

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

**KERRY:** Okay. Tonight's call is with Melissa Mantak. Melissa was a former professional triathlete, for six years. During that time she achieved numerous podium finishes at the World Cup level. In 1992 she places third at the World Cup championships in Canada, capturing the overall World Cup title. That same year she was voted Triathlete of the Year by the US Olympic committee. In 1993 she added to an impressive list of accomplishments by winning the first ITU Indoor World Championship title.

Today she is a coach. She is currently certified as a level three USA triathlon coach and a level one USA cycling coach. Those are both the highest certifications in those organizations. She is also a performance-enhancement specialist, certified by the National Academy of Sports Medicine. In 2007 Melissa started working as a head coach with the US Triathlon team at World Cup races in the ITU.

Not only that, Melissa is also my coach. I've been harping on about that I think coaching is important, she's been my coach for a while now. I just wanted to throw that in there too. With that, I welcome Melissa Mantak to the call.

**MELISSA:** Thank you, Kerry. It's been a pleasure working with you for so many years now.

**KERRY:** [Laughs] It's been a while. We've definitely known each other for a long time. It's been a good ride.

We're going to talk a little bit more about short-course racing, Olympic distance and sprint distance and things like that, and ITU. The first question I have for you is, why don't you explain a little about what exactly is ITU racing.

**MELISSA:** First of all I'd like to talk a little bit about what the ITU is. I don't know that many people really know about the ITU. It's the International Triathlon Union. It's the international governing body of triathlon. Just like USA Triathlon is a national governing body of triathlon, the ITU takes care of triathlon on the world championship and Olympic level. At its most basic the ITU is the feeder for Olympic triathlon. That's kind of the biggest goal that they have and the work that they do. They also run age-group world championships in the short-course and long-course. They run the Olympics, PanAm Games, Commonwealth Games, World Cups, ITU Continental Cups, Regional Championships and now this year they've got a new World Championship Series along with the World Cup Series. These are premium World Cups - bigger fields, bigger prize purses

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

- that all feed into the World Championships.

1989 was the first World Championships that the ITU officially held at the Olympic distance. 1994 was their first draft-legal triathlon in Osaka, Japan, which I competed in. It was a great, great race.

So what is ITU racing? ITU racing is still triathlon. Triathlon is really a pretty small sport but we have a lot of different slots and different focuses in triathlon. We've got the short-course, sprints, we've got the Olympic distance, we've got the ITU race and of course we've got the Half-Iron and Ironman distances. So there's a big spectrum of types of racing and distances of racing.

The biggest difference with the ITU racing is the draft-legal format on the bike. The other difference is that it's a criterion-style race. So on the swim most of the time athletes will dive off a pontoon and they'll do two loops. They'll do half the swim and then they get out of the water and then dive back in, which is also a format that's become popular with the Ironman races. It makes it much more spectator friendly.

Then on the bike they also do loops, usually six to eight loops on a course. It's still 40 kilometers, still the regular Olympic distance. Then on the run they also usually do that as a criterion-style race. Again, it makes it a little more spectator-friendly. You can stand in one place and see a lot of action.

**KERRY:** Cool. Awesome. That is good stuff. What is different about spring and Olympic distance racing compared to an Iron distance?

**MELISSA:** I think the biggest difference is that the training volume for the Ironman and the Half-Ironman distance is much bigger. The focus is aerobic development and lower intensity, going out there all day long. You're looking at an event that's anywhere from 8 hours to 17 hours long versus a sprint or an Olympic distance race where, of course, aerobic development is also key because any event that takes more than a couple of minutes is technically an aerobic event. But in order to go faster at the sprint and Olympic distance, in order to get better over time, it's important to increase your skill, your power, your intensity. So more high-intensity work is important.

**KERRY:** Cool. Awesome. Why don't you explain the differences between training for Olympic and sprint versus Iron races more specifically?

**MELISSA:** Okay. In the sprint distances, first of all, sprint distance is 750 meter swim, a 20 kilometer bike, a 5K run. The Olympic distance basically doubles that with 1500 meter swim, 40K bike and a 10K run. Then we go up to the Half-Ironman distance. It's an 1800 meter swim, 56 mile bike

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

and then a half marathon, 13.1 miles. Then the Ironman is 3800 meters, 112 miles and then a full marathon after that.

