

From Full-Time Athlete To Full-Time Work

By: Ben Lustgarten

Train 2.5 hours in the morning, shower, stretch, eat, nap, work, train 2 hours, shower, eat, sleep. This is what I was used to for the past four years training and racing full-time for the Craftsbury Green Racing Project, and how lucky I was to have that opportunity! Having the ability to develop your life around the pursuit of athletic perfection was a journey of a lifetime and something I now realize I may have taken a bit for granted. I started my full-time job (not skiing) this spring only a few weeks after the 2020 ski season's premature end.



I was anticipating having a bit more time to relax, reflect, and process the end of my ski career, remembering the good times and coming to terms with goals not-yet-achieved. However, I was plunged headfirst into a completely new and rather foreign lifestyle. Now the routine is: eat breakfast, drive to work, work 8am-5pm, drive home, squeeze in a short workout, make dinner, clean up and sleep.

I am not saying I am an expert at transitioning from full time training to full time working, but I have learned some tricks for how to adapt some important workouts into a very tight schedule. I also am very aware that I have a lot of work to do if I want to attain fitness even close to what I had a mere seven months ago. And for full transparency, I have had some serious ebbs and flows of motivation to train, with both the desire to keep my hard-won fitness and also the feeling of being burned out and not needing to train hard anymore. I figured with my job taking the time from about 7:40am - 5:20pm I decided to not even attempt to do 2 workouts in one day. I wanted to make sure what little I trained would be quality. It was much more about efficiency and effectiveness of the training than the volume.

My goal is to hit about 12 hours per week, which would translate to about 600h per year, however I have been stuck at 8 hours for longer than I care to admit. This is due to a combination of lack of motivation and life getting more in the way than it used to be. I am not angry about it, just accepting it and trying to see how I can bump those numbers up a bit.

I have spoken to my coach Pepa and she kept encouraging me to do intervals to keep my fitness. I couldn't rely upon hours of training each day, seeing that I could workout about 1.5h max per day after work without sacrificing all my free time to training, and a few hours per day on the weekend. Really in the past few weeks I got a good system, and it goes like this:

Most weekdays: try to get a good 1-1.5h workout after work. I aim for L1 run or bike ride, or a good strength workout if it is raining and gross out (because I have the glorious power to choose that now)

Wednesday or Thursday: Do a 1.5h rollerski interval workout, something short like 6-10 x 1min L5 intervals. Then work from 10am-6pm. I am lucky to be able to shift my schedule at work to arrive late and leave late.

Saturday: Intervals in the morning - something longer like L3 (8-10min per interval) or longer L4 (3-5min per interval).

Sunday: longer workout like a hike, trail run, or bike ride.



My main goal going forward is to be consistent with doing intervals every week. I had a very hard time in the summer with adjusting to work, and not having a team or coach to encourage and/or tell me what to do. Doing 1.5h of L1 six days a week does relatively nothing for high end speed and ability to process lactic acid.

Efficiency with time is the most crucial element with working a full time job. I find that if I come home from work and sit down and eat a snack, maybe check my email, then suddenly it is 6:15 and I don't have time for a full workout and I just choose to not workout or to clean up and make dinner, etc. It is so easy to miss a workout. Or if I have to bring my car in, or run an errand, suddenly the workout time is gone.

At the end of the day, I know I just have to try my best. But also it is a time of my life where I realize skiing and training is not everything anymore. This realization is quite liberating, so I let myself accept that I won't hit all my workouts, and that is ok too.

See you on the trails,

Ben

