



THE FINISH LINE



Jesse Mocha at Ft. DeSoto triathlon before winning her age group.

Editorial -	Page 2
Training Calendar -	Pages 3-4
Birthdays -	Page 5
New Mad Dogs -	Page 6
Upcoming Races -	Page 7
Mad Dog News -	Page 8
Race Results -	Page 9
Mad Dog Pix -	Pages 10 - 14
Articles & Reports -	Pages 15 - 30

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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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Items should be sent by the 15th of the month preceding the issue.

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

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Editor's Column

For the first time in several years, I am looking forward to the "Hair of the Dog" festivities on New Years Day. Looks like it's safe to attend an outdoors event with responsible triathletes. Now we just have to keep our fingers crossed for decent weather (I remember attending the event one year in pouring rain). It's always windy at Ft. DeSoto. Those that try the swim can count on braving 1 inch surf.

The event is really a party with a fun workout of swimming, biking and running (all events optional).

(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. 14.5 miles 20-21 mph. 7:50 slower ride..	6 pm. From Northshore Pool Parking Lot (16 miles) St Pete Road Runners
TUESDAY		8 am. From USFSP 14.5 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 Meet at Hurley Park. Only during Dsylvight Savings Time.	8 am. From USFSP 14.5 miles 20-21 mph. 7:50 slower ride..	7:00 am. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway.
THURSDAY	5:30 - 7:00 AM St. Pete Beach Aquatics Club coached by Leo Briceno -fee	8 am. From USFSP 14.5 miles 17-19 mph.	5:15 AM. Bayway Bridge Repeats. Meet at Sun Blvd & Pinellas Bayway. (Burgasser Road Runners).
FRIDAY	8 am. Group swim @ Pass-a-Grill. Meet at Hurricaneman restaurant	8 am. From USFSP 16 miles 20-21 mph. 7:50 slower ride..	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 +	

TRAINING CALENDAR

SUNDAY	SWIM	BIKE	RUN		
		8:30 am. Advanced ride. From St. Pete Library 9th Ave N & 37 St.	6:30 AM Long run alternating from Hurley Park PAG and Northshore Pool. SP Road Runners		
		Ft De Soto 8:00, all paces, 20 miles Mad Dogs	Following the bike ride a 4-mile run Mad Dogs		

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Gabi Lohman's second birthday. Woof, woof.

Joseph Kharzouz	6th
Linda Lewallen	9th
Jeanette Michell	18th
Jessica Parish (MD 11)	23rd
Robert O'Brien	26th
Matt Abbey	28th
Andres Marte-Grau	Top Secret

WELCOME NEW MAD DOGS!

MD # 3938 - John Rafter - Highlands, NJ
MD # 3840 - Peter Lieberman - Tampa
MD # 3841 - John Mrosek - St. Petersburg
MD # 3842 - Brett Woyshner - Tampa
MD # 3843 - Renee Litton - St. Petersburg
MD # 3844 - Tom Howard - St. Petersburg

Editor's Comments continued:

The funny thing is, for at least a couple of folks who just can't help themselves, it gradually turns into an all out sprint. Can anyone remember the epic race between Park Alsop and Dallas Rose one year? Most of us were enjoying food and adult beverages while these two were engaging in an epic red-faced sprint to the tape.

Next up - The St. Pete Beach Classic two weeks later run by Al Johnson. Large Mad Dog attendance every year. Excellent post race food! Be there — you won't regret it! Anyway, what else is there to do in Mid-January?

Mad Dogs Rule,
Chuck Lohman, Editor

UPCOMING RACES



1 Jan - Hair of the Dog Fun Tri
Fort DeSoto at 12:00 PM.
Sprint with all events optional
Get ready to Party!



15-16 Jan - St. Pete Beach
Classic
St. Pete Beach
5k, 10k, Half. Several Fun Runs
www.runsignup.com



9 Jan - Alpha Win Sarasota Tri
Sarasota, FL
Half/Olympic/Sprint Tris
www.alpha.win/event/sarasota



6 Feb - Chilly Willy
Ft. DeSoto
5k/10 mile/5k Duathlon
www.runsignup.com



23-25 Feb - Gasparilla Classic
Tampa
5k to half Marathon
www.racerooster.com

MAD DOG NEWS

California Mad Dog Clive Heke finally qualified to compete in the famous, but brutal, Leadville 100 mountain bike race in Colorado. Not sure whether to congratulate him or offer condolences! Good luck, Clive.

