



Working his way up the chain, Morgan was eventually promoted to Corporal in command of a vehicle. "I was responsible for the lives within, and for making sure we were fulfilling our part of any mission," he says. "But I also did anything else they asked of me—I was not above scrubbing floors."

Morgan applies the discipline and work ethic developed in the Marines to his IRONMAN training, which he calls "somewhat unorthodox."

For instance, Morgan strength trains five times a week to maximize certain muscle groups. "As a wheelchair athlete, I rely on upper-body muscle groups that are smaller, thus lighter, than your traditional triathlete. My pecs are your glutes, my deltoids are your quads, and so on," he explains.

He handcycles about 42 miles daily, Monday through Friday (it's the handcycle that gives Morgan the "runner's" high) and pushes 30 miles a week in his racing wheelchair. "On the weekends I'll throw in a brick (workout), or maybe change up the scenery, like an open water swim in a nearby lake, or find some hills to climb on the hand bike or racing wheelchair."

Unlike his 20s when he felt lazy when not doing something, Morgan now accepts rest as an essential training component to help him "push through more, and find that extra oomph." "I don't know if it's age or experience, or both, but I am learning to listen to my body a lot more."

Morgan additionally disciplines his mind with hobbies outside of IRONMAN to manage race-day stress. Finding them meditative, Morgan plays guitar and sings at local bars along with doing carpentry, a craft taught by his father and now expanded to detailed work, joinery, and other techniques.

Being physically and mentally disciplined forges Morgan's confidence. "I learned early that you can only prepare as best you can, and that everything after that is out of your control."



### Purposeful

On January 1, 2005, exactly one month after his 21st birthday and during his second tour in Iraq, Morgan was in his vehicle when it was struck by an enemy IED (improvised explosive device) which detonated directly under his seat. He lost his right leg above the knee, his left leg below the knee, broke his right arm and fingers, went blind in his right eye, and sustained multiple breaks in his facial bones.

He says he not only lost parts of his body, but "perhaps more significantly, I lost my sense of purpose."

About two years into his rehabilitation, Morgan learned about [Challenged Athletes Foundation](#), a 25-year-old organization helping people with physical challenges to pursue active lifestyles through physical fitness and competitive athletics. Its [Operation Rebound](#) program funds equipment, training and travel expenses for injured troops, like Morgan, and first responders.

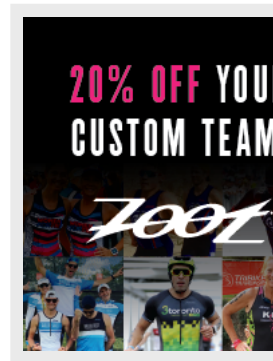
In 2007, Morgan was invited to do the swim as part of a relay team for CAF's annual San Diego Triathlon Challenge in La Jolla. Over the following two years, Morgan devoted more time and effort to triathlon, resulting in his selection to the U.S. national triathlon team, medals at IRONMAN 70.3 Oceanside, and an improved outlook on life post-injury.

Encouraged by his athletic success, Morgan regained a sense of purpose as a father and husband, crediting CAF and triathlon "as the most important tools" in finding himself. Years later, the sport still sustains those family roles. "The job of training adds a nice structure to my days, which tends to make me more productive and present in other aspects of my life."

Being known for something other than his injuries matters to Morgan.

"My friends and family don't really think of the whole no-legs thing anymore; what I enjoy the most is when those close to me just think of me as Evan."

### Selflessness



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Committing to IRONMAN training and racing this year evoke the primary reason Morgan joined the Marines. "It was the Samurai notion of service above self," he states. "I always found that notion appealing: the code of honor, the discipline and the release of self."

Knowing first-hand the benefits of triathlon, Morgan thinks his story could interest anyone with a disability, especially those who have been away from triathlon or any sport for an extended time.

He also hopes his story appeals to people confronting new situations and responsibilities. "I've learned more about balancing everything. I've drunk, I've smoked. I've tried different ways of living, and I've figured out the combination that works best for me."

Just as Morgan gave up his spot on the U.S. national triathlon team to focus on raising his kids with his wife, this renewed interest in IRONMAN training and racing benefits his children.

"It is nice to see my kids have something to call me," says Morgan. "They recognize my training as a job, and they have seen the fruits of my labor when they come along to the events. Now that I have gotten back into racing I am a triathlete, and eventually, I will be an IRONMAN."

When Morgan's friend and sponsor Bob Babbit—a board member of CAF and an inductee to the IRONMAN Hall of Fame—suggested Quest for Kona, Morgan jumped at the chance. Morgan set out on a return to IRONMAN racing with April's [IRONMAN 70.3 Oceanside](#), where he bested the closest wheelchair athlete by an hour and improved his own bike time on the course. He went on to compete at the [IRONMAN 70.3 Buffalo Springs](#) in June, the North American Handcycle Championship, where he hoped to carry his Quest for Kona to completion.

*Following a successful debut last year, IRONMAN is again presenting [Quest for Kona](#), a television series that documents the highs and lows of 10 athletes attempting to qualify for the 2018 IRONMAN World Championship this October in Hawaii. Tune in to [Quest for Kona](#) to follow Morgan's qualification journey.*

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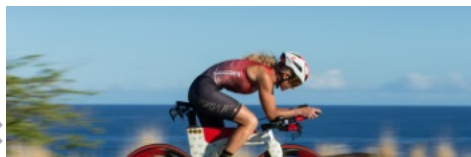
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