A lot of people start out in the sprint distances. It's a great place to start out. A lot of people can manage the training and the racing at the sprint distance. It's a minimal time commitment and a way to get your foot wet and get your foot in the door and see if you like doing it. People kind of graduate to the Olympic distance and then sometimes they'll graduate to the Half-Iron and Ironman distance.

One kind of unfortunate thing in our sport is that a lot of media attention is paid to the Ironman distance races and the drama and everything that happens in Ironman. Although they're wonderful and challenging events, I think there's a lot more to triathlon, especially in the shorter distances. It's much more accessible for people.

So what are the training requirements? The training requirements are speed and skill development. First of all, as I talked about, the aerobic development. That's first and foremost. You need to build your volume. You need to build your endurance up, building that aerobic base and that aerobic capacity. Then from there building speed, power, skill. Especially at the ITU style racing. There's a lot of skill involved, a lot of power involved. These kids are racing an all-out 1500 meter, all-out 40K time trial and then a criterion-style race where you're sprint and go, sprint and go, and then an all-out 10K race. So at the very lowest level it's an introductory sport and at the highest level it's just all-out, 100 percent effort for a couple of hours.

**KERRY:** Good deal. In the shorter distances swimming becomes more important. Why don't you talk about how an athlete in the shorter distance triathlons train specifically for swimming and why it's more important.

**MELISSA:** Okay. For the swim, it's really important, especially at the ITU level where if you're not there with the swim then you're not going to make the lead bike pack. The swim becomes very, very critical. Over the years that I've been in triathlon I've really seen a lot of fast swimmers come into the sport. In previous years you could be kind of a slow swimmer and still get out and win a World Cup event. Now you have to be a very, very good swimmer.

So in the time-trial style events you can be kind of an average swimmer and be a really strong biker and have a chance at catching the lead bikers and runners.

But for swimming volume is important, skill is very, very important. You can't really build your endurance, your strength and your speed unless you

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

have that base of skill. Level of skill is very, very important. Working at that threshold level, knowing what your threshold pace is, knowing what your threshold intensity is, knowing what your race-pace is.

The ability to change paces, I find... I work with a lot of people who are really good at swimming the same pace for a 100 as they are for 1,000 or 1500 meters. But in order to get faster you have to be able to train at the higher levels. You have to train above your threshold, doing sprints and very fast events. But you also have to get good at endurance swimming. So swimming a lot of 50s all the time will help you be really great at 50s and help you improve your speed, which is important, but it's also important to do those kind of long, middle distance - 400s, 500s, 800s, those types of things - to get strong as a swimmer.

In open-water swimming it's very important to be a strong swimmer. You have to have a powerful arm pull and catch. Again, skill is very, very important there.

In the loop style of swimming, whether you're doing an Ironman or an ITU, you also have to train to be able to get up out of the water and run and then dive back into the water, which is challenging in and of itself, going from that prone position, standing up, running as fast as you can when you have no blood in your legs, and then diving back in and getting back to swimming. That's a whole other challenge to swimming. And then diving, knowing how to dive in, the butterfly dive... I lost what it is. Kerry, help me out. The dolphin dive.

KERRY: Oh yeah, the dolphin dive.

MELISSA: So the swim is very important because it's just a faster event all along. If you've only got an hour or two hours to compete you've got to be competitive all the way through the event. Whereas if you've got 10 hours to compete you have the opportunity to make up more time.

KERRY: Yeah. Can you just explain, a lot of people don't understand why you need to do so much swimming volume? A lot of people ask me, through Triathlon Summit, "Why do you have to swim so much distance for swim training when you're doing such a short distance?"

MELISSA: Well, everybody is going to be a little bit different in their volume needs and abilities. If you've got only so much time in your day and your week and you can only swim for three one-hour sessions a week, that's about the best that you can do. But at some point increasing your volume will help to increase your efficiency and your comfort and your feel in the water. Again, that feel and comfort level in the water. In any triathlon we want to be able to swim as hard as we can for as long as we need to in the

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

event and have that swim take very little out of us so we can get on the bike and get to the run and still feel really strong so the swim doesn't take very much out of us.

As you get better, through your swimming, and through any sport, you need the challenge of increasing your intensity or increasing volume to continue to improve. Otherwise you just kind of stay at the same level. Our bodies hit that level of homeostasis when we get good at what we do all the time. So we need that extra challenge of adding more volume, adding more distance.

