



Setting Goals

If you don't know where you are going, any path will do.

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We have all heard about the importance of setting goals, but few people know how to set them effectively. The process of setting goals is simple in theory, but takes critical thinking and planning to do it well. Probably at this point in the season you have picked out most or all of the key races you want to do this year. If not, that's a great place to start. Teaching yourself to set realistic, yet challenging, personal performance oriented goals will allow you to do the work necessary to achieve those goals, allow you to see improved performance, lead to increased confidence, and ultimately lead to your success as an athlete.

The goal setting process consists of seven steps. Take your time with each step and write your answers for each point down on paper.

1. **Define the "Dream":** Think big and imagine where you want to go with triathlon. See it and feel it. Don't limit yourself to this season by any means. Your dream goals all have to do with you and your own performance, not comparing yourself to anyone else.
2. **Know Where You Are Right Now:** How are you doing right now? With multisport you have to think about each sport and break up what you are trying to accomplish into sections, (i.e. speed, strength, nutrition, mental skills). Get feedback from coaches and training partners.
3. **Be Honest About What You Need to Develop:** This is a tough, yet critical step. You will need to be really objective with yourself to know where the gaps are! Again, get feedback from others outside yourself. However, don't just focus on your weaknesses, continue improving your strengths as well.
4. **Set and Pursue Short-Term Goals:** Break your dream goal into shorter term, more doable goals (i.e. end of the season or race by race).
5. **Make a Plan For Daily Improvement:** This is the most challenging and where most persons fall short. Planning for daily improvement helps maintain motivation and each training session becomes high quality. Don't just say that you are going to do a 'speed workout', literally write out the specifics you are going to accomplish for that day and follow through with your plan.

6. **Commit Yourself Completely:** Make sure the goals you have set are really what YOU want to accomplish. “I will” not “I’ll try”. This is where the realistic stuff comes into play. Set goals that will stretch and challenge you, not tear you into pieces, allowing yourself to never feel satisfied.

7. **Continually Monitor Progress:** Be flexible and change the plan when necessary. Sometimes your goals will change based on illnesses, injuries, uncontrollable external distractions, or quicker/slower improvements than expected.

Having a purpose is really important. If you don't know where you are going, then any path will do. Motivation and drive come from constant focus on the destination and then seeing yourself moving through the process for getting there. Setting goals is part of a process of identifying why you do what you do and ultimately defines what kind of athlete you not only want to be, but are going to be.