



THE FINISH LINE



Gail Lohman and Mike Kelly exchanging epidemiologically correct Air Hugs at the Hair of the Dog Party/Mock Tri on 1 Jan 2021.



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Established on November 6, 1993, the St Pete Mad Dogs Triathlon Club is a not for profit organization designed to promote the sport of triathlon. The club is comprised of fun loving triathletes who train, race and howl together, with members of all levels of experience and expertise.

The Finish Line is a medium for communicating the latest club news, as well as an informal source for what's happening in the sport of triathlon as it affects us. Articles published in The Finish Line may contain opinions of the author, not necessarily the club.

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advertising@stpetemaddogs.com. For questions, please e-mail him.

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Space	1/2 page	Full
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Editor's Column

Many thanks to John and Pam Hollenhorst for providing organizing skills and great photography at the Annual Hair of the Dog Party and mock triathlon on the 1st of January 2021. After the difficult year we have all endured, it was great to see so many Mad Dogs out in the sunshine sharing the (socially distanced) love. Patrick McGee, new Director of St. Anthony's Triathlon was a welcome addition handing out free swag and discount cards.

(continued on page 6)

TRAINING CALENDAR

	SWIM	BIKE	RUN
MONDAY	5:30 - 7:00 AM St. Pete Beach Aquatics Club coached by Leo Briceno	8 am. From USFSP 6th Ave & 2nd St. South. 16 miles 20-21 mph.	6 pm. From Northshore Pool Parking Lot (16 miles) St Pete Road Runners
TUESDAY	6:30-8 pm. Northshore Pool. Coach Joe Biondi \$9.00 fee	6 am. Base miles 22-25 mph ride from SPB&F 4th St. store. 8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 17-19 mph.	5 pm. Track workout coached by Joe Burgasser. SPC Track 5th Ave and 70 St N.
WEDNESDAY	6:00 pm. Mad Dog OWS Swim Ending 10/28/20. Meet at Hurley Park. End of the season.	8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 20-21 mph. Wed is Mad Dog ride. Wear your colors.	7:30 am. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway. 6:00 pm. Meet at Tavern at Bayboro by USF.
THURSDAY	5:30 - 7:00 AM St. Pete Beach Aquatics Club coached by Leo Briceno -fee 6:30-8 pm. Northshore Pool Coach Joe Biondi \$9.00 fee	8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 20-21 mph. 8:00 3 Bridges 35-mile Ride, meet at 30th Ave N and Pinellas Trail	5:15 AM. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway. (Burgasser Group).
FRIDAY	8 am. Group swim @ Pass-a-Grill. Meet at Hurricaneman restaurant	8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 17-19 mph.	6:30 AM From Fit4Life 75th Ave. St. Pete Beach SPRR
SATURDAY		8:30 am. From Northshore Pool. Rides staged by speed: 16-18MPH, 20MPH, 22 MPH, 24 MPH + Groups of ten dispatched)	

TRAINING CALENDAR

SUNDAY	SWIM	BIKE	RUN		
		<p>8:30 am. Advanced ride. From St. Pete Library 9th Ave N & 37 St.</p> <p>8 am. Intermediate no drop ride. From SPB&F 4th St store</p> <p>10:30 am. Beginner no drop ride. From SPB&F 4th St store.</p>	<p>6:30 AM Long run alternating from Hurley Park PAG and Northshore Pool. SPRR</p>		
		<p>Ft De Soto 8:00, all paces, 20 miles</p>	<p>Following the bike ride a 4-mile run</p>		

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Vance Eaddy - | 1st |
| David Smith - | 2nd |
| Alexa Lampasona - | 5th |
| Carol Hollenbeck - | 7th |
| Luther Dore - | 12th |
| Kimberly Poor - | 14th |
| Carol McKenna - | 19th |
| Lisa Pesta - | 20th |
| David Sitton - | 20th |
| Dan Runyon - | 24th |

WELCOME NEW MAD DOGS!