Good news. Kim Donaldson and Danny Nolan have decided to move back to St Pete and resume full time residence. They told me that they would be back at the Hair of the Dog on 1 January. Ask Danny about his famous race with John Woodruff at the Kona World Ironman Championship, but don't try to match his lap times at Northshore. Kim – smarter than a whip and faster than a whippet.

Apparently, Richard Jansik has morphed into the beast mode – 2nd Place in Florida 70.3 on 12 December, and 1st Place at Fort Desoto a week later on 19 December. Finishing the season with a bang! Better “google” recovery, Rick.

Great turnout at the last Fort DeSoto triathlon of the season. Mad Dogs hogged the podium. Almost too many to keep track of. It was a team effort to try and get the results right. If you are happy, give me credit. If not, blame John Hollenhorst.

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.

Sr. Games Bike T/T- 6 Dec

1st Place -

C. J. Vosburgh (5k)

2nd Place -

C.J. Vosburgh (10k)

IM Florida 70.3 - 12 Dec

2nd Place -

Richard (the Rock) Jansik

Holiday Halfathon

1st Place -

Patricia (I'm not Claudia) Junqueira

2nd Place -

Carolyn Kiper
Colleen Murray
Paula Shea

Ft. DeSoto Trilogy #3 - 19 Dec

International

1st Place -

Reva (Mo fast) Moeller (Overall)

Roger (Big) Little

3rd Place -

Cody Angell (Overall)

4th Place -

Ben Broadwater

Sprint

1st Place -

Jay Anderson

Kim Case (F Masters)

Karen Hendrick

John (The Horse) Hollenhorst

Richard (the Rock) Jansik

Gail (GLo) Lohman

Jesse Mocha

Cindy Yost Perret

Scott (Viking) Underkoffler

2nd Place -

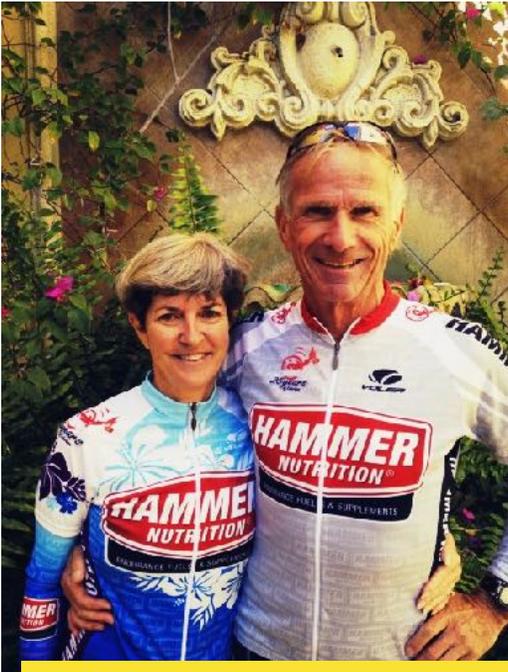
Michael Deacy

Dody Saputo

3rd Place -

Bill Hendrick

MAD DOG PICTURES



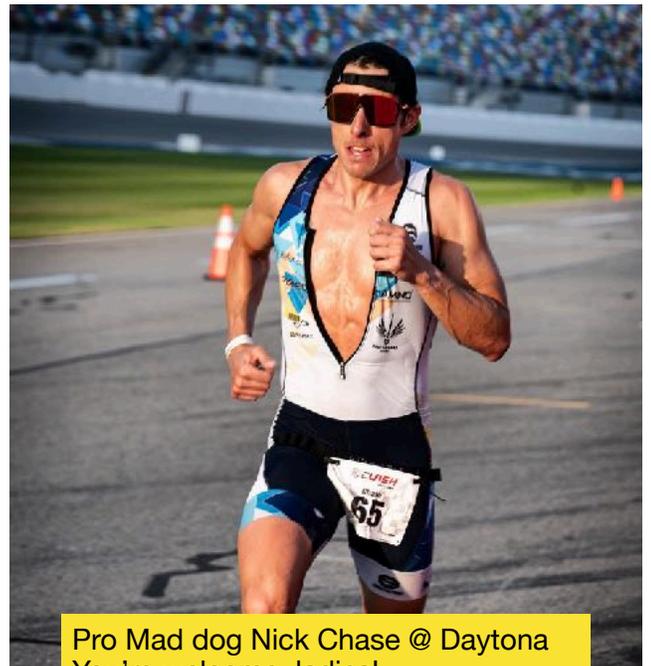
Rumor has it that Debbie and Bill Riley will be back in St. Pete this month!



