burst of motivation become a big jump in load. The plan was right in December too.

CHAPTER 12

THE OFF-SEASON MISTAKES I SEE MOST

THE SHORT VERSION

Nine mistakes, and the fix for each.

1 **"The race is ages away, so missing training won't matter."** CH 01

The fix: Treat these 12 weeks as the start of the season, not a gap before it.

2 **Going all in, then burning out or falling off.** CH 05

The fix: Ramp in over the first month, and judge each week by the floor.

3 **Skipping strength, and expecting the bike and run to make you strong.** CH 07

The fix: Lift heavy, twice a week, for about an hour.

4 **Leaving out plyometrics.** CH 07

The fix: Start low: skipping and small hops in your warm-ups.

5 **Endless Zone 2, with no intensity.** CH 06

The fix: About 80% easy, and real intensity in the other 20%, from Week 2.

6 **Testing too often, and chasing numbers.** CH 03

The fix: Test when you start, then once each off-season. Add a test only when hard sessions start to feel much easier.

7 **Trying to fix the swim with drills alone.** CH 06

The fix: Book a technique session with a qualified coach.

8 **Training so hard one week that you need time off the next.** CH 10

The fix: Reduce volume and intensity to protect the consistency.

9 **Eating more than you need, in the name of performance.** CH 09

The fix: Use the off-season to bring it back in line with what you need.

EVERY ONE OF THESE IS A CONSISTENCY PROBLEM

Look down the list again. Burning out, getting injured, chasing numbers, a lost week every month. They all end in the same place: weeks you don't get back. Fix the thing that breaks your consistency, and the fitness takes care of itself.

Trust the process.

CHAPTER 13

WHAT 12 WEEKS LOOKS LIKE

THE SHORT VERSION

Here's the shape. Yours depends on your testing, your last season and your life.

EXAMPLE **A 12-WEEK OFF-SEASON**

1 TEST	2	3	4 DELOAD	5	6	7	8 DELOAD	9	10	11	12 REVIEW

WEEK	WHAT IT IS
1	Testing week. RPE only.
2 to 3	Build. The routine settling in (first-timers ramp in from the Floor week). Intensity from Week 2 at 80/20. Strength twice a week.
4	Deload week.
5 to 7	Build.
8	Deload week.
9 to 10	Build. Short, easy bricks off the long ride can appear.
11	Last build week, same sessions as Week 10.
12	Lighter week, Off-Season Review, and into race season.

Beginners, and athletes over 50 coming back: the 2:1 pattern from Chapter 6 works here too. Holidays land where they land. Swap them with the nearest deload week, or run them as floor weeks.

EXAMPLE

ONE ATHLETE, THREE WEEKS

The same example athlete, in a full week and a standard week. Same [KEY] sessions, less around them.

FULL WEEK

10 to 12 hours

Mon	Run: Long Z2 Endurance	Swim: Technique & Aerobic Endurance
Tue	**[KEY] Bike: Threshold Intervals**	Strength: Full Body Functional (about 1h)
Wed	Swim: Aerobic Endurance	Bike: Easy Z2
Thu	**[KEY] Run: Threshold Intervals**	Strength: Full Body Functional (about 1h)
Fri	Swim: Technique & Aerobic Endurance	
Sat	**[KEY] Bike: Long Z2 Endurance**	
Sun	Run: Easy Z2	

STANDARD WEEK

8 to 10 hours

Mon	Run: Long Z2 Endurance	
Tue	**[KEY] Bike: Threshold Intervals**	Strength: Full Body Functional (about 1h)
Wed	Swim: Technique & Aerobic Endurance	
Thu	**[KEY] Run: Threshold Intervals**	Strength: Full Body Functional (about 1h)
Fri	Rest, or a walk	
Sat	**[KEY] Bike: Long Z2 Endurance**	
Sun	Swim: Aerobic Endurance	Run: Easy Z2

[KEY] = this week's priority sessions. Every session has a job, but if life gets in the way, protect these first.

EXAMPLE

THE FLOOR WEEK

FLOOR WEEK — 6 to 7 hours

Mon	Rest, or a walk
Tue	[KEY] Bike: Threshold Intervals; Strength: Full Body Functional (about 1h)
Wed	Swim: Technique & Aerobic Endurance
Thu	[KEY] Run: Threshold Intervals
Fri	Rest, or a walk
Sat	Bike: Long Z2 Endurance
Sun	Run: Easy Z2

[KEY] = this week's priority sessions. Every session has a job, but if life gets in the way, protect these first.

