

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT

GRACE UENG, 38
CARY, NC



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Grace is an avid novice athlete. Her endurance pursuits began in earnest while taking a sabbatical after her third software startup venture was sold, when she joined Team in Training and was part of the national team that raised over \$10 million at the Walt Disney World Marathon in January 2002. Two more startups later, Grace is now doing sprint triathlons. She completed Valdese and White Lake this spring and plans on participating in Mission Man and Fit & Able later this summer. She also has taken to bike riding and enjoys rides like the Spin Cycle Fourth of July Firecracker and is starting fundraising for the MS150 Magical Mystery Tour this fall. She is president and founder of Savvy Marketing Group, LLC (www.savvymarketinggroup.com), a consulting firm that helps new ventures maximize their success, and is the single mother of a seven-year-old budding triathlete.

What's your sport? Running, biking, and swimming—but they are all very new to me. In fact, before I did the 2002 Team in Training marathon, I had run only a handful of 5Ks in my entire adult life—that was the extent of my running experience. I had to start from scratch and develop a baseline for two months prior to joining TNT. I am also probably the only adult you will meet who didn't know how to ride a bike—that is, up until 2 years ago. After my sister got into a biking accident on a hill near my house while growing up, we didn't ride bikes except in our driveway! After my marathon, I wanted to start doing triathlons but knew I had to learn to get over my fear of riding. Several falls and bruises later, I am now happily riding over 60 miles a week.

What do you do for a living? Since moving to the RTP, I've been an executive for several software ventures. This past year, I founded my own consulting business, Savvy Marketing Group

LLC, a consulting firm that uses proven methodologies to help new ventures within Fortune 500 and startups maximize their success. The categories we serve are consumer products/services, healthcare/medical devices, and information technology. After graduating from MIT, I worked for management consulting firm Bain & Company and then worked in consumer marketing for Sports Illustrated. After receiving my MBA from Harvard, I managed five national household brands at General Mills and Clorox. Since then, I've been on the management teams of five software ventures where we returned over \$1 billion to our investors.

How long have you been participating in endurance sports? 3 years.

How many times will you race this year? I run in several 5Ks a year—my favorite are Run for the Roses and Race for the Cure. I am participating in four triathlons this season and several charity bike rides and will cap off biking with the MS150 in New Bern. I'm very excited about that. MS is a special cause for me, and for someone who didn't ride a bike until 2 years ago, this is a big step in my biking career!

Hours of training per week: I work out 5–6 times a week and alternate my swimming, biking, and running. I try to do one long bike ride each week—I'm up to 39 miles now and working toward 100K for my long ride to prepare for the MS150. I would like to do more interval training each week to improve my performance.

Why do you race? Over the last 3 years, I've participated in endurance sports to stay fit, for the camaraderie with team-

mates, to help raise money for good causes, and because I think endurance sports help you in every other part of your life, keeping you emotionally fit, which helps when life brings you difficult challenges. I get some of my best ideas for my clients on my long rides and runs and swims, and I also have time to appreciate nature and enjoy quiet meditation time. My goals have been pretty simple—first they were just to finish the particular race—now I would like to make improvements. Marathon author Jeff Galloway, however, once told me that some people just don't have the genes to do the Boston Marathon. I still would like to do Boston since I spent many years in school and working there, but I'm realistic that I would probably need to fundraise to gain entrance. That's OK—I'd like to keep improving my time but I know that I am more of an endurance than speed athlete and am cognizant of other priorities in life that are important as well.

Where are you from (originally)? Atlanta, GA

Where do you like to run? Lake Pine, Lake Johnson, Bond Park, around Preston.

What's your favorite ride? Any challenging group ride in the countryside

Where do you swim? At the Cary Family YMCA

Sources of inspiration: My former YMCA personal trainers (Patty Geiger, owner of Triangle Pilates, and Sara Bailey), my teammates and coach Trish Graham from Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training, my current coach Alisa Colopy from Fit & Able Productions (See quote below), and all my teammates. My faith in God also gives me strength. Finally, I usually have a friend or family member who is suffering from an illness for whom I dedicate my races—when I am weary toward the end of a race, I think that I can definitely tough it out if they can.

Ideal training conditions: In the summer months, I like to train in the morning before it is too hot. Or I will train in the evening. It really depends on my client, son, and team training schedules—I am flexible—just as long as I get the training in at some point during the day.

Ideal racing conditions: Morning at 8 a.m., with minimal humidity, and below 80 degrees.

Running shoe of choice: Wore sturdy pair of Adidas for marathon, then started wearing women's Ryka KM5. Just got a pair of Asics Gel Kayano Xs, which I already love.

What do you ride? Trek 5200. When I first bought it, I had a very bad tumble on a cold icy hill (you have to remember that I was just learning to ride a bike—the fear factor with the skinny tires was very intense). I've archived that cracked helmet and am now absolutely in love with the bike. No wonder Lance likes the same frame. The folks at Cycling Spoken Here were right—I thoroughly enjoy it now—it is so lightweight and handles extremely well.

One piece of gear you can't live without: I have been without my Polar heart rate monitor the last few weeks while Inside Out Sports has it sent out to have the battery repaired. I really miss it. I also love my two cyclometers, which have been extremely helpful for monitoring and improving my biking performance.

Endurance sports highlight: Training with Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training, completing the 2002 Walt Disney World Marathon, and having my son and parents be there to share the very special moment after I crossed the finish line. I ran in honor of my friend Megan White, from my church, who had a rare form of lymphoma and passed away a few months later.

What motivates you? My teammates and my next race!

Current goal: Improving my swimming techniques and decreasing my stroke count. Getting faster on my bike. Improving my running form and doing more interval training. Completing 150 miles in the MS150!