New Mad Dog John Mrosek



New Mad Dog Brett Woyshner from NJ



Pro Mad dog Nick Chase @ Daytona
You're welcome, ladies!

MAD DOG PICTURES

Pictures of Mad Dog Group Breakfast at Pass-a-Grill on first Sunday of the month provided by Pam Hollenhorst.



MAD DOG PICTURES



New Mad Dog Jack Keefe joins the morning run.



Macarena Martin Mayor on the road



Kip and Carol Jean Vosburgh



Sandy Weiss finishing IM Arizona

MAD DOG PICTURES

Mad Dog Sunday Workout by Pam Hollenhorst (Fog Dogs)



MAD DOG PICTURES



MAD DOG PICTURES



Jackie Yost, Glen and Bobbie Gullickson, and Paula Shae



Mad Dog Noah Pransky in Joshua Tree National Park

MAD DOG PICTURES

Pictures from Fort DeSoto Trilogy #3 from Pam Hollenhorst



Cindy Yost Perret



Mike Deacy, Tom Howard and John Hollenhorst



Jesse Mocha



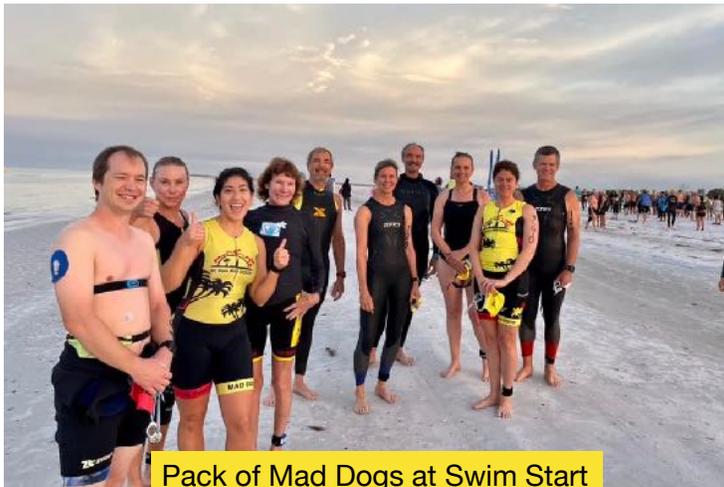
Bill Hendrick



Karen Hendrick



Dody Saputo



Pack of Mad Dogs at Swim Start



Kim Case



Mike Deacy

MAD DOG PICTURES



Gail Lohman with her usual happy finish



Bill and Karen Hendrick



Cindy Yost Perret on top!



Bill Hendrick with Rick Jansik and pink guy



Scott (The Viking) Underkoffler in his



John Hollenhorst



Senior Mad Dog Roger Little wins again



Breaking News: Jarek and Ola engaged!

Training Tip - Off Season Rest

For much of the northern hemisphere the winter months are non-racing months. Because of the cold and snowy weather, most athletes back off on their training or focus on winter sports. Regardless of how you spend your off season, it's also valuable to allow some time for a physical and mental change of pace. Take some time off for rest and recovery.

This is especially important if you live in Florida where the winter weather is still mild and you can train and race year round. In Florida, we're lucky that we're not forced indoors due to the cold and snow so we tend to just keep on training. In some respects that may be good, but it can also be a detriment. Your brain and your body need some rest. Some may disagree, but my advice is to take time off for a week or two in January or February. Markedly reduce training intensity and volume, or take some complete rest if you psyche can handle it. You'll come back fresh and invigorated, and ready to start the new season strong.

Train smart. Race fast.

Frank Adornato





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Training Tip - Recurrent Knee Pain.

Recurrent knee pain can be due to many things, including tightness, weakness or an imbalance in one or two muscle groups: the abductor vs adductor muscles and quadricep vs hamstring imbalance. Here's a brief overview of how to check and correct if either of these is the cause. (Since knee pain can have other causes, this overview should not replace diagnosis and treatment by a medical care professional.)

The adductor muscles are located on the medial (inner) thigh and they act to pull the legs towards the midline and keep them close. The hip abductor muscles are located on the outer hip and upper thigh. These aid in pulling your legs away from the midline of the body. For triathletes, these muscles are very important for stabilizing the pelvis and the knees during swimming, biking and running. They provide side to side balance. If the adductor and abductor muscles are out of balance, knee or hip pain can result.