HOW IT CHANGES WITH THE LIMITER

EXAMPLE

SESSION MIX BY LIMITER

SWIM SPEED

- 3 to 4 swims, including a technique session
- 2 bikes
- 1 to 2 runs
- 2 strength

[KEY] on two swims and one bike.

BIKE ENDURANCE

- 2 swims
- 3 bikes
- 2 runs
- 2 strength

[KEY] on two bikes and one run.

NIGGLES ALL SEASON

- 2 swims
- 2 bikes
- 1 to 2 runs
- 3 to 4 strength

[KEY] on one strength session, one bike and one run.

MAKE IT YOURS

Build your own three weeks in the Weekly Planner, starting with your limiter from Chapter 4. Then write them onto the My Three Weeks worksheet.



CHAPTER 14

FINISHING THE OFF-SEASON

THE SHORT VERSION

Review the whole off-season, not just the numbers, then move into race season with intent.

THE OFF-SEASON REVIEW

Week 12 is a lighter week, not another test. Look at your consistency across the board:

TRAINING	**SLEEP**	**HYDRATION**
NUTRITION	**STEPS**	**RECOVERY HABITS**

- Use your 12 weekly tracker pages as the evidence. They'll tell you more than any single test.
- If you added a test along the way, read it in context (Chapter 3). Twelve weeks of aerobic work builds durability, the ability to go further, and that may not show as a higher threshold number.
- Write it all down on the My Off-Season Review worksheet.

READY FOR RACE SEASON?

Tick these off honestly.

- [ ] Every week hit the floor, and most hit standard or above.
- [ ] Hard sessions feel easier than they did in Week 2, and you know why.
- [ ] Strength is a habit, not a project.
- [ ] Recovery habits are automatic: the sleep routine, the water, the steps.
- [ ] Easy sessions are genuinely easy, and hard sessions are genuinely hard.
- [ ] You know your worst day of the week, and you plan around it.
- [ ] You know your limiter going into race season.

WHAT CHANGES IN RACE SEASON

MORE SPECIFIC

More race-specific work, and longer sessions, especially for an Ironman.

STRENGTH SHIFTS

Towards muscular and strength endurance.

FUELLING PRACTICE

Steps up in your long sessions, building on the habit you started in the off-season.

TRAIN FOR THE COURSE

A hilly course means hills in your race prep.

Every race is different. My Event Strategy race guides cover the course, pacing and fuelling, race by race.

↗ **Event Strategy race guides** tccoaching.co.uk/event-strategy



CHAPTER 15

NEXT STEP

Thank you for reading. You're on my mailing list now, so you'll get my weekly tips, new tools, articles and insights as they come out.

If you want to go further, there are two ways I can help.

$97 (ABOUT £72) · 12 WEEKS

THE TC COACHING IRONMAN / 70.3 OFF-SEASON PLAN

The actual sessions, week by week, in TrainingPeaks. Everything in this guide, turned into your 12 weeks, with a weekly education video from my Legacy Playbook. Find it at tccoaching.co.uk/offseason/ironman.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE

1:1 COACHING

A specific, individual guide through your off-season and into race season, built around your testing, your last season and your life.

↗ **Coaching** tccoaching.co.uk/coaching

↗ **Book a free Roadmap Call** tccoaching.co.uk/apply

JOIN THE OFF-SEASON WHATSAPP GROUP

Free to join. Ask questions of the group, or of me: chat.whatsapp.com/G7PRpE7ed7RC2RQECdLRKc

If nothing changes, nothing changes.

TOM COLLINS · TC COACHING

APPENDIX

WORKSHEETS, RPE, TOOLS AND GLOSSARY

Everything in this section is built to print. Black and white, plenty of room to write.

PAGE 47
TOOLS DIRECTORY
Every free tool in this guide, with its address.

PAGE 48
RPE TABLE
Effort out of 10, for when you don't have a device.

PAGE 49
GLOSSARY
Every term in this guide, in a line.

PAGES 50 TO 58
WORKSHEETS
Eleven worksheets, from your test results to your Off-Season Review.

THE WORKSHEETS

1. My Off-Season at a Glance
2. My Test Results
3. My Last Season
4. My Three Weeks
5. My Week on a Page (print one for every week)
6. My Sleep Audit
7. My Steps Audit
8. My Drop Ladder
9. My Reliable Days
10. Lost Week Rescue Card
11. My Off-Season Review

TOOLS DIRECTORY

All free, all on tccoaching.co.uk.

