

The Thrill

By Bruce Bosler

Photos by Ryan Bates Photography

Words can't describe the thrill of reaching the finish line at the Ironman World Championship Triathlon in Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii. For me it was a feeling like no other. It had been nearly 12 hours since the early morning blast of the starter cannon sent all 1400 of us swimming madly at once, churning Kailua Bay into white foam. After 140 miles, I made my final turn onto Alii Drive, the last quarter mile before the finish line. Where my body had only moments before felt spent and exhausted, the thrill of finishing brought new life. I ran taller, my pace quickened and people I had never met lined the street to cheer us all on. A hundred yards away was the flood lit finish line. There was a party going on with music and celebration. It was then I knew I was going to make it. After all the preparation and all the effort, I would finish the Ironman.



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IRON CHAMPION

SoFit>> How did you get started in ultra-competitions?

Dr. Bosler >> Curiosity led me to attend my first triathlon as a spectator. I was so inspired by the level of competition at the triathlon, but I only had a month to train for it. I was quickly humbled. I knew more training would be necessary, so I entered cycling events like the Foxy Fall Century, the Davis Double Century, and the Death Valley Century. Then I entered two marathons, one in Las Vegas and the other in Death Valley. To train for the swim, I twice did the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon where we swam from Alcatraz to San Francisco. Four years after my lack luster first triathlon, I competed in my first Ironman. Three years after that, I did it again.

SoFit>> What kind of effect did your parents have

on your fitness prowess?

Dr. Bosler >> My parents were relatively healthy. They were active tennis players. My dad snow skied up until his mid-seventies. I'll never forget a 10K run he and I ran together at Yerba Buena Island. We appreciated its beauty in a way we never could by driving through it on the Bay Bridge.

SoFit >> What advice can you give our readers struggling to stay motivated?

Dr. Bosler >> The best way to stay motivated is to have work out partners or belong to a group where you can hold each other accountable for consistent effort. When you know your partner will be waiting for you at 6:00am to head out on a run, you don't want to disappoint them. We all need help staying motivated. Motivation is the drive for achievement. It comes as a result of



having very clear goals. Goals should be written down in detail. They can be pinned up on a bulletin board so they can be vividly imagined. Tremendous focus is required to prepare for extreme events. Our focus gives us goal clarity. It protects us from distractions and random mental vacations that can easily derail us in our training and in our performance.

SoFit>> What kind of visualization or focus was necessary to compete at that level?

Dr. Bosler >> Intense focus was required. To maintain it, I read Triathlete Magazine and pinned up pictures that especially caught my imagination. Often, during a long run, I would repeatedly chant under my breath, "Ko – Na, Ko-Na" imagining myself crossing the finish line at the Ironman in Kona, Hawaii

SoFit>> Where do you work out?

Dr. Bosler >> I like to work out at Gold's Gym. I can get there before work or even at lunch because it is so close to my office. They have a hypoxic room with a stationary bike and a treadmill in it. The oxygen is about as thin as you would find it at 9,000 feet elevation. Working out in this room can effectively increase your endurance.

But when the schedule is tight, I will often ride a stationary bike in my garage. That's what I do now to maintain fitness. But to train for an Ironman distance triathlon, a much greater time commitment is necessary. I trained 6 days and took Sundays off to rest. I ran 3 miles in the mornings each week.

“ Health and fitness has always been important to me. A healthy diet is as important to our overall conditioning as any training program.”



Wednesdays after work I took a bike ride 13 to 26 miles and I got to the pool 3-4 times to swim about 1700 yards. Except for the Wednesday night bike rides, my minimal training schedule did not impact my family time at all. It was the Saturday mega work out that pushed my limits and took me away from the family. These work outs became 8 hours long at times. They would consist of a mile swim at the Three

Oaks pool, the Berryessa 70 mile loop bike ride, and a run down Hawkins road and back for 13 miles.

Subsequently, I have become aware of the "Family Filter" concept of applying balance in my life. If it doesn't pass the "family filter", I think twice about participating or I try to include family members in my training. For example, my teen age daughter and I rode 50 miles to the Monticello dam, and my teen son completed two half ironman races with me.

SoFit >> Lastly, Dr. Bosler, so many of us want to look, feel, and be our best, having accomplished so much in your fitness legacy what final tips can you give?

Dr. Bosler >> I would tell those who desire to change and live healthier to:

1. Catch a vision of how you want to become and then set a goal.
2. Join a gym, or a masters swim group, or a cycling team, or a running club. Be accountable to someone else like a training partner or a group.
3. Plan to participate in a future event like a 5 or 10K run. Pay your entrance fee early so you feel committed and then systematically train for it.
4. Take note of your progress and celebrate your success.

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