There are several ways to determine if you have weak adductor muscles. One method is to do a few slow controlled squats (without any weights) and watch your knee alignment. If your knees point outward at the bottom of the squat, there could be an imbalance of hip strength with your hip adductors being weaker than the reciprocal hip abductor muscles.

Here are two exercises to help strengthen the adductors. (It's best to use a wall mirror so you can look straight ahead rather than looking down.)

1. Sumo squats without weight and with your arms extended straight out in front of you. As you move down into the squat, watch the track of the knees and make sure they are in line over your feet and not pointing outward.
2. Side lunges. Start standing upright with both feet about shoulder width and toes pointed straight ahead. Lunge to the side with your right leg and bend your right knee to about 90 degrees. Toes remain pointing straight ahead. Return to the upright position and repeat with the left leg.

The second thing to consider is the balance between the two muscles groups in your upper legs - your quadriceps (front thigh muscles) and your hamstrings (rear thigh muscles). When working correctly, these two muscle groups provide front to back balance, particularly around the knee. If you work only your quads and ignore your hamstrings in the gym (as some athletes often do), this could lead to an imbalance in the strength between the quads and hamstrings, which in turn can cause poor running and cycling biomechanics, all of which can cause knee pain.

The fix for weak and / or tight hamstrings and quads is simple. When you're in the gym, be sure to stretch and strengthen both muscle groups equally. Do hamstring curls as well as quad extensions to keep both muscle groups equally strong.

In addition to the few exercises mentioned above, there are numerous other stretches and strength exercises you can do, such as lateral leg raises while lying on your side, fire hydrant kicks while on your hands and knees, side clamshell raises, TFL stretches, "monster walk" side to side and front to back with a stretch band around your mid calf, etc. Do these regularly about three or more times a week.

Train smart. Race fast.

Frank Adornato



Many of you know Paul Williams, a long time bike fitter in the Saint Petersburg Area. He is offering a new “boutique” bike service. The deal is listed below for anyone interested.

Perfect Fix Membership Program

We've been offering best practice service now going on three years. We are pleased with the service we provide and love the opportunity to meet your service needs in the best possible ways. That said, we are always looking for ways to improve your experience and overcome obstacles as we are aware of them.

We have observed that there are a couple of things that are obstacles to providing the best possible service for you on your bikes. For the 3% of you that are obsessed and particular (we love you) with keeping your bikes maintained you can stop reading here - LOL For the other 97% of you - please read on...

First, we are acutely aware that most bikes are not serviced nearly frequently enough. So we asked the question - why not? We believe the answer is two fold. It can be expensive and it's not convenient. We believe that the main reason it can get expensive is because it's not convenient. In other words, if you don't have your bike serviced regularly enough, small problems become big problems and now it just got expensive. This affects both the cost of needed replacement parts and the labor required to solve the problem.

Second, we have been conducting some tests with some of our regular clients to determine exactly how often bikes ridden the way we ride them in the environment we ride them in need attention. Also, what they need and when how frequently they need it to keep them in good shape and hopefully avoid the big surprises that occur when bikes are serviced less frequently than needed.

What we've learned is that with a bit more regular attention, small issues are addressed well before they become bigger problems and while the visits required to accomplish this are more frequent, the time required to keep your bike in top shape actually decreases.

The goal for Perfect Fix has always been and remains to conduct preventive maintenance so that your bike will always work well so you will get maximum performance and longevity from your gear and to as great an extent as possible eliminate surprises and unexpected expenses.

Membership / Subscription Program

Our solution is a membership / subscription based program. With this program we want to provide you with solutions to the two most common roadblocks to keeping your bike serviced like it deserves - inconvenience and expense - understanding that making it more convenient will lead to it happening more frequently which will lead to it being less expensive. We are working through the fine print of the program and plan to launch it around the first of the year. But in essence it will look something like the following:

Free Bike Pick-Up Service

Free Pick up Service - We will come get your bike - for some - every two weeks - for others - once a month - depending on annual mileage. This is what it takes based on our research to keep things running well. We need hands and eyes on your machine much more frequently that most people are accustomed to. Our goal is to cut your visits to the office in half making it much easier to fit your bike's service into your schedule.

Subscription-Based Payment

Subscription Based Payment - Think Amazon Prime - There will be an annual subscription fee along with **substantially reduced service rates for those who participate in the plan**. We are able to provide the reduction in cost to you because while we will be seeing your bikes more frequently, the time required to keep your bike in top shape actually decreases substantially.