**KERRY:** Cool. Awesome. Good stuff. Running off the bike is very important in all the distances really, but in the shorter distances you've really got to be able to get off and get right into it at a very high pace. How does one train then to run fast off the bike in a shorter distance race?

**MELISSA:** Basically the simple thing is that you just run off your bike frequently. The more you practice that skill the better you get at it. It's very, very uncomfortable at first, running off your bike, because biking and running are not very similar sports. On a bike you're kind of bent over, your hip flexors are tightened up, your calf muscles are getting really tight. Then you go to stand up and your body is like, "Whoa, what's this? What's going on here?" Over time if you practice that you do get better at it.

So starting with a ten-minute run off of an easy bike, an easy run off of an easy bike, and doing that once or twice a week is a great thing to do, especially this time of year. Now is the time of year to start adding those bike-run combos in, or bricks. We also call them bricks. So as you get better at it you want to add more intensity. So go for a hard bike ride and then maybe use your run. Or a hard bike ride and add some time to your run. So instead of 10 minutes add 20 minutes to 30 minutes, depending on the distance goal of your next race. Then as you continue to improve you can do a hard bike and then a hard run right afterwards. I used to go out and do all-out intervals on the bike and then go run at the track and do a really hard track workout. But you can't do a lot of those because it takes a lot out of you. It does help to harden your body and get used to that, how that feels to bike all-out and then get off and run all-out.

It's all just a matter of time and training and also remembering that years add up in your training. So what you did last year builds on what you do this year. What you do this year builds on next year. So it does get easier to improve. You get to the point where it feels good to run off the bike. You may not believe that your first time out, but it does feel good to do that.

Another thing that I like to do with people are bike-run combos or bike-

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

run repeats. You get a good warm-up on the bike. You do varying intensity on the bike and varying intensity on the run and small repeats. So say do a hard ten-minute bike ride and then get off and do a hard five-minute run. Take a short break and repeat that a couple of times. Then you can vary that. You can do 5K pace, 10K pace on the runs. You can do half-marathon pace, endurance pace. You can add some strides. On the bike you can do some threshold work. You can do some hill intervals. There's so many things that you can do with that. Then you just do these repeats. A lot of my athletes think I'm crazy but they get out there and feel really good on that bike to run transition.

**KERRY:** Definitely. I love those. She makes me do them a lot. They work good. They work very good come race day.

**MELISSA:** They're also good for duathletes. Anybody who's doing duathlon, it's really a great way to get used to that bike-run, bike-run, bike-run. It just hardens your body and gets you to a new comfort level so once you get to the race it's like, "Oh, no big deal. Piece of cake here."

**KERRY:** For sure. They're great. They work awesome. Melissa, you do clinics and you also coach as well. Why don't you tell people where they can find that information. My information is...I'm a professional coach. That's what I do fulltime. I mostly work with triathletes but I've worked with all different kinds of athletes. My business name is "The Empowered Athlete." My website is [theempoweredathlete.com](http://theempoweredathlete.com), or [empoweredathlete.com](http://empoweredathlete.com). Either one works. You can also just google my name, Melissa Mantak, and you find my website there. I've got lots of information on the clinics that I do. I do clinics in swimming, open-water swimming, bike-run training. I've got a new series that I'm doing this year called "Running School," teaching people how to run, how to run faster, how to run better, how to stay healthy while you're running, how to be strong and fit as a runner.

I was never taught how to run. I don't know how many people were actually taught how to run. We're learning more as adults now. There's a lot more information out there. There's a lot to running form, running skill, running mechanics. I love teaching people that. I love hearing the great stories of how they improve when they improve their running skill. So that's how to get in touch with me.

**KERRY:** Cool. And where are those clinics?

**MELISSA:** The clinics are all here in the Denver area. I haven't done any really outside the Denver area but I do work with people one on one online and through the phone and through email and all those fun, different types of media.

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

KERRY: Awesome. Good deal. So you can be reached any way, basically.

MELISSA: Yeah.

KERRY: Let's get into cycling for the shorter distances. Why don't we just talk a little bit about some of the differences there and what you need to be good at and how to train for those, the cycling.

MELISSA: Okay. With cycling the majority of athletes are going to be a time-trial type event. But it's also important to know what intensity you're training at. How do you measure the intensity that you're training at? Do you use a heart rate monitor? Do you use a Power Meter? Do you use both? Have you gone to a lab and gotten a lactate-threshold test? How do you determine how you're measuring your intensity in your training, whether it's on the bike or the run or whatever? Especially on the bike we need to be able to measure the intensity of training that we're working at.