- # 3909 - David Bredow - Palm Harbor**
- # 3910 - Lynn Estrada - Miami**
- # 3911 - Lamany Kelavong - St. Pete**
- # 3912 - Thomas Nisbet - Fremont, NH**
- # 3913 - Ed Kuehnle - Ocean City, NJ**

Editor's Comments continued:

for the 2021 race. Everyone's best friend, Coach Leo Brisceno, with the world's biggest Polynesian/Latino heart, also attended making the day special. I am certainly glad to put 2020 in the rear view mirror, as are all Mad Dogs. Apparently, local Race Directors have taken great pains to make recent races as risk free as possible, and I salute their efforts.

I've also included 3 articles culled from the slowtwitch website for your examination. Enjoy!

Mad Dogs Rule,
Chuck Lohman, Editor

UPCOMING RACES

Tentative Dates for Local Races



12 Feb - Ultraman Florida
Ultra Distance
Clermont, FL
www.ultramanflorida.com



13 Mar - Great Clermont Tri
Olympic/Du/AB
Clermont, FL
www.runnersignup.com



12-14 Mar - Challenge Miami
Half/Sprint/Du/AB
Homestead-Miami Speedway
www.challenge-miami.com



21 Mar - IM 70.3 Puerto Rico
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Half IM Distance
www.ironman.com



13 Mar - Florida Challenge
Half/Sprint/Du/AB
Clermont, FL
www.runnersignup.com

MAD DOG NEWS

Our Mad Dog refrain to 2020 — Sing it with me!

**“Nah, Nah, Nah,
Nah, Nah, Nah,
Hey, Hey, Gooby!”**

Apparently, the city of Saint Petersburg granted both the St. Pete Grand Prix and St. Anthonys Triathlon permission to stage their races on the same weekend in April. The world wonders how this is possible! I’m guessing that the Grand Prix wins. Stay tuned!

We were glad to hear that Mad Dog snow birds Kip and CJ Vosburgh, and Bill and Debbie Riley have returned to St. Pete for the Season. Welcome back!

All Mad Dogs join me in offering our most sincere condolences to Joe Bayliss on the passing of his brother, Mitch.

Note that our 2 newest Mad Dogs are from New Hampshire and New Jersey!

Rumor has it that a certain Mad Dog “Cheesehead” was hoping that the Packers would beat the Bucs in the NFL championship game. Say it ain’t so!

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1963

RACE RESULTS

All Mad Dogs are encouraged to submit race results. There is no automatic program to search for Mad Dogs in every race. Thanks.

Hair of the Dog - 1 Jan

1st Place - Everyone!

Sand Squirrel Duathlon - 9 Jan

Regular Distance

1st Place - Jessica Bibza

2nd Place - Kim Donaldson

Extreme Distance

2nd Place - Todd Bibza (Overall Male)

HITS Sarasota - 10 Jan

Sprint

1st Place -

Cody Angell

Mandy Zipf

Olympic

2nd Place -

Heather Gollnik (Overall Woman)

