

Every month, Triathlete features an age-grouper who exemplifies the performance body-weight connection.

Ingrid Miller

PERSONAL: Ingrid Miller, 49, lives in Laguna Beach, Calif., with her husband, Chris, and daughters McKayla, 11, and Casey, 10.

OCCUPATION: A lawyer by training, Miller has turned to writing in the past few years and has authored two books: "Ironplanner: Iron-Distance Organizer for Triathletes" and the forthcoming "Weight Management for Triathletes."

TRIATHLON EXPERIENCE: Miller has been competing in triathlons consistently since 2005. Although she is able to race in the Athena class (body weight is 150 pounds or greater), she sometimes competes in her age-group and is a frequent top-three finisher.

BEFORE TRIATHLON: A swimmer in her youth, Miller switched to marathon running as an adult and actually planned to become a triathlete years before she took the plunge.

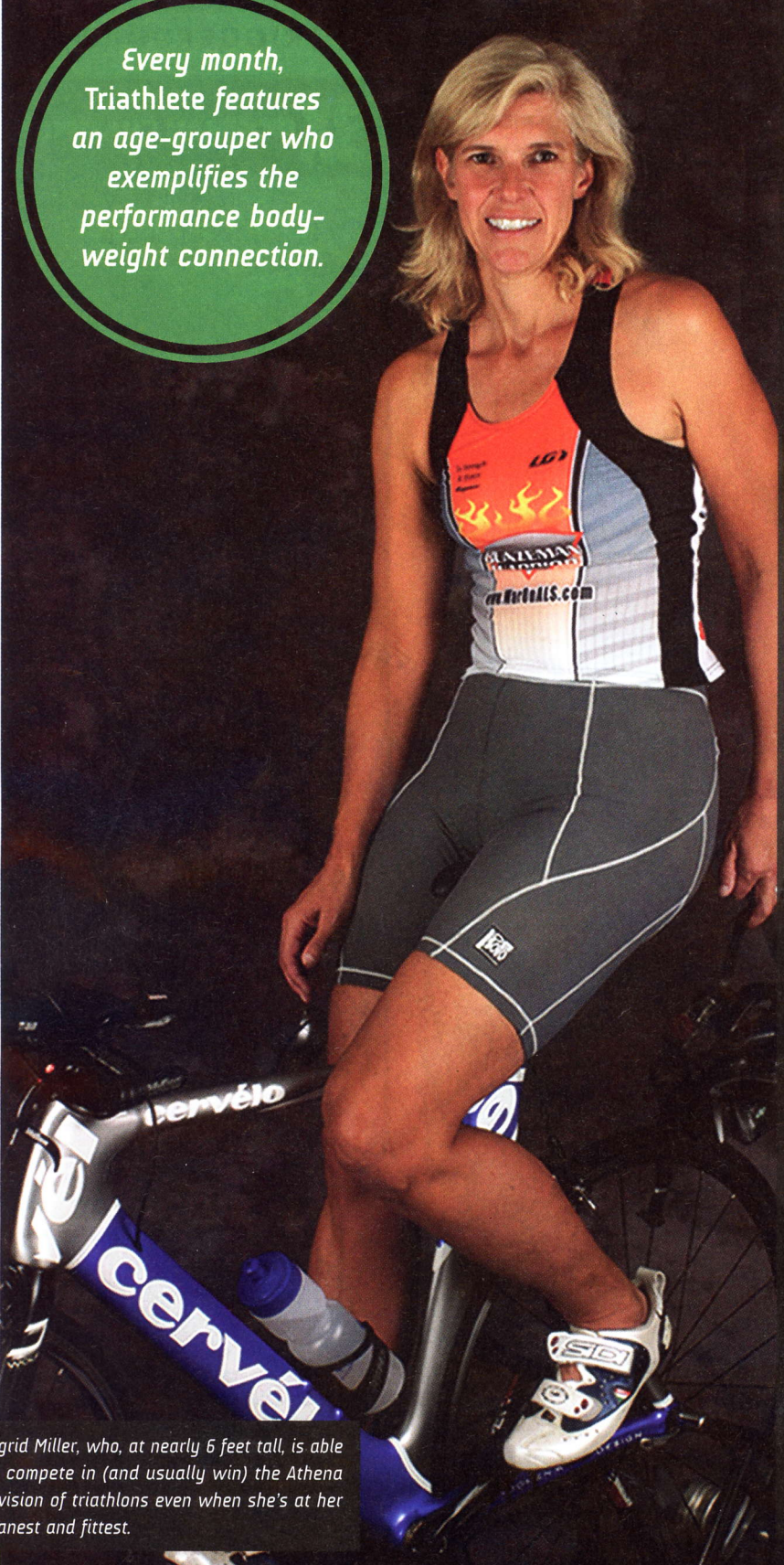
TRAINING APPROACH: Miller trains roughly eight hours per week except in the several weeks before a race, when she adds a couple of hours to her routine. She swims, rides and runs each three times in a typical week, and also pumps iron. "I am dedicated to two times a week in the gym year-round," she says, "doing functional strength work, which has been crucial to staying injury-free and getting faster."

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT: Overweight when she started doing triathlons, Miller addressed the problem in a way that few athletes do, but with great success. "I improved from 30 percent to 15 percent body fat in about nine months with Weight Watchers," she says. "I resisted Weight Watchers because, as an athlete, I felt out of place there. But it forced me to focus on the food instead of the training and that was the key to my success."

As Miller's weight went down, her times did, too. "It was a cycle," she says. "The leaner I got, the faster I went."

Miller keeps herself on track by weighing herself daily. "Weighing daily has taken the emotional gamble out of stepping on the scale," she says. "I know my weight can fluctuate five pounds in a month depending on hormonal issues, so I have learned to live within a weight range rather than an exact number."

ADVICE TO OTHER TRIATHLETES: "It's all about the food," says Miller. "I can't tell you how often I hear other athletes say, 'But I train and train and train and I still don't lose enough weight.' You can't count on your training to do it all. You still have to control your portions and avoid junk." ▼



Ingrid Miller, who, at nearly 6 feet tall, is able to compete in (and usually win) the Athena division of triathlons even when she's at her leanest and fittest.