



FIT FOR LIFE

Let yourself rest

Carol Westmorland explains why she trusts her Garmin to tell her when to take it easy

For many of you this will resonate; an unspoken truth that carries a teensy bit of shame.

In this sharing society, peculiarities are, it seems, quite the norm. Even celebrated. Insatiable needs require balance and it is finding that balance that is tricky.

This is my normal and I am happy to be this way. I, dear reader, am only a very nice person if I am allowed to exercise. Take it away and I am agitated. This state of play will be very normal to some, but utterly incomprehensible to others.

So it may come as a surprise that I now love my rest days. I relish them. Confused? No need. I have permission. Not from a coach, but from a far better medium; my Garmin. The device I use to analysis my race performance. It has all the facts.

Rest days are essential for both physical and mental wellbeing. Without them you become tired and irritable and ravenous. Your body and mind struggle to stay on top of the demands you are putting yourself through. If an individual says you need rest days, you may find that hard to accept and yet along comes an inanimate and, bingo, you listen. Or I do.

To date, with said inanimate, I have only ever encountered the word 'fair' once. This is Garmin unhappy. What I want Garmin to say is 'good'. This little message will pop up. At the end of my race it will tell me how many hours I should rest

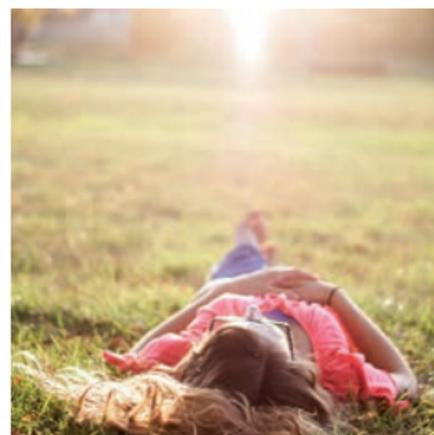


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depending on my output - which is lovely and reassuring. I willingly do as I am told. I simply walk the dogs and teach my Pilates classes on rest days.

The only way the body can adapt to exercise is during rest. If you want to get, or stay, strong then rest days are crucial. Without them you will tire and possibly start to get niggles. Muscles must reconstruct. I want the effects of racing to give me a stronger advantage. I want to be chomping at the bit.

It's allowed.



Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.uk