This is an everybody wins plan.

You win - more convenient, less expensive.

Your bike wins - it will perform like it's designed to perform and its service life will be extended.

And yes, Perfect Fix wins - we get the satisfaction of knowing that we have done all we can to make your bike life as excellent as it can be from a service perspective. Believe it or not, we never like to have to give you bad news, particularly when we know it could have been avoided.

Stay tuned for the fine print and feel free to offer your opinion or any ideas that you think might make it even better than what I've outlined here.

Meanwhile, enjoy the Ride and the Holidays and Much Peace!

All the Best!

Paul

Paul Williams

<https://PerfectFitFixRide.com>

Among Slowtwitchers: HOKA Leads, Saucony Gains For Everyday Trainers

DAN EMPFIELD

Slowtwitch

Mon Nov 29 2021

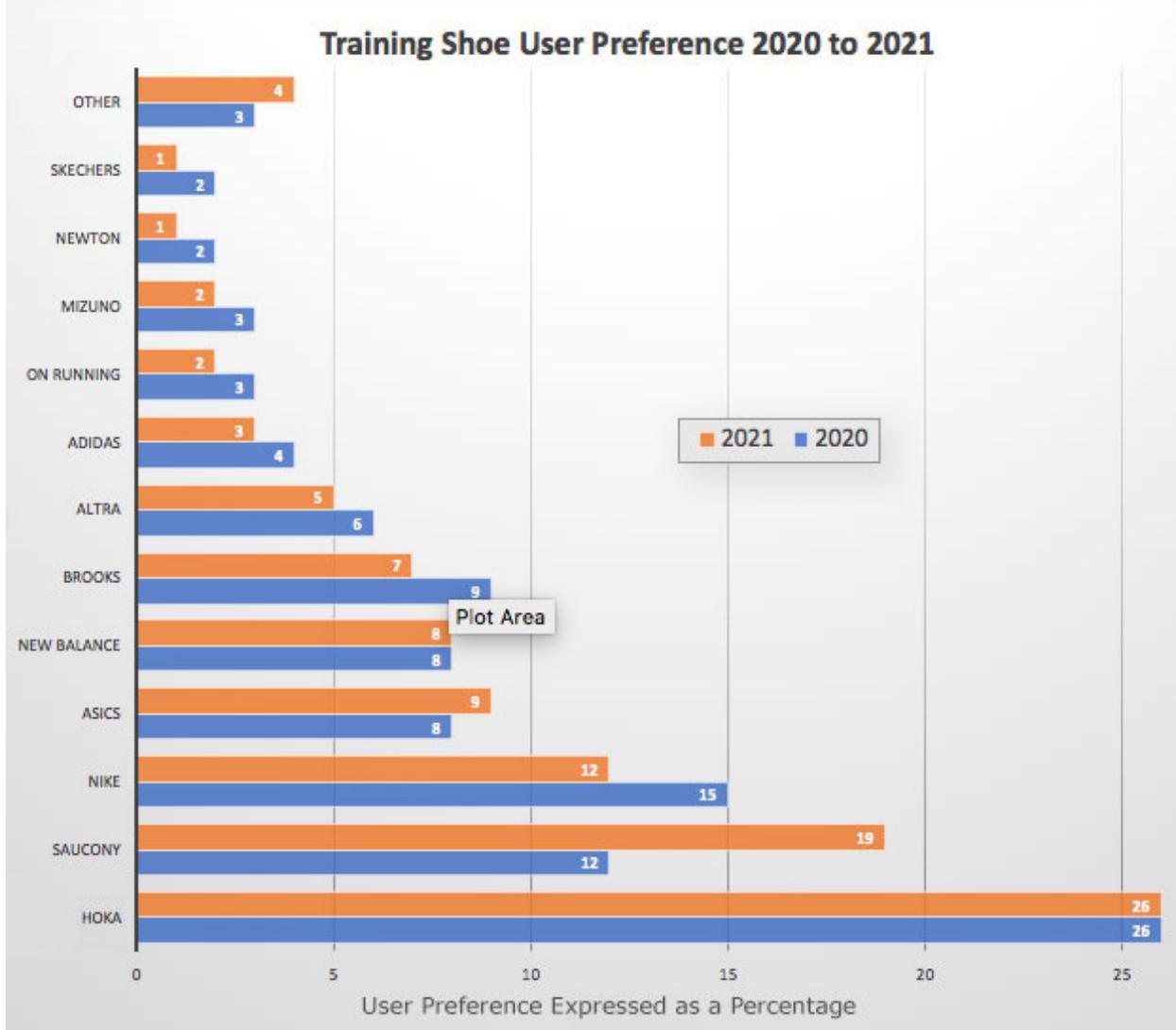
We just ran a poll on run shoe brand preference, as we will do here from time to time (and have done for almost 15 years). Just over 1100 readers answered this question. Just over 1300 of you took this poll the last time we asked the question 13 months ago (here's our [commentary on our poll from last year](#)).

