

Running and More

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OTC administration is done during nap time

By Louise Rachlis

Balance is a challenge for anyone involved in sport.

For Geordie McConnell, director of the Ottawa Triathlon Club, his proudest accomplishment is "my balance in life between being a house-dad, husband and coach."

A Certified Triathlon Coach and personal trainer, he has worked in outdoor education and fitness for most of his working life, including eight years working overseas in Europe and Australia.

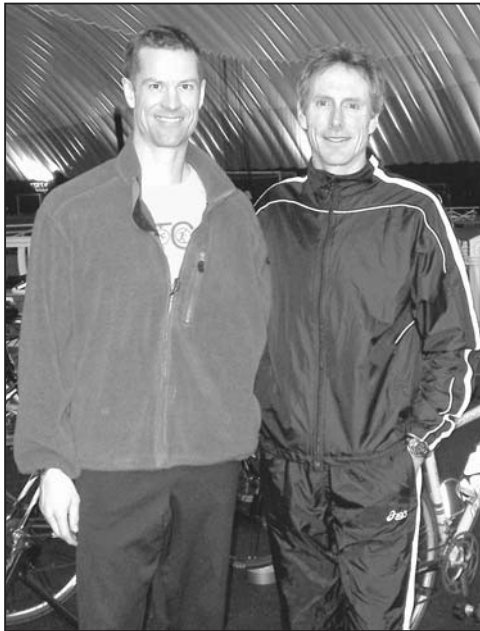
In fall 2004, he decided to become house-dad to his daughter Hannah, now three.

He also set up a small swim group and later rented some spin studio time for winter training, doing the administration during his daughter's nap time.

"The club grew enough to allow for the leasing of a space and purchase of our own spin bikes last year," says Geordie, 41. "The programs now include swimming – indoors and open water, spin classes, track workouts, yoga, bootcamp fitness, and seminars."

Seventy-five per cent of the new members of the Ottawa Triathlon Club are brand new to the sport of triathlon, so he spends a lot of time explaining as well as exercising. "As an educator I believe in explaining not only what to do, but also why we do it."

Triathlon lends itself to goal progression, he says, but many people wrongly feel it's mandatory to keep moving up in the distances. "I tell my members that if they can complete a super sprint or a sprint distance triathlon, they are ahead of 95 per cent of the population. You don't need to be Type A or have a lot of equipment to participate in triathlon. Health Canada recommends three to six hours of physical activity a week, and that basic recommendation to the general popu-



Geordie McConnell (left) with six-time Ironman champion Mark Allen.

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– Geordie McConnell
Ottawa Triathlon Club

lation will allow most anyone to prepare for a short triathlon."

He doesn't see the club's role as helping people to get to the finish line of an event. "The event gives a focus and a framework, and is a celebration of the fitness gained through a healthy level of physical activity as part of one's lifestyle," he says. "When I apply that to my experience in the fitness industry, there are countless people who manage to go to the gym regularly, but there are vastly greater numbers who fail at that. I've learned that there is much greater exercise adherence in group situations."

The two primary reasons that groups succeed, he says, are the social aspect, and also availability of guidance – every time your work out there's a qualified individual telling you what to do. "There's a plan, a progression and a variance that will max-

imize not only one's interest and motivation, but also an increase in fitness. Having a regimen that allows you to make a commitment in your day-timer certainly helps your adherence as well."

Geordie, who grew up in Almonte, Ont., did his first triathlon in 1985. "I've never seen a podium," he says, "but have simply enjoyed triathlon as a means of keeping fit through the years." He completed an iron distance race in 1997.

Swimming, biking and running are three of the top eight physical activities in Canada, he says. "For children, they are fun. For adults, they work many different muscle groups."

He says that while volunteering in the community is very important to him, his schedule "doesn't allow for me to get out to do it in the usual ways." Instead, for last three years he has volunteered his time in organizing a triathlon clinic and speaking engagements by triathletes Dave Scott and Mark Allen to raise funds for charity.

For information, view ottawatriathlonclub.com.

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