Gail Norman

4th Place -

Michael Kelly

Paula Shea

Tampa Bay Frogman Swim - 17 Jan

Finishers -

Dawn Clark

Steve Swift

Chilly Willy Duathlon - 31 Jan

1st Place -

John Hollenhorst

Claudia Junqueira

Gail Lohman

David Longacre

Jill Voorhis

2nd Place -

Kimberly Case

Bill Hendrick

Andres Marte-Grau

Carol McKenna

3rd Place -

Art Singleton

4th Place -

Lenny Aron

5th Place -

Bob Ranta

MAD DOG PICTURES

2021 Hair of the Dog Pictures From Pam Hollenhorst



MAD DOG PICTURES



MAD DOG PICTURES



MAD DOG PICTURES



MAD DOG PICTURES



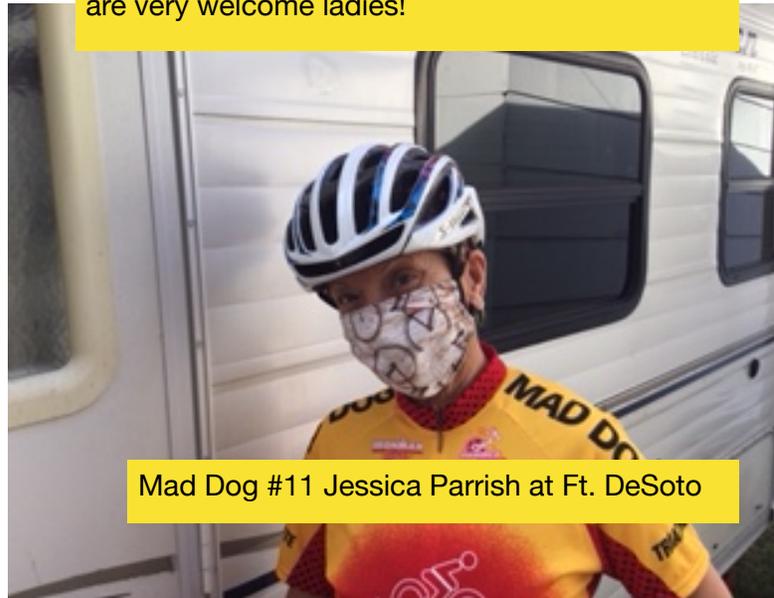
Mad Dog Christmas run. Who says it doesn't get cold in St. Pete?



David Longacre shared this retro picture of one of the original triathlons in the 80's. He said the order of events was run/bike/swim. Yikes! You are very welcome ladies!



Mad Dog Sunday morning bike ride



Mad Dog #11 Jessica Parrish at Ft. DeSoto



GO MAD DOGS! CHILLY WILLY PODIUM FINISHERS.

Training Tip - The Pre- Race Taper

You've trained hard for your race and it's time for your pre-race taper. But what's the right taper for you and how much should you do or not do?

It's important to remember that the pre-race taper is not "one size fits all". The type and duration of a taper plan is dependent upon the distance of the race, the relative importance of the race, and the athlete. You want your body to be rested but not stale on race morning. In general, you should always taper before a target "A" race. Short tapers are probably adequate for short distance races. Older athletes may require longer tapers than younger athletes.

As a rule of thumb:

- Allow 10 days to 2 weeks taper for an Ironman distance race.
- Allow 5 to 7 days for a 70.3 or Olympic distance race.
- Allow 3 days for a sprint race.
- No weight training during the taper period. Weight training breaks down muscle and this is not the time to do that.
- Continue stretching and mobility work everyday, even on the rest days.
- Reduce training volume to about 80%. During the taper, less is better than more.
- Reduce but don't eliminate high intensity work. High intensity sets should be shorter in duration with longer recovery intervals.
- Take a day of complete rest two days before race day.
- Do a very short and easy workout the day before the race, early in the morning if possible.
- The food you're eating pre-race week should be comfortable in your GI system. Test pre-race meals in training. This is not the time to try new foods.
- Reduce calorie intake since you are training less and burning fewer calories.

The primary goal of the pre-race taper is to be rested and in peak condition on race day. You want to wake up on race morning knowing you have prepared yourself properly and that you are ready to race. Stay calm, focused, and positive in your attitude. Race day is what it's all about!

Train smart. Race fast.

Frank Adornato



What to Expect When Traveling During COVID-19

RYAN HEISLER

Wed Dec 30 2020 [slowtwitch.com](https://www.slowtwitch.com)

As 2020 winds to a close, we have many reasons to be hopeful as we head into 2021. COVID-19 vaccines are rolling out globally. People got outdoors and explored in previously unheard of numbers. And we got to do some racing, and every IRONMAN full distance event in North America is sold out of general entry.

We have reason, then, to expect that we're going to do at least some full-distance races, which also means that you're likely going to need to do some long-distance traveling in order to get there. Here are some of the things that you can look forward to, based upon my recent travels to the western United States.

FLYING

Our experience is limited to flying through Bradley, Midway, and Salt Lake City International Airports. We also flew Southwest, in part because we needed five checked bags to lug the majority of our ski equipment and other needed supplies for our eight day adventure.

