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SPRINT TRIATHLON TRAINING GUIDE



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Introduction

Welcome to your sprint triathlon training guide

A triathlon is a hugely rewarding event to compete in. Completing a triathlon event is a great achievement wherever you finish and this training guide takes you through to race day and includes a multitude of tips and advice to help you reach your goal.

This training guide is specifically designed by fitness experts to safely progress your fitness to the appropriate levels so that you will not just be able to complete the challenge but you'll be able to complete it comfortably. The guide is based around specific cardiovascular (CV) training. It also includes a range of dedicated resistance and flexibility training exercises, which will improve your total body fitness and provide you with the all-round strength and fitness that you'll need.

Who is this training guide for?

This training guide is suitable if you are completely new to triathlon or you have possibly completed one sprint distance triathlon event



Safety First

To start with, it is vitally important to ensure that it is safe for you to begin an exercise programme. Complete the safety checklist below and if you answer YES to one or more questions, or alternatively, if you are at all concerned about starting training, then make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up before you start.



Health-status safety checklist

- 1 Are you aged over 30 and/or have not exercised for some time?
- 2 Do you suffer from any medical conditions?
- 3 Are you a smoker or have recently given up smoking?
- 4 Have you undergone any surgery in the past two years?
- 5 Are you suffering from any injuries?
- 6 Are you currently on any prescribed medication?
- 7 Are you unsure about beginning an exercise program?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

Once you have the all-clear from your doctor then you're ready to start training.

Getting Started

What gear do I need?

Getting the right gear and shoes for triathlon events

When you take part in a multi-discipline event like a triathlon, your kit demands will inevitably become greater. Not only do you need to ensure you have got the appropriate kit for each triathlon discipline but your clothing must also be able to stand the test of the infamous triathlon transitions.

Nevertheless, getting together the right gear for triathlon training and competing need not be such a hard task. To help you on your way, here's a basic guide covering all the triathlon clothing and footwear needs to ensure you are properly suited and booted for the three disciplines of swimming, running and cycling.



Triathlon swimming kit

Swimming goggles

To swim in open water, you will need goggles. For a pool swim we would suggest that you do wear goggles. There are many types of goggles out there on the market. Try the goggles on before you buy them. They need to fit your face. The nose clip in the middle of the goggles is adjustable, as is the strap for the goggles to fit around your head. The strap design today usually has a split in it; this allows the goggles to fit around the back of your head.

The new types on the market are those that resemble swimming masks. These types of goggles allow much wider vision in the water, and are a big advantage in large groups of people, and in open water. The goggles that you purchase should have an 'anti-mist' type lens. You can buy a special solution to put on the inside of your goggles to prevent them from steaming up.

Swimming wetsuits

When competing in triathlons in open water, you often need to wear wetsuits. Wetsuits provide extra insulation, and for the weaker swimmers out there, they provide extra flotation. Triathlon and swimming wetsuits are much thinner than those used for surfing and other water sports. To swim any distance in a wetsuit, you need plenty of movement in the upper body area. Triathlon wetsuits are very thin in the underarm and shoulder area. This provides maximum flexibility, thereby not affecting the stroke technique.

Although your first triathlon should ideally be in a pool-based swim, many novices take the plunge and go for an open water race. If this is purely a 'give it a go' kind of activity then we would suggest that you hire a wetsuit for the race. The race information sheet will sometimes advertise a wetsuit hiring deal for competitors. Large races will have wetsuit suppliers there to help you out for that first attempt.

When buying a swimming wetsuit, you must seek advice from experts. There are suits designed for all abilities in the water. If you are a weak kicker in the water, there are suits that are thicker in the legs, thus more buoyant in the water helping you along the way. It is important that the suit fits you, so we would suggest that you go and try the suits on before buying. If you have purchased a new suit for your first triathlon, try it in the local pool before you race in it.

Accessories for triathlon swim training include...

- Pull buoys - These are small floats that you place between your thighs when swim training. It raises your legs and makes you only use your arms, improving your stroke technique, and strengthening your upper body. Use it with paddles.
- Paddles - These are plastic paddles that go onto your hands and improve stroke technique and upper body strength. The bigger the paddle, the harder the session will be.
- Floats - Floats will help your leg kicking, through swimming technique and strength work.

Triathlon bike kit

With the swim kit all sorted, the second element is the bike kit. The race kit that you wear in the bike section of the triathlon is usually the same as you wear in the water. Race kit today is designed not to hold water and dries very quickly. Usually after your first couple of miles, your kit is dry. Speed shorts, cycle shorts and swimwear are all acceptable to wear on the cycle leg of a triathlon.

Cycling tops

The cycle top, again, is a personal preference. If you are purchasing your kit new, then most shorts will have a top that will accompany them. The racing tops are designed so that they are relatively tight to the body so that it doesn't flap about on the cycle section. Most will be designed so that they can be worn in the swim also, either in the pool, or underneath your wetsuit.

Features to look for are rear pockets, easy to get on and off if you're not going to wear it for the swim and you're going to change into it in the transition area. Most of them are sleeveless, and of a 'singlet' proportion. You must wear a top for the cycle section of a triathlon. Many triathletes wear the same kit that they swim in to complete the rest of the race. However, cycling in trunks or a swimsuit is very much a personal preference. We advise you to try a cycle ride in them before you race in them.

