



Acclimatization takes about 10-14 days, similar to other training adaptations.

COLD PACKS: You might want to consider a cooling vest or a frozen hydration pack. These can be useful in maintaining lower core temperature, but they come with a weight penalty. Also, vests can actually impede cooling once their cooling action has dissipated. Removable frozen hydration packs are more versatile because they can be discarded and you can drink their contents.

HYDRATE: Proper hydration is obviously critical, both in training and racing in the heat. Numerous resources exist on this topic, so I won't delve into that here.

PRE-COOL: Besides the general training strategies, there are a few specialized techniques you can sometimes employ before a race. Pre-cooling is one; it entails performing an abbreviated warm-up in cool temperatures prior to a hot event. For example, the weather at the Fitchburg Longsjo Classic stage race in Massachusetts is nearly always oppressive. It's often very hot and humid for the prologue time trial. The 25-minute effort is held in the afternoon for most categories. However, the TT happens to start right next to the race hotel. Are you with me? If you can, warm up on a trainer in a room with the A/C cranked, and don't come out until right before your start. By keeping core temperature low while warming up your muscles in this way, you'll have full power for nearly the entire TT, as core

temperature tends not to rise beyond optimal for at least 15-20 minutes of exercise.

Even if you're not staying at a hotel right by the start, you can still pre-cool. Simply do a relaxed, hour-long ride the morning of your event, then clean up and go to the start but stay in an air-conditioned building or car until a few minutes before your start. Then roll up to the line and let 'er rip.

These techniques are often used by professionals. The pre-warm-up method allows them to pre-ride the course if needed. The pre-cooling technique was employed by three members of the 2004 U.S. Olympic team, all of whom medaled in the time trial. Unfortunately, the longer the event, the less useful these techniques are. By 20-30 minutes into a race, your core temperature will be as elevated as it would have been otherwise... but at least you got those 20-30 minutes.

Short time trials, short-track mountain-bike races and criteriums are prime candidates for these methods. Just make sure not to miss your start.

If these techniques are logistically impossible, at least stay out of direct sun and warm up on the road where you can get some wind instead of on a trainer. VN

JOHN VERHEUL (www.jbvcoaching.com) is a full-time cycling coach who works with a variety of cyclists, from beginners to national champions.

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