TOOL	ADDRESS	USE IT FOR
Weekly Planner	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/week-planner	Building the routine and your three weeks (Ch 5, 13)
FTP Calculator	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/ftp-calculator	Bike test and power zones (Ch 3)
Critical Swim Speed	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/css-calculator	Swim test and paces (Ch 3)
Run Threshold Calculator	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/run-threshold	Run test and pace zones (Ch 3)
Heart Rate Zones	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/heart-rate-zones	Heart rate zones and easy sessions (Ch 3, 6)
RPE Explained	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/rpe	Effort without a device (Ch 3, 6)
Pace & Speed	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/pace	Converting run paces (Ch 3)
Caffeine Curfew	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/caffeine	Your caffeine cut-off for better sleep (Ch 8)
TDEE Calculator	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/tdee	Daily energy needs (Ch 9)
Menstrual Cycle	tccoaching.co.uk/tools/menstrual-cycle	Adapting training to your cycle (Ch 6)
Event Strategy	tccoaching.co.uk/event-strategy	Race guides: course, pacing and fuelling (Ch 14)
Two-bottle hydration	tccoaching.co.uk/insights/two-bottle-hydration-standard	The water method (Ch 8)
Coaching	tccoaching.co.uk/coaching	1:1 coaching (Ch 15)
Roadmap Call	tccoaching.co.uk/apply	Book a free Roadmap Call (Ch 15)

RPE: EFFORT OUT OF 10

Rate of perceived exertion. Use it when you don't have a device, or when the numbers and your body disagree.

RPE	WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
1	Very easy. Recovery. You could sing.
2 to 4	Easy. Full conversation. Could hold it all day. Zones 1 and 2, aerobic base.
5 to 6	Somewhat hard. Short sentences. Zone 3, tempo.
7	Hard. A few words only. Zone 4, threshold.
8	Very hard. A word or two. Zone 5, VO2 max intervals.
9	Extremely hard. Near-max. Cannot talk.
10	Maximal. All-out. Sprints and tests only.

More on RPE: tccoaching.co.uk/tools/rpe. TC Coaching athletes also have the RPE tool in the Wayfinder app, under TCC Planning Tools.

GLOSSARY

70.3 AND IRONMAN 70.3: 1.9km swim, 90km bike, 21.1km run (70.3 miles). Ironman: 3.8km, 180km, 42.2km (140.6 miles).

OFF-SEASON The 12-week foundation block before your race build, started whenever you have 12 weeks before it.

RACE SEASON The months of race-specific preparation and racing.

BRICK A bike session followed straight away by a run.

CSS Critical Swim Speed. Your swim threshold pace per 100m, from a 400m and a 200m test.

FTP Functional Threshold Power. 95% of your best 20-minute power.

THRESHOLD PACE The fastest pace you can hold evenly for about 30 minutes to an hour.

W/KG Watts per kilo. Your FTP divided by your body weight.

RPE Rate of perceived exertion. Effort out of 10.

ZONE 2 Easy aerobic training. Conversational.

80/20 About 80% of training easy and 20% hard.

GREY ZONE The middle ground: too hard to be easy, too easy to be hard.

THRESHOLD The highest effort you can sustain for a long time before fatigue builds fast.

VO2 MAX Your maximum rate of using oxygen. VO2 max work is short, very hard efforts.

LIMITER The specific weakness within a discipline that holds your race back the most: swim speed, say, or run durability, not just "the swim".

[KEY] SESSION A priority session. If life gets in the way, protect these first.

FULL / STANDARD / FLOOR WEEK Your three versions of a week: the ceiling, the normal, and the minimum.

DELOAD WEEK A lighter week that lets the training land.

3-REP MAX The heaviest weight you can lift for three clean reps.

5-REP MAX The same for five reps. The beginner's option.

PLYOMETRICS Jumping, bounding and skipping, for tendon stiffness and power.

GAS MODEL General adaptation syndrome. Physical and mental stress add up in one bucket.

TDEE Total daily energy expenditure. The energy you use in a day.

TESTING WEEK Week 1: four tests, spaced so each gets a fair go.

OFF-SEASON REVIEW The Week 12 look back at your consistency, not just your numbers.

WORKSHEET 1

MY OFF-SEASON AT A GLANCE

Fill this in before Week 1.

My last race _____

Week 1 starts _____

Week 12 ends _____

Race season starts _____

My A race _____

Its date _____

WHY THIS OFF-SEASON MATTERS TO ME

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 2

MY TEST RESULTS

Week 1 now, next off-season to compare. Left and right separately.