This year (like last year) we asked what shoe you prefer just for training. No real mystery which brand came out on top; it was HOKA. This brand has reached cruising altitude, with 25.8 percent of users choosing this brand last year and 25.6 percent this year. HOKA has made forward progress in training shoes with the Bondi X (pictured above) and the Mach 4, mid- and light-weight trainers respectively, both big improvements over the standard Bondi and the Mach 3 in my opinion as well as opinions shared by many of our readers (here's our Forum discussion of the [Bondi X](#), and the Mach 4 dominated our recent [Recommend a HOKA](#) thread).

But the big mover this year was Saucony. Last year 12 percent said "Saucony" to our training shoe preference question and that jumped to 19 percent in one year, which is pretty astounding. The last time our polling saw a brand jump of this size was when we polled racing shoe preference, and Nike made the jump off the strength of its Vaporfly right after it first came out. But you can only race so often. Race for show, train for dough would be my mantra if I was a run shoe brand, because training shoes need to be replaced much more often. Accordingly, Saucony has made the big move this year and in a more important category (if sales are the metric).

Why the move to Saucony for training? Because of the Endorphin line: The Pro (pictured above), Speed, and Shift. I say this because I [asked on our Reader Forum](#) why you moved from something else to Saucony over the past year (and what you moved from and to). So far about 60 of you have replied, and those who moved over to Saucony were in Skechers, Nike

Pegasus, Salming, Brooks Hyperion and Launch, Mizuno Wave Inspire, ON CloudFlow, Altra Escalante, Brooks Launch, Newton Kismet, a little of everything. And, from Nike. One reader said he, “was Nike Zoomfly/Vaporfly but switched over to Endorphin Speed/Pro.” Some moved from HOKA (the Bondi and the Clifton primarily).



What surprised me is that very few of you moved to the Shift. I [reviewed that shoe last year](#), and you might have liked the review but almost all of you moved to the lighter Speed, and some to the still-lighter Pro. The Speed is just under 7.8oz in a size 9 and that’s quite light. That shoe is

lighter than a HOKA One One Carbon X, which is 8.4oz and the Carbon X is my racing flat. The Endorphin Pro is just a tad lighter yet at 7.5oz.

None of these shoes are for the wallet-challenged. The Saucony's Endorphin Speed and Pro are \$160 and \$200 respectively and HOKA's Carbon X 2 is \$180. So, for all the grousing you-all do about price, you're willing to give until it hurts for your training flats!

While the Endorphin series is Saucony's new fave among so many of you, Ryan Heisler just published a [review of the Saucony Freedom 4](#), and his thesis (if I understand him correctly) is that the tailwind Saucony is riding is about more than just its Endorphin collection. Saucony's "meat and potatoes line up (Ride, Guide, Triumph, Kinvara) have been crushing it," he wrote on that Reader Forum thread.

If you look at the results of this poll, no shoe company tanked. Okay, Nike tanked a little, from 15 percent in 2020 to 12 percent this year. Otherwise it's like Saucony passed a collection offering around and every brand dropped one percent of user preference into the plate.

The brands holding their own or increasing – other than HOKA and Saucony – were New Balance (holding steady at 8 percent), and ASICS, with a modest 1 percent increase from 8 to 9 percent year-over-year. This is a big deal, because after a decade of free-fall (in Slowtwitch User preference), ASICS has moved up a percentage point each of the last 2 years. It held to its traditional narrative for a long time but over the last 2 years has been exploring themes like lower drop and increased forefoot cushion. This has resulted in really interesting shoes like the METASPEED collection which has me very intrigued (like the METASPEED SKY, pictured above). If ASICS can translate some of this new interesting design work to more affordable price points one wonders how that might affect the fortunes of this brand in tech running.