First, airports are empty. According to the TSA, air travel is down 50 to 66% on any given day, year-over-year. Despite our original flights being cancelled (more on that in a minute), our re-booked flights and the airports themselves were still significantly empty. The largest crowd that we saw was at the check-in counter to get our bags screened and checked. This is where airline status can help you; because we are A-List passengers on Southwest, we were able to skip the line and get our bags checked in plenty of time. TSA screening took under 10 minutes, and we were off to our gate (and our fifth cup of coffee of the morning).

Now, about those flights. Be prepared for re-booking and build that lead time into your plans. Our original flights were supposed to leave on Wednesday, and flying home on Christmas Day. This would give us a night in Salt Lake City before doing our long drive up to Yellowstone on Thursday. However, Southwest cancelled our flights in advance of a large snowstorm. Despite snow not coming until Thursday. After a lot of wrangling with customer service, we re-booked for Friday -- making it a very long day of flights and driving (not helped by a four year old that was "too excited" at the airport hotel on Thursday night and waking up at 1 AM Eastern).

This all being said, our flights were still well under capacity. Being a family of three, we easily were able to find a row up front on the plane and be distanced from other passengers. In flight service is limited, which also limits the amount of time that people won't wear masks. And kudos to Southwest -- flight attendants were very attentive to passengers wearing masks incorrectly. If you weren't actively eating or drinking, your mask needed to be on and over your nose. And their attendants made sure you got it done; Ivy was having a little trouble with one of her masks and the flight crew gave her a Southwest-branded one that fit her well.

My recommendation, if you have a Sunday race, would be to plan on flying Wednesday, and a return trip on Monday or Tuesday. This avoids some of the peak travel days, and also puts you with travelers who more frequently deal with TSA, security, and airports generally. It helps. Seasoned travelers are safer travelers and less likely to devolve into chaos. Also plan on bringing snacks; most airports have limited food options open, and those that are open are extraordinarily busy.

MASK FATIGUE IS REAL

Unless you are a frontline worker, you're going to need to get used to wearing a mask all day. For example, on our travel days, we were masked for up to 10 hours continuously. This is a big change from our work-from-home experience, where our limited masking time is when we are in retail shops or in downtown Brattleboro, Vt. It means you should probably practice wearing your masks before your trip, and to pick those that are going to be comfortable for full-day wearing.

Early on in the pandemic I picked up the [De Soto masks](#). These are great for 95% of what I needed. The other 5% of the time I opted for masks with ear loops, which are easier to put on and take off as needed. Be forewarned, though, that those types of masks are significantly more taxing on your ears, especially if you're going to be wearing them for hours at a time.

You also need to plan on wearing your mask throughout your outdoor activities. For example, masks are required in all lift lines, at the village, riding the lifts, and whenever you can't maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing (regardless of location) at both Big Sky and Snowbird. The only time my mask came down while at either resort was when we were skiing, and we were careful to pick both trails and lines on those trails to keep distance from everyone.

In those instances, I opted for [this balaclava/hood combination from Blackstrap](#). It was warm when I needed it to be, and breathable when it was warm. It fit very well under my [Smith CODE MIPS helmet](#). (I always wear a helmet skiing, and I go for MIPS after my TBI and concussion history.)

DISTANCING FROM OTHERS

Sadly, it appears that social distancing has become as politicized as the rest of the pandemic. On our trip, we went from Salt Lake City to Yellowstone's northern entrance through Gardiner, Montana, then came back down as we skied at Big Sky and Snowbird. We spent a significant amount of the trip in our hotel room, away from others, due to the fact that we didn't feel particularly safe in certain situations. (It was also because Ivy was exhausted, as evidenced by the picture above. Who knew she might get overtired from that travel day?)

Your destination will likely be the thing that dictates what you will be doing once on the ground. In Yellowstone, we wound up not eating at our hotel (Mammoth Hot Springs Lodge) due to discomfort around our fellow guests. Instead, we frequently drove back down to Gardiner, Montana and ate both our meals at [The Wonderland](#). We did so because of the ease of distancing from others, the quality of the food, and the atmosphere for Ivy. I wound up

buying a photo off the wall of wildlife from Yellowstone. Highly recommend this place if you're ever there.