TEST	WEEK 1	NEXT OFF-SEASON	CHANGE
Run threshold pace			
Run threshold heart rate			
Bike FTP (watts)			
Bike W/kg			
Swim CSS (per 100m)			
Trap Bar Deadlift			
Single-Leg Leg Press: left			
Single-Leg Leg Press: right			
Single-Leg Hamstring Curl: left			
Single-Leg Hamstring Curl: right			
Bench Press (3RM)			
Pull-up (assistance and reps)			
Front plank (max hold)			
Body weight			

MY ZONES, FROM THE TOOLS

WORKSHEET 3

MY LAST SEASON

Be specific. Be honest.

WHERE I FELL SHORT

NIGGLES, AND WHEN THEY STARTED

MISSED WEEKS, AND WHY

MY LIMITER, IN ONE SENTENCE

MY OFF-SEASON FOCUS

WORKSHEET 4

MY THREE WEEKS

Built in the Weekly Planner. Mark your [KEY] sessions.

DAY	FULL WEEK	STANDARD WEEK	FLOOR WEEK
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
	Hours: _____	Hours: _____	Hours: _____

WORKSHEET 5

MY WEEK ON A PAGE

Week ____ of 12 · Tier planned: Full / Standard / Floor · Print one for every week. Tick ☐ each session, and write [KEY] on your priority sessions.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Session 1							
Session 2							
Strength							
Sleep (hours)							
Bedtime / wake							
Water (two bottles)							
Steps							
Stress (1 to 5)							

GOOD DECISIONS THIS WEEK

NEXT WEEK, I'LL

WORKSHEET 6 AND 7

MY SLEEP AND STEPS AUDITS

Two weeks of each, before you change anything.

DAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Sleep (h)														
Steps														

SLEEP

Average hours _____

My wake time _____

So my bedtime is _____

Wind-down starts _____

MY HALF HOUR BEFORE BED

_____

_____

_____

_____

STEPS

Two-week average _____

WEEK	TARGET (+5%)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

WORKSHEET 8 AND 9

MY DROP LADDER AND MY RELIABLE DAYS

What goes first, and where your [KEY] sessions go.

MY DROP LADDER: WHAT GOES FIRST WHEN THE WEEK SHRINKS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Shorten, then move, then drop. Never on the ladder: [KEY] sessions, one strength session, at least one swim, sleep.

MY RELIABLE DAYS

DAY	RELIABLE	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS GOES WRONG	WHY
Mon	☐	☐	☐	
Tue	☐	☐	☐	
Wed	☐	☐	☐	
Thu	☐	☐	☐	
Fri	☐	☐	☐	
Sat	☐	☐	☐	
Sun	☐	☐	☐	

WORKSHEET 10

LOST WEEK RESCUE CARD

Cut it out. Keep it where you'll see it.

THE LOST WEEK RESCUE

- [ ] Call it: decide the week is lost, and log what happened.
- [ ] Salvage what's left: the [KEY] session, and one short session.
- [ ] Don't make it up: no catch-up week, no stacking.
- [ ] Come back to the plan as written, or one notch lower.
- [ ] Protect the first session back: easy, and it happens.
- [ ] Look for the pattern.

WHEN YOU'RE ILL: RECOVERY IS THE MISSION

- [ ] Sleep as much as you physically can.
- [ ] Walk outside instead of training.
- [ ] Drink water.
- [ ] Vitamins, and more whole, nutrient-dense food.
- [ ] Come back easy once you're well. If in doubt, speak to your GP.

Pain or injury: stop, and speak to your coach or a rehab specialist.

WORKSHEET 11

MY OFF-SEASON REVIEW

Week 12. Consistency first, numbers second.

AREA	HOW CONSISTENT? (1 TO 5)	WHAT I LEARNED
Training		
Sleep		
Water		
Steps		
Nutrition		

HOW HARD SESSIONS FEEL NOW, AGAINST WEEK 2

READY FOR RACE SEASON?

- [ ] Every week hit the floor, and most hit standard or above.
- [ ] Hard sessions feel easier than they did in Week 2, and you know why.
- [ ] Strength is a habit, not a project.
- [ ] Recovery habits are automatic: the sleep routine, the water, the steps.
- [ ] Easy sessions are genuinely easy, and hard sessions are genuinely hard.
- [ ] You know your worst day of the week, and you plan around it.
- [ ] You know your limiter going into race season.