Thanks to efforts of Mad Dog Mike Kelly, the Mad Dogs have a new sponsor - VO2 Max Cycles in San Antonio, FL. The owner, Pierre Beaulieu, is offering Club Members a 15% discount on purchases (there may be a few exceptions, like items already on sale). VO2 Max cycles is located at 32755 Pennsylvania Ave. San Antonio, FL 33575. Phone is (352) 534-0888. Web site is www.vo2maxcycles.com. The shop is closed Sunday and Monday. Next time you are riding "them thar hills" up I75, drop by and check them out.



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What You Should Know About Chamois Cream

DAN EMPFIELD Slowtwitch

Mon Dec 20 2021

Chamois cream has outlived the chamois. The technology behind the name died, but the name survives. I need to tell you first what a chamois is, or was, before we get to chamois cream.

When I began cycling wool was the preferred fabric for cycling jerseys and shorts; we nailed our cleats – yes, with a little cobbler's hammer – to the bottoms of our cycling shoes; and inside that cycling short was a chamois. Now...

...As to that chamois (pronounced shammy): There is a kind of goat or antelope that lives in Europe's remote mountains called a chamois. The manufactured thing we call a chamois is in homage to the leather of that animal. When I was a kid, and I had as a chore to wash the family's Ford Country Squire station wagon, or the Ford Galaxy 500 (both mid 60s), I dried off these vehicles with a chamois.

In cycling, something very much like this car-drying chamois was sewn into wool shorts, and this is what we rode on. Wool shorts, absorbent leather sewn inside, on a Brooks leather saddle. That was cycling. You can see why we needed a little something extra, and chamois cream was that extra.

Today we call it a pad, not a chamois, because we don't make the pads out of leather anymore (just like our saddle uppers are rarely made of leather these days). But we still call it chamois cream. Is chamois cream still necessary? Is it compatible with today's pads? And, between the \$.30 an ounce, and the \$5.00 an ounce, price tags for these products is there a meaningful difference worth the 16-fold price jump between barely acceptable and top-of-the-heap?

Purpose

Chamois cream is designed to provide the following benefits. The primary duty is lubrication. It's not just lubrication between you and the pad in your

tri or cycling shorts; it's lubrication between you and you. Parts of your skin rub against other parts of your skin when you ride. You abrade yourself. Chamois cream forestalls that happening.

Proper chamois cream – as opposed to “works like” chamois cream but isn't chamois cream – also has ingredients that guard against bacterial infection. If you spend a lot of time in the saddle, and you abrade away your skin because not everything works as it should (a nettlesome seam in the pad or the short), the area where you sit on the saddle is a germ factory.

These two points above are the idea behind chamois cream and, yes, you can use chamois cream in today's modern pads. This is because, while chamois cream may have oils and butters and paraffin, chamois cream as a complete product is pretty much water soluble. In many or most chamois creams water is the number-1 ingredient.

The more easily the chamois cream you use washes out of your cycling shorts, the better it is for your shorts. For this reason and others I absolutely never use a petroleum based lubricant as a proxy for chamois cream. It is so hard to get Vaseline off of a garment, this is the one thing that would void your warranty when I was a manufacturer: If you sent us a wetsuit to be repaired with this lubricant all over it, we boxed it up and sent it right back to you.

How much to use?

A healthy amount. Don't scrimp. Lube up. Imagine, when you were a kid, taking two fingers and scooping enough icing out of the mixing bowl to satisfy your sweet tooth. In my opinion, if you have a hard time justifying the use of that much chamois cream because of how quickly a \$20 jar of it will disappear, move to a less hoity toity brand (which we'll discuss below). Better to use a cream that is less your ideal – but meets the minimum standard – so that you can use a proper amount for each ride.

I use chamois cream whether I'm riding indoor or outdoor, but it's more an imperative if I'm riding a longer distance. Honestly, if I'm riding less than an

hour I may forego chamois cream. If I'm riding 3 hours or more, chamois cream is a certainty. Somewhere in there is the break-even. But I'm more likely than not to use chamois cream on every ride lasting over an hour, indoor or outdoor.

Tri position?

In my opinion and experience chamois cream is even more beneficial for tri position riding, because the friction possibilities – between you and the pad, and you and yourself, skin-on-skin – are increased. That 60-minute rule above is obliterated once I'm on a tri bike. It's more like the 60-second rule. I've on in the aero position for more than a minute, it's chamois cream.

But this creates a conundrum. If what you want is a water-soluble product, and you want chamois cream during the ride while in a race, will chamois cream survive the swim? Kinda. I put a lot of chamois cream down there before the swim, and the wetsuit is only marginally good at keeping it in there. If I was racing a 70.3 or longer I'd have a tube of chamois cream in transition and would reapply after the swim. That might not be an attractive sight to anyone looking on but, well, this is triathlon, not beanbag.