You can do simple field tests. A 20-minute time-trial test gives you lots of information. You take those tests and you determine your heart rate training rate, your power zone training ranges. Then you can determine the different types of intensities and intervals based on those ranges and based on the type of racing that you're doing to be doing.

Again, this is an aerobic event so endurance is very, very important in the off-season. Base-training is very important. This time of the year hopefully you've gotten most of your base-training down. Maybe you're just starting your base-training for an August event or a November event. Make sure you spend plenty of time in that base-training. It's very, very important. It's like the foundation of your house. Without the foundation everything kind of falls apart and your season lasts about eight weeks.

Then from there we start to build modern intensity at a tempo level. A tempo level that builds strength and power, aerobic power. We're starting to build into a little bit of anaerobic mixed in there but your body can handle it. It's more of that uncomfortable-comfortable range. Tempo level is like a zone three, heart rate zone, power zone, building strength, building that aerobic power. Then you start getting to sub-threshold and threshold work with just a little bit higher intensity. You want to kind of push that threshold up where you're starting to feel more anaerobic. It's important to be training at threshold, up at VO2 max levels, which is, again, on the zone five level where you only hold on to that intensity for about three to eight minutes. Very important for the ability to time-trial in 30 minute to one hour type, one hour or a little bit more type of events. It's very important to train those zones on your bike.

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

Then also, if you live in a place where there are hills or you can train in the wind, knowing the courses that you're training on helps you to develop what type of training you should be doing. For the most part on the run and especially on the bike in the Olympic and the sprint distance, once you've got that base down, once you've got that tempo, you want to really be hitting the threshold and the VO2 max levels. Those are the very important levels to really help you improve and go faster.

**KERRY:** Awesome. Good deal. Let's talk a little bit about transitions. Can you tell us why they're important in shorter races? Or why they may be more important? And how can someone get better at doing them?

**MELISSA:** Transitions are key. They're an important part. They're part of your overall time. We don't single out the transition time so your overall time takes into account the transition. So if you want to go faster you must race the transitions. You absolutely must race the transitions.

When I was thinking about this question I remembered a time back in the early 90s. I was doing a World Cup and I was just bound and determined to win this race. I went into T2 as fast as I could go and came out of it as fast as I could go. I was with about four other women at the time. I came out ahead of the pack and there was a girl behind me. We ran the exact same time for that run but I was 30 seconds ahead of her, only because I pushed it that much harder through transition. So I won the race because of my transitions.

So having a good transition is really key to racing faster in the short-course races. It's important that towards the end of the swim you're going as fast as you can and you're starting to think about what's going on in your transition to T1. So you want to come out of that swim running as fast as you can, which requires training. If you're not comfortable getting out of the swim and then running fast, it's very important to be able to do that. Also, taking your gear off in an efficient way, taking your goggles off, taking your top off, and running while you're doing this, as fast as you can do that. It's important to be able to run fast right out of the swim.

Also, knowing your transition spot is very important. If you run into the transition area and you're running around like a chicken with its head cut off, you're going to be losing a lot of time. So it's important to know where you're going so you get yourself oriented in that transition area before the race starts so you know where you're going when you come out of the water.

You need to be able to get out of that wetsuit really fast so practicing stripping your wetsuit is very important. At the Ironman they have wetsuit strippers so they can help you with that. But Olympic distance and sprint

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

distance you're on your own. You've got to really be able to get out of that very, very quickly. Then get your helmet on and then you're running out of transition again.

You run with your bike. So getting out of T1. You need to be able to practice the fastest way to do it is to leave your shoes on your bike and you'll be able to do a flying mount. These are definitely advanced skills and you want to practice them a lot before you do them in a race. It'll save tons and tons of time. I've seen some of my athletes that I've worked with on this just crush their competition in the transitions because they're doing flying mounts and dismounts and they've practiced them a lot before they get into their big race.

You blast ahead. You really want to get out fast on the bike. Again, this is something you need to practice. For people who are just starting in triathlon they want to kind of get slow and get into their bike race, but if you want to get faster, you need to be able to blast off on your bike and get into a rhythm, settle into your race pace.