It was pretty much the same case in both Bozeman and Big Sky. Montana had billboards throughout our drive about "mask up, adventure on." The local community really seemed to care for one another and making sure that we kept one another safe. The same held true for our hotel and its restaurant, allowing for to-go cocktails or having dinner sitting outside around a fireplace. Big Sky was probably the best mix of feeling safe in the community and having as close to "normal" operations as possible.

The same couldn't have been said when we traveled through Idaho to get back down to Utah. We stopped in Idaho Falls for coffee and gas. Masks were on fewer than half the people we saw. Those within the Starbucks, where masks were required, would pull them down in order to talk to others. We kept our distance and got the hell out of dodge as quickly as we could.

Utah was more of a mixed bag. The ski community seemed more fractured than it did in Big Sky. I think this is more due to the proximity to Salt Lake City. People within lodges were not nearly as well-masked as they were in Big Sky, nor did it have the same feel of "we all need to keep each other safe." Once on the mountain it was fine. But it was the same when we got back into town. It meant that we didn't eat out in Salt Lake City; we did take out and otherwise isolated back in our rooms.

IN CONCLUSION

Traveling during the pandemic means you need to be prepared to be flexible and to otherwise isolate away in your hotel room. And you also need to take into account isolation on the way home. We are currently isolating at home, working, and otherwise attempting to keep a four-year-old entertained (with varying results). Another two days left on our isolation period, and then we'll look at how we can keep adventuring in early 2021.



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Training Tip - Fast Transitions

Even if you're properly trained for the swim, bike and run, you can mess up a solid triathlon competition with slow transitions. For fast transitions you need to do two things.

1. Train your muscles to move smoothly from the swim to the bike (T1) and also from the bike to the run (T2). and 2. Practice how to organize your gear so that you have everything at your fingertips and you can get in and out of the transition area fast.

Prepare your body for the physical transitions by doing training bricks (back-to-back workouts with minimal to no rest between).

- Schedule bike-to-run and swim-to-bike bricks periodically in your training plan.
- Start with short distance bricks and gradually over time, increase the bike segment to the approximately target race distance.
- In general, brick runs need not be more than 1 hour, and some experts feel that 30 minutes is adequate to acclimate your legs to the transition off the bike.
- When preparing for longer races, you can do double bricks (B/R/B/R). These will save your legs from the impact of a very long run, and reduce recovery time.

The T1 transition is usually not a major problem for athletes. The only issue, particularly after longer swims, might be the change from the horizontal position of the swim to vertical as you run to the bike and then ride.

The more difficult transition is T2 from the bike to the run. Quadriceps contractions on the bike are short and compact (concentric), and on the run they are elongated (eccentric). If you haven't adequately for T2, your quads will feel like marshmallows at the run start. In a race, you should start preparing yourself for T2 in the last mile of the bike by standing briefly and stretching your lower back and legs. At the start of the run if your quads feel tight, shorten your stride length until your legs loosen up. Then resume your normal stride length and increase your speed to race pace.

Some ideas for a well organized transition area...Lay out your gear & clothes in the sequence you'll want them. For the swim, if you're wearing a wetsuit, wear your tri top and shorts under your wetsuit. Have both pair of shoes ready with the laces or straps open. If you want your bike shoes clipped into the bike, make sure to have practiced slipping into your shoes while riding. Put your bike in a proper gear based on the terrain at the start of bike course. For T2, change only your shoes and put on a hat, number belt and sunscreen (which you can do while you're running); nothing else. The goal isn't to be fancy. The goal of transitions is simple: Get in and get out fast!

Train smart. Race fast.

Frank Adornato



Straight from TSA: Best Practices on Bike Inspections

[DAN EMPFIELD](#) Slowtwitch.com

Mon Sep 23 2019

We have an evergreen, curated superthread on our Reader Forum called [Ministry of Travel](#). It's a week old, it's already busy, and it's there because of American Airlines' bike policy from earlier this summer, followed by Delta's near match in its policy.