Eurostyle?

This is code for party-in-your-pants. Certain chamois creams have witch hazel or menthol. You'll know immediately if you're applying a eurostyle chamois cream. Some brands offer both: Chamois Butt'r, for example. If you take a look at pic highest above, of the 3 tubs, one is Chamois Butt'r eurostyle, and the other is Buttonhole. To my taste, Buttonhole (the favorite of many) is a little heavy on the menthol, or maybe it's just menthol I find a bit overwhelming. Chamois Butt'r uses witch hazel. You can also get [Buttonhole without the pants party](#), and this chamois cream is high quality and a little easier on the pocketbook than certain other brands.

My instinct told me that women would not prefer euro style chamois butter but my instinct was wrong. I polled a lot of women on this, experienced cyclists who were users of chamois cream, and I did not find any difference

between the genders as to what percentage preferred regular versus eurostyle.

Brands

I have not tried every brand; not even close. My first chamois cream experience was [Assos](#), eurostyle, and as usual Assos is both pricey and worth it. Then I moved to [Chamois Butt'r](#), and I've used both eurostyle and regular and I have no quarrel with either. Each delivers the goods.

One of our bike fit instructors who rides an awful lot, Matt Hill, (you'll also see his articles here) has as his personal fave [Mad Alchemy Dark Matter](#). Activated charcoal is the hook here – it “can absorb many times its own weight in toxins.” This chamois cream is among the most expensive, and once you get into the typical highest-quality, chamois creams you're looking at \$20 or more for a tub which contains between 4 and 5 ounces. Assos, Mad Alchemy, and other brands are all in this general territory. The best values in chamois creams is a moving target, but Chamois Butt'r is a reliable value and as of this moment [UndrBudr](#) is pretty good.

There is also Gooch Guard, Zevlin, Veloskin, DZ Nuts, Silca, Endura, Muc-Off makes chamois cream and I'm sure I've not even listed half of them. The only thing I will say is that I only buy chamois cream in reasonably large containers. I'm trying to use less plastic, and it seems really wasteful to me for chamois cream to come in individual plastic “servings.” I favor the tub; but I'm fine with the tube (pictured above); the tube is best if you share; but the container must deliver 4oz or more or I'm not buying it.

Bargain

I have not used diaper cream, rash cream or any of those kinds of products as chamois cream stand-ins. What I have done is look at the starter ingredients of those who've tried to home brew chamois cream, and one of the popular base starter products is Queen Helene Cocoa Butter. This stuff is really cheap. It's \$5 for double or triple the quantity you pay \$20 for when you buy best-quality purpose-made chamois cream. But it's not creamy like actual chamois cream. Imagine sticking your fingers into a tub of

refrigerated margarine – it’s about that consistency. (Chamois cream is like sticking your fingers in margarine you left out on the counter overnight.) But when Queen Helene Cocoa Butter is applied it pretty quickly liquifies. So, while this product – not “solid”, not “hand and body lotion”, not “body oil” – which is the Face and Body Crème, is a common starter base for home brew chamois cream, it’s pretty darned good as-is.

I have not tried Bag Balm. This has been around for 120-plus years, and the original use was to solve the problem of chafed cow udders. I’ve been hearing about Bag Balm for as long as I’ve been riding and by-volume you can get at least double, up to quadruple, the amount versus what you’d spend on top-cabin chamois cream. My reticence is that the ingredients sit in a lanolin and petroleum jelly base. I’m okay with lanolin. This is a typical ingredient in chamois creams, though some sensitive to animal rights issues may find this problematic as it is derived from wool-bearing animals. But for whatever reason I don’t find products with lanolin a problem to wash out of my garments, but I have a heck of a time with petroleum jellies.

But let me backtrack and prohibitively un-harsh on petroleum jellies if they are a component of an emulsion. It doesn’t take much Googling to find patents from the 1980s forward on processes for emulsifying petroleum jelly for use in skin care products. In this case – if aqueous forms of petroleum jelly are water soluble – I could imagine their use in a chamois cream.

What I don’t know about chamois creams is legion. In fact, if there’s anything I do know, you now know it too. The most important thing to know about chamois cream is that it will solve some portion of your saddle problems. In tri, in particular, it won't make a bad tri saddle into a good one, but it'll take a good bit of the edge off.