Go through the whole bike and then as you're getting into T2 you want to practice that flying dismount. So you're taking your shoes off before you even get to the dismount line. Then you hop off and you're running right off the bike. You're running right back to your transition spot so you know the flow of the transition area. There's always a specific flow to keep things organized and keep traffic in a safe movement pattern. So you know exactly where you're going.

Then you want to get into...rack your bike efficiently, helmet comes off. Then stretchy laces on your shoes. It's really important practicing getting into your shoes quickly. Then you want to blast off out of T1 as fast as you can go. Again, for people who are just starting out, it's kind of hard to go fast right away. You want to kind of ease into it. Especially at the ITU level, the international level, you want to be able to race right out of transition as fast as you can. Then you can settle back into your race pace.

Often times in the ITU racing as the men and women are leaving transition they're running at about a 400 meter pace for the first bit of the transition, just to get out and get a good position on the run.

The most important thing to think about for the transition is practice. Practice, practice, practice those transitions so you get really fast at it, it's second nature and you get into a race and it just all flows very easily for you. So take some of your training time and spend time practicing your transitions. Get to the race early enough so that you can really get yourself organized in the transition area. It will really pay off in shaving time off your overall time. Racing the transitions is very important to getting faster.

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

**KERRY:** Awesome. Good stuff. Let's talk a little bit about tactics in shorter races. How do those change versus doing an Iron or a Half-Iron distance?

**MELISSA:** The biggest difference in the shorter races versus the longer races is patience. In the shorter races you have no time to be patient. Everything is boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Everything happens very, very quickly. That's why you have to have everything organized, flying through the transition, in and out of the transitions. It's very, very important. Race tactics have to include being very, very efficient in everything that you do. Race tactics also include knowing your race paces. How fast can I go? Can I push harder? What can I do?

A lot of that will come with some mental skills training. Sometimes it takes a while for us to learn how to go at that red line. An Olympic distance and a sprint distance, if you want to really be competitive you are red-lining from the start to the finish.

Warm-up is very, very important. It's very, very key to the short races. So a good warm-up where you do some swimming, some biking, some running, adding some intensity on the swim, the bike, the run, it's very important to being able to get off on the start as fast as you can go. You want to be able to start hard and fast so you can get out there, get a good position and get on fast legs for the swim. So warm-up is very, very important as part of your race tactic.

Again, Olympic distance you're just red-lining it the whole way, if you're really able to do it. It takes practice and learning in your training, but also it's good to practice in some races. So before you get to your "A" priority race, your big race for your season, practice in some shorter races that are not as important to you and practice, "How hard can I go?" Do a race where your goal is to just blow up and see how hard you can go. Very few people actually do blow up. [Laughs] If you do blow up then maybe you need to slow down a little bit. If you don't blow up then you know you can go harder.

For the Ironman distance race patience is really key. Creating a game plan where you've picked your heart rate ranges or your power ranges and sticking to that to the best of your ability because it's a long day out there. It's a long, endurance day out there and a lot of times race tactics come and just pang off impatience, just more patience in what you're doing there.

I'm also noticing that there's a greater similarity between Olympic distance training racing and the Half-Ironman distance training and racing. Some people may have noticed that a lot of the ITU athletes, somebody

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

like Andy Potts, come off of World Cup racing for many years and they go right into Half-Ironman and they kill everybody, just crush everybody because they've been doing the volume necessary to do the Half-Ironman but they've also had a lot of more-intensity training, which helps them to be a lot stronger and faster than a lot of Half-Ironman distance racers who are focusing on just a lot of volume. They're slower racers. So sometimes there's a greater correlation between Olympic distance and Half-Ironman versus Half-Ironman and Ironman distance because you can't just necessarily double your Half-Ironman time and say, "This is what my Ironman is going to be." That equation doesn't really work there. The Ironman distance is more of a stand-alone type of event, very, very special and unique event.

**KERRY:** Awesome. Good deal. What's a good way for people to figure out their pacing for a shorter race?

**MELISSA:** Yeah. Sometimes that's a bit of trial and error. Unfortunately a lot of training is a bit of trial and errors. Doing field testing, running 5Ks, running 10Ks, see what you can do for those paces there. Generally in an Olympic distance whatever your 10K race pace is, you can generally add about seven percent of that time to predict your 10K race time in an Olympic distance triathlon. So practicing, "What do I think I can do," in training is very important. Having some idea of what you're doing in training and then getting into the race and saying, "Okay, what do I think I can do here? Am I going to use my heart rate monitor? What kind of guides am I going to use to check my race pace? Am I going to use my GPS or what am I going to use to check my paces or am I just going to go on how my body feels? What does it feel to be like when I'm red lining? What does it feel to be like when I back down a little bit and then I speed up a little bit?" So practicing what you think you can do in training is very important. With the guidance of a coach that can also be very, very helpful because a coach can stand back and say, "Okay, these are what I'm seeing you do in training. This is what I think you can do in the race. Here is what I'm predicting you can do. Here are some targets to handle."

