**Surviving the Post Race Doldrums**By BoldRunning Denver Coach, Brian Hansen.

This week's topic is that dreaded phenomenon called the DOLDRUMS.  The doldrums are that period of time after a big race, but before you have picked your next one, where your training kind of falls away - you lose momentum.  You have spent a lot of time and energy all summer and fall building towards your race - sometimes putting off certain indulgences or life tasks (fast food, sleeping in, house projects, etc.) during your training.  Now that the race is done, you can relax and have all of that free time back again, right?

Well, sort of.  But don't rest on your laurels too much.  There are two things that I usually focus on after a season ends to make sure that I don't slip all of the way back into inactivity:

**1)** As hard as you worked to get to that fitness level, realize that it is very easy to lose it.  So, while you can and should take it easy and recover from your races, do not let it slip into weeks and then months of 'taking time off'.  Pick your next race to stay motivated.  Signing up for the winter maintenance session (shameless plug) is also a way to keep your motivation up - run with others, be accountable to someone if you skip.  But don't let those hard fought gains slip away.

**2)** Continue to make a place for running in your life.  Don't let this be an expendable part of your day - the first thing that you toss aside when the day gets hectic.  Make this a cornerstone, both for the mental and physical benefits that it provides.  Adopt it as a year-round lifestyle, not just something you do in the warmer months.

I realize that those are two sides of the same coin, but there are subtle differences.  Some people train for races, others run for life and the races are just waypoints.  Be the latter.  Use the tools in #1 to help you make that leap - this club, the friends you make while running, the adventures you have while racing, etc.  Those are all great support mechanisms and motivational tools that keep running fresh, exciting, and something you look forward to.  Eventually it just becomes a part of your daily routine.

I think a lot of you are already there - but the doldrums can get to even the most dedicated runners.  The unpredictable weather, the waning daylight, the new season of American Idol - all easy excuses that let you off the hook.  But don't let Ryan Seacrest's siren call get you off track!  Just plan alternatives like yoga, pilates, spinning, P90X or something similar if you are a little burned out and need a change of routine.  If you need to see American Idol, plan to watch it on TV at the gym while you are on a bike - or record it and watch it while you stretch out.

And, the easiest way to keep going...keep coming to the workouts.  You have a supportive environment, a witty coach, and friends to hang with - who could ask for anything more?

~Brian