

## Bike Shedding is Today's PLOT to Manage Tri Training

The only positive outcome about wasting time in work meetings is you usually get paid for attendance. In triathlon training you never get paid so don't waste time on mundane workouts or unimportant distractions once you get started.

Triathletes suffer from time poverty. There is never enough time in the day to swim, bike, run, eat, sleep, work, love your significant other, socialize with family/friends, and everything else in life you want to accomplish.



Let's look at how to relieve the problem of time suck from your workouts by applying the wisdom of Cecil Northcote Parkinson who created the term, Parkinson's Law of Triviality (PLOT), or more simply, "bike-shedding". Mr. Parkinson was a British naval historian, author, and expert in business management. His satirical law is based on people's behavior to spend a disproportionate amount of time on trivial issues of low monetary value and minimal complexity compared to important higher value and complicated matters.

Most non-triathletes don't understand the nuances of Ironman events compared to a triathlon in your local park. They wouldn't spend any time helping you make training decisions other than saying let the experts decide. To you, storing bikes should be a trivial aspect of triathloning but to an eager non-triathlete, he would discuss the subject of

how best to build a bike shed to protect your equipment. He'd discuss the pros and cons of construction type, size, location, and more about the shed. The bike shedding time suck discussion would never reach the value of your lost tri training time.

Do you recognize any of your own actions of bike shedding?

### **Time sucking activities may lurk almost anywhere and in any form.**

Consider your swim workout. Did you really swim to your distance and time targets? Time sucks occur when deciding on workout content. Maybe you talked with others on

deck about theoretical best workout content. Eliminate wasted time by arriving with your workout from a coach. Screwing around with different swim fins or hand paddles of different sizes for various segments of your swim workouts contributes to your own bike shedding in the water. You get half the swimming in a set time period as scheduled. Swimming less yardage in workouts will result in racers being worn-out in T1, before getting on the bike.

Do you spend more time talking about biking with local bike store personnel than actual time in the saddle? You probably know a clubmate who did. He talked about the top aero gear, the latest breakthrough technology, and the fastest bikes the pros rode. Then spent more time researching options on the Internet where he eventually bought on-line based on color and coolness factor. While his bike looked fast, especially hanging in his bike shed at home, Freddie's teammates became faster by doing scheduled training in their pain caves.

Running itself can be a time suck if workouts lack specific purpose for race performances. Let a coach plan your personalized workout content to boost your speed and endurance for your next race day.

Too much time spent not improving is the worst PLOT for any race outcome.

You probably didn't know this behavior was someone's "Law." Look for others engaged in bike shedding at work or workouts every day. Remove the time suck openings in your activities to maximize your accomplishments toward your race and life goals.

Did you experience an "Oh shit" moment when reading this write-up? What other ideas to you have to eliminate time sucks?

*Follow-up note: you may be more familiar with another of Parkinson's laws, "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion". A common phenomenon when too many people become associated with a once lean project until scope and deliverables increased to a level of members' overblown importance and beyond. Let me know if you need any input on coaching or may be about expanding a shed for a new bike.....*