

Jun 7th, 2024: Understanding TP numbers

I've been logging workouts on TrainingPeaks for more than three years now. But I only looked at one metric: **Fitness**, also named CTL (Chronic Training Load).

Fitness should record your current level of fitness or, in TP words, the *ongoing average of your daily training (TSS load) specifically looking at the last six weeks or 42 days of data points*.

Note: TSS is the Training Stress Score, a score that tracks the effort of the workout (similar to the concept of the Relative Effort in Strava, but calculated in a different way). It's best tracked with a wattometer and a precise segmentation of the HR zones, but for newbie "athletes" like me I guess it's OK to use the default zones based on age and other factors and an Apple Watch with no wattometer. At least for now.

So, if it's an ongoing (rolling) average, it means that if I train at the same effort for 42 days straight, I'll have that exact fitness. So for example if I train on a 50 TSS daily, I'll surely have a 50 CTL in 42 days.

Of course I can't do that. I tried to do that a few years ago up until a year ago, and I think I actually made it worse.



Since I don't have an ATP (Annual Training Plan) dashboard for 2022 on TP, I'll use the Strava Fitness & Freshness chart, that's very similar. One of the last times I tried to have the 'fast and strong' approach by having a lot of hard workouts, I increased my overall fitness score from 1 (!) to 48 in less than 4 months, from late September 2022 to mid January 2023. But then, I lost more than 50% of it because I got injured, then sick, then the momentum fade away and I didn't have the same will to go training multiple times a week.

I remember taking a lot of walks (that's why I didn't loose 90% of my fitness), but then I tried to go at it again in the same way, and increased my score back to around 35, but got sick again, and one more run up before getting in very bad shape until october 2023.

Then, like I said, a few months before my 30th birthday I decided I needed to take a different approach.

I don't know why I haven't though of this before, or why I haven't fully gotten the grasp of it, but one needs to treat fitness, wellness and health care as a marathon, not a sprint.

In a marathon, you need to have a strong mental commitment, but first you

need to learn to be patient when running for 3+ hours on a streak.

It takes patience.

So that's why from October 2023 I started picking up pace in a different way, but TP and Strava weren't enough. I also needed to look at Gentler Streak, an app that just recently won the Apple Design Award.



Gentler Streak (GS) is an iPhone app to learn to take gentler streaks in the fitness routine. There are a few rules that work so good that it's crazy that it's so simple:

- The center green zone represents the balance: if you stay in that over time, your fitness will stay the same
- The upper and lower greener zones are for increasing and decreasing your fitness: staying in those zones consistently means you'll increase or decrease fitness over time
- You can rest up to 4 days from a peak without damaging your fitness
- If you overtrain for more than 2 days straight (being outside of the upper greener zone), you'll have a much higher chance you'll get sick or injured. In my case it's more than 90%

And that should be it.

It's not made for pro athletes that can commit to more rest, massages and other measures to prevent injuries or illnesses, but it's made for guys like me that work on a computer and want a simple method of knowing how much they can push each day to reach their fitness goals.

So I use TP for weekly planning over a long period of time (now I'm planning about 3-4 months in advance), and GS to check my 'potential power' each day. GS uses quite a few measurements from the Apple Watch to tell you if you can do it, and it's the perfect tool to know if I can do it on any day.

Next step: understanding how to improve **Fatigue** and **Form**.

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