Cycling shorts

Cycle shorts or speed shorts are fine to swim in. Modern shorts are not heavy and will not weigh you down in the water. Speed shorts are slightly higher in the leg, and will have less padding than the usual standard cycle shorts. They are usually 'lighter material' than the Lycra short. Many come in a 'dryfit' form that is excellent for that swim-to- bike transition.

Cycling shoes

Specialist cycling shoes (and the pedals that you have to use with them), make a significant difference to your cycling efficiency but by using running shoes, you will save time in your triathlon transition and money. As you progress, you may want to buy more specialist shoes but for your first sprint event, running shoes are fine.

Cycling gloves

Cyclists sometimes wear mesh-type padded gloves to help absorb road shock in the hands, a standard pair that you may use for running will be perfectly adequate.

Triathlon bikes

If it's your first triathlon, dig out that old racer from the garage, dust it down and blow the tyres up! Triathlons can also be completed on mountain bikes, although you would be better off if you can get your hands on a racer bike.

To compete in a triathlon you must have a bike that is roadworthy, and safe. Make sure ...

- The brakes work properly on the bike.
- The cycle has good tyres with adequate grip.
- The gears work properly.

A trip to the local bike retailer for a full service will ensure this.

The position on the bike is very important. If you are using a normal road 'racer' type bike, then it is easy to adjust it for your first race. Aerobars help to assist the rider to stay in an aerodynamic position throughout the race. It does take a while to get used to this position, and remember where your brakes are. Also you must have, or fit a water bottle to your bike. It is really important to stay hydrated on the cycle course. A 1lt bottle will be fine for this bike ride.

There are many pieces of 'trick kit' that we can put on our bikes to make them fast and lightweight. However, at the end of the day it's your legs that get you round the bike course.

Triathlon bike helmets

'No helmet, no race' is quoted by all race organisers before the start of any event. So what type of helmet do you really need for a triathlon?

All good bike shops stock a variety of helmets, for both novice and elite riders. Helmets come in a variety of shapes, styles and sizes, but ultimately comfort and ventilation is the key to your purchase.

When buying your helmet, make sure you get it out of the box and try it on. Although they mainly come in four sizes (small, medium, large, and extra large) sadly your head doesn't, they will differ in shape and size. The helmet should fit snugly on your head, but not too tight. All helmets will have some method of adjusting the sizing to fit the shape of your head. This can be through an internal Velcro system or inter-locking straps that just 'click' onto your head.

When you are happy with the fit, the 'chin strap' must now be adjusted. Again comfort is the key; the straps will fit around your ears and should be tight enough to ensure that the helmet will not come off if contact is made. Pushing the helmet at the front, side and back will give a good idea if this helmet is for you or not.

Ventilation is important, and so is the weight. Ideally, you should forget that the helmet is on when you are training or racing. Many of the new helmets on the market boast about their 'vents'. Try and get a helmet with as many vents as possible, to help stay cool.

Triathlon running kit

Running shoes

One of the most important pieces of kit that you need to buy is a pair of proper running shoes. Good running shoes are an investment in comfort, protection and injury prevention and it is worth visiting a specialist sports footwear retailer rather than a chain store and discussing your requirements with them. And remember your shoes can 'double up' for use on the bike, saving you outlay on a second pair of specialist cycling footwear.

You want to be comfortable when you run — finding the correct shoe size is very important. When you shop for running shoes, always go in the afternoon because after lunch, your feet will have expanded a little. Hence a closer fit in the morning could mean a tight fit in the afternoon and blisters when training, which is certain to curb your enthusiasm!

Running hats

If you are competing in a race and it is going to be hot, it is strongly recommended that you wear a hat. You can purchase very light running caps that keep the head cool, and are very light and breathable. You can also turn your hat around if your neck is burning, so that the peak protects your neck.

Elastic laces and lace locks for running shoes

These are designed to speed up transitions. Elastic laces replace your normal racing shoelace, and once your shoe is on, you just pull them and they tighten up your foot, without having to do the laces up. Lace locks are similar to those found on backpack cords. You attach them to your laces, pull the lock down, and it keeps the laces tight. Both are easy to use, and cheap..

Small essentials of your triathlon kit

Whilst running shoes, cycle shorts and swimwear are all key aspects of the triathlon competitor's kit, there are some smaller items that could improve your performance in the swimming, running and cycling disciplines. Triathlon sunglasses, socks and number belts are all valuable items that will bolster your kit and hopefully your result.

Triathlon socks

Triathlon socks are, to a point, down to your personal preference. For the shorter distances of a triathlon race, you can usually get away with wearing no socks. If you are going to wear them, make sure they are sports socks though, not the normal thick type.

Triathlon socks need to be seamless if possible so that they are nice and comfortable. Socks that will not rub, and that breathe can be purchased from all good triathlon or running shops for little expense. See the section on transitions for how to get them on as quick as you can. Some people cannot cycle and run without socks on!

Triathlon number belts

Number belts are pieces of elastic that go around your waist attached by a plastic clip. You pin or 'clip' your race number to them. If you prefer using four safety pins instead, that's fine. Some races will not allow number belts and different seasons have brought different rules.

The advantage of number belts is that if you are going to wear your cycle top in the swim, you can just clip the number on yourself in the triathlon transitions. You turn the number around to your back for the