

I'm getting into summer cycling now, which differs from winter cycling. In the winter, it's cold, so I wear several layers of light-weight technical gear that keeps me warm so long as I work as hard as I can. It's pretty simple—go all out the whole way to stay warm.

In the summer, it's more complicated. I can't ride as hard as I can as long as I can because it's hot. I have to dial back my effort, which means riding slower, which means riding longer, because I'm either going the same distance that I rode in the winter or going further. Here's the tricky part. If I knock off too much, I suffer dehydration before I get home, because I'm in the heat too long. But if I work too hard and go too fast, because I don't want to be in the heat too long, I suffer dehydration before I get home. I have to strike the right balance. Too slow, I overheat. Too fast, I overheat.

Overheating = intense suffering. Of course, even when I strike the right balance I suffer. It's cycling! But when I overheat, I *really* suffer, physically and mentally. It took me years of suffering from dehydration and overheating before I learned how to strike the right balance.

I learned it takes vigilance—paying close attention to how my body feels and what the feelings mean. It takes knowing what I need and having it on hand—electrolytes, carbs, and protein—and knowing when and how to take it, which means studying and heeding the science. It takes knowing when to back off or push harder under different conditions, because I know what my body can and can't take in the short-run and long-run.

In the Covid-19 drama in which we're all characters, I think we just finished the Introduction and we're now starting Chapter One. Chapter One includes our first attempts to loosen the restrictions and reopen the economy. People whom I trust say we don't have adequate testing to safely loosen and open, and warn that we're taking significant risks. I worry about the risks, and advocate extreme caution. But I also understand why people want things to loosen and open. Like them, I want to get out more, do more, and see people again. If I had no income, I'd want my job back.

Can we strike the right balance? Can we loosen and open not too slow, not too fast? It's a tricky balance. Even if we strike the right balance, people will suffer. It's a global pandemic! But if we don't strike the right balance, more people will *really* suffer.

Are we vigilant enough? Can we pay close enough attention to what we're doing? Are we studying and heeding the science? Do we know what we need, and do we have what we need on hand? Do we know what we can and can't do under different conditions? Are we willing to learn, change, and adapt?

What we encounter in Covid-19 Chapter Two will depend on what happens in Chapter One, on whether we begin to strike the right balance. Let's pray that we learn how to get it right.

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