Another thing I like to help people with is different levels of goals that you can achieve in a race. So maybe a lower-level goal would be at this pace. Another level goal would be more of a reaching pace.

Then you have to take into consideration what the conditions are on race day. Is it really windy? Is it really hot? Those types of conditions will always affect your intensity and your speed and pace. For example the Ironman triathlon in China just a few weeks ago, it was 113 degrees. The top men normally run about in the 2:30s to 2:40s for their fastest marathon. They do that out in Kona even where it's very hot, humid and windy. But the fastest men's run time was 3 hours and 39 minutes.

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

KERRY: Yeah, I followed that.

MELISSA: That's how hot it was. Rassis Henning who won it, who did that time, is a very, very good runner. So that's just an example of what the race conditions can do to your pace and your times.

Another thing that works very well for people is going by our PE or your rate of perceived exertion in your training and your racing. "How does it feel when I'm doing a seven-minute mile? How does it feel when I'm doing a six-minute mile? How does it feel when I'm riding my bike at my threshold pace?" That may not always show in the speed that you're going or the watts that you're putting out or the heart rate that you're putting out on any given day. So our PE is another way to go on figuring out your paces. Again, it's a bit of trial and error. Using some practice races will help and just giving it a little bit of time to figure out before your big races is a very good way to figure out what your race pace will be.

KERRY: Awesome. Good deal. I've got one more question for you here. That is basically about the off-season. I think a lot of athletes out there confuse that for taking three months off and doing absolutely nothing, which can hamper your training for the next year quite a bit sometimes. So why don't you talk about that.

MELISSA: Yeah, I think there's a lot of misconceptions. Like with taper phase, people think, "Oh, taper time, I get to do nothing and drink beer and then I get ready to race." That doesn't work. In the taper there's very specific things you need to do to have a proper taper to insure a great race. But also in the off-season, you're right, there's so much...Number one, rejuvenation, recuperation, recovery from the stresses of the season. It's very important to take some down-time. But it's also very important to stay active and start looking at the goals for the next season. What you do in October, November and December and January, is very important for improving and accomplishing your goals for the next season. If you just take three months off you're basically re-starting what you just did for the whole season. You lose so much that you're re-starting everything.

Also, another goal in the off-season is to not gain excessive weight. We tend to put on extra weight and then honestly you spend the first two to three months of the season not only improving your fitness but losing weight. So you're losing all the gains that you had. I had mentioned earlier how every year builds on itself but if you take an extended break for three months, then you lose everything and you're starting back at square one. So the off-season is very important for improving for the next season.

In the off-season, that's when we build that endurance base, that aerobic

## The Triathlon Summit - Get Blazing Fast for Olympic Distance Races with Melissa Mantak

base, that base training is very important. It's a good time to improve your fat metabolism, your fat-burning metabolism. So really focusing on the quality of your diet, eating fruits and vegetables and protein and decreasing the amount of carbohydrates that you're eating will teach your body to burn fat as a fuel more efficiently. So the off-season is very, very important for building that base, for then making plans for the next season.

KERRY: Awesome, Melissa. That's great stuff you just shared with us. Can you again tell us where people can get your information if they want to get in touch with you and check out your clinics, all that stuff?

MELISSA: My website is [www.theempoweredathlete.com](http://www.theempoweredathlete.com) or [www.empoweredathlete.com](http://www.empoweredathlete.com). All kinds of information on what I do. I've got some great photos on my website, I must say. It's really fun to look at some of the photos there because that's partly what I do with people is I go and use photography as a teaching and a coaching tool, but also I'm at the races watching so I take a lot of photos. There's some really great photos on my website. Great information on how to improve your training, how to reach me and also some articles on learning more things about what training does for you and how to improve your training and racing.

KERRY: Good deal. Well Melissa, thank you so much for coming on. That's basically it. That's tonight's call. We will talk to you guys later. Bye.

MELISSA: Great. Thank you, Kerry.