

Effects of Aging on Ultra: Triathlon Performance

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Abstract : The purpose of this critical review is to find out what is known and what is unknown about the effects of aging on endurance performance, especially on ultra- triathlon performance. It has been shown that among master's athlete's peak levels of performance decreased by 50% by age 50 it has also been clearly revealed that age associated atrophy, weakness and fatigability cannot be halted, although year round athletic training can slow down this age associated decline. Studies have further revealed that 30% to 50% decrease in skeletal muscle mass between ages 40 and 80 years, which is accompanied by an equal or even greater decline in strength and power and an increase in muscle weakness and fatigability. Studies on ultra-triathlon athletes revealed that 30 to 39 year old showed fastest time, with athletes in younger and older age groups were slower. It appears that the length of the endurance performance appears to influence age related endurance performance decline in short distance triathlons. A significant decline seems to start at the age of 40 to 50 years, whereas in long distance triathlons this decline seems to start after the age of 65 years. However, it is not clear whether this decline is related in any way to the training methods used, the duration of training, or the frequency of training. It's also not clear whether the triathlon athletes experience more injuries due to long hours of training. It's also not clear whether these athletes used performance enhancing drugs to enhance their performance. It's not also clear whiles there has been tremendous increase in the number of athletes specializing in triathlon. On the basis of our experience and available research evidence we have provided answers to some of these questions. We concluded that aging associated decline in ultra-endurance performance is inevitable although it can be slowed down.

Keywords : aging, triathlon, atrophy, endurance

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