When we ask you, 44 percent say you'll bike will travel underneath you, in the plane's belly, more often than before because of these new rules. More to the point, if you're an airline, 1 in 3 of you say you're likely to change carrier loyalties because of this new policy. And of those who do are loyal to a carrier who doesn't have this new liberal bike policy (e.g., United as of this writing), 73 percent of you say you intend to change your loyalty. (Even if you clicked that radio button out of frustration and not stark reality, if I were a non-conforming airline I'd be concerned.) Many of the remaining 27 percent say you just can't change your loyalty because of the airport you use.

On the Ministry of Travel thread the issue has come up, and unique bike cases like the B&W Bike Box II (below) I recently reviewed is a – pardon the pun – case in point: Is there a way to inoculate yourself against the TSA agent who doesn't repack your bike correctly? I had a conversation with TSA's media liaison, Lorie Dankers, and BrookHunter Whelchel, a transportation security manager at Sea-Tac Airport (Seattle).

My specific question for Mr. Whelchel was, "Is it appropriate - is there a convention known to TSA agents - that we as travelers ask TSA for an inspection of our bikes in our presence?" The answer is yes.

The protocol is, "Let the air carrier know when your bag is checked that you want the bag to be screened in the traveler's presence," according to Mr. Whelchel. "Let the air carrier know, they'll direct you to the on-site [TSA] station; there may be someone from the airline present, assisting the TSA officer. If the passenger says 'I'd like to be present,' that's perfectly fine."

“For the actual screening process, the officer will open up the bag, do a sampling of the inside of the bag, move around items in the bag, sample the toiletry bag, the bike repair kit, if there are no alarms or security threats, the agent will repack the bag while the passenger is there.” Mr. Whelchel added that, “For security the passenger can’t repack the bike, however the passenger can guide the officer when repacking the bag, same as we do with passengers with firearms and pets.”

I asked if this was limited to certain airports or universally available and Ms. Dankers said, “Because every airport has a unique config, sometimes you’ll encounter something a little different, but what is across the board is the access to make that request. TSA will try to work with that traveler within the limits and the airport and its footprint.”

These TSA folks asked that I relay to you all a particular limitation to this. Every piece of baggage on a plane that originates outside the U.S. that connects to a flight inside the U.S. will be subject to search, and that won’t be done in the presence of the traveler. This includes flights from U.S. carriers. For example, last month I flew on an American Airlines flight from Madrid to Ontario, California, changing planes at Dallas DFW. My bike case was, presumably, inspected at DFW. I asked if TSA has pre-screening in any foreign airports, such as is the case with U.S. immigration, and the answer is no. I asked if there are any countries that have screening relationships with the U.S., where if a plane originates in Ireland or Israel that by virtue of their comprehensive, qualifying screening that baggage is not TSA screened at American hubs. Nope.

I asked about guidance on the lithium batteries that are used in bikes with electronic shifting – both the batteries installed on the bikes and spare batteries we might take in either checked or carry on baggage. And, while there is [watt hours guidance already listed](#), I was surprised to find out that TSA has nothing to do with batteries. “It’s a safety issue, not a security issue,” said Mr. Whelchel, “so the FAA will need to provide that guidance.” Ms. Dankers kindly offered to help me find my correct liaison at the FAA for this, and when I know you’ll know. I’ll ask about CO2 cartridges as well.

Dan Empfield's Review of the Hoka One One Carbon X in [slowtwitch.com](https://www.slowtwitch.com) issue Jan 18th 2021

Seems like if you go back 3 or 4 years, I was disliking at least 1 out of every 3 new HOKAs I reviewed. Sometimes 2 out of 3. But HOKA One One is on a streak, at least with me. The streak continues with the Carbon X 2.

The Carbon X had been my go-to race shoe and it still is, by virtue of I have 2 or 3 pairs with miles left in them on the shelf; and they're white and I like to race in white shoes. But this new Carbon X 2 fixes a small issue with the Carbon X and is altogether a superior shoe.



So, displayed here is my already-run-in Carbon X 2, and I'll compare these with recent HOKA models to show you what it seems to me this brand is up to.

First, the shoe itself is darned near perfect. It's weight – about 8.4oz for size-9 mens – is right for me, because any lighter and there's just not enough shoe there. It's substantial

enough to support an orthotic (it supports mine), and it's plenty cushioned in both the fore- and rearfoot. It's architecturally sound. The rocker, the width of the outsole in the heel and the midfoot is fine. There are no levers to impede a natural running gait. It's a supportive shoe that acts like a neutral shoe. Or the other way around. It does everything I need it to do.



The upper material HOKA chose for the Carbon X series is a challenge for this brand because it's a performance upper definitely, but it's almost like crepe paper. Crinkly. You can see in the original (white) Carbon X that it's not an elastic material, it's hard to get the pattern exactly perfect. The upper in the new Carbon X 2 is similar, but HOKA seems – maybe – to have dialed in the pattern just a little better. I had no real complaints about the upper of the original Carbon X, but I think you can see how the pattern is just a little more dialed, can you not?

Those who complain about HOKAs being too narrow aren't going to have that complaint about this shoe. I just [wrote about the Mach 4](#), and this shoe fits like that shoe fits: I have to wrangle down the laces a bit to get it tight enough for me.



The outsole of the Carbon X 2 is pretty similar to that of the Carbon X. The dimensions are pretty much the same. The dimensions and the rocker architecture. But you can see a big difference in the heel, and that's the dovetail heel in the Carbon X 2.



If you look at this shoe against the Mach 4, you'll see that the dovetail heel is an obvious direction HOKA is going. The Carbon X 2 feels much like the Mach 4 when you run in both these shoe models. It's not just the dovetail heel, it's the architecture of the heel. If you look at the amount of the heel that protrudes out the back of these new shoes – it's not as much as in the Clifton Edge, but it's substantial – you can see the difference in how these new HOKAs are made. (Below is the Carbon X on the left, Carbon X 2 on the right, and the Mach 4 in the middle. It's not hard to see how the heel in the two on the right are more like each other than either is to the heel on the Carbon X on the left.)



HOKA had for its entire existence, up to about a year ago, an ambivalence toward normal lacing patterns. Either the shoelace type, the tongue, the eyestay, was often something non-standard, and the legacy of that is seen in the Elevon 2. I like that shoe, but it has 2 problems: it's not got enough forefoot cushion, and it's got an eyestay that you need a math degree to understand. I have to loosen the laces considerably, put on that shoe, and relace it and, yes, when I've done all that the lacing is nice. But it's kind of like putting on a spacesuit and all I want to do is go for a run.

If you look at both the Mach 4 and the Carbon X 2, these shoes are just very normal, in the eyestay, the lacing pattern, and the lace. Remember when Giro came out with cycling shoes that had the revolutionary new closure method, the – wait, wait for it – shoe lace? The Empire series is a prominent component of Giro's line, and it's just a shoe with a standard shoelace. Because standard shoelaces work really well! And they work very well in these HOKAs.

I guess you might call that a part of HOKA's maturation as a brand, that its shoes are just (for me) so much better for running – as an entire lineup – than the shoes of any

other company that HOKA can have the confidence to put a regular lace in a shoe, regular tongue, without any gimmicks, and know that its shoe is going to kick the living daylights out of whatever is in its competitive set.

The [Carbon X 2](#) costs \$180, same as the Carbon X when it came out. Available in mens size 7 thru 14, half sizes thru 13. Womens sizes 5 thru 11, all in half-size increments. What I see are 3 colorways for both genders. I see Carbon X, as of this writing, for as low as \$129 and even cheaper, because this new version is out. In some cases, such as the Mach 4, that shoe is so much better than its predecessors that you could give me prior generations and I would still pay full price for the Mach 4. In this case, it's a good time to stock up on Carbon Xs if you can get them for cheap, because that was a breakthrough shoe and remains a terrific shoe unreservedly.



However, HOKA has actually improved on the Carbon X, and I can find no fault in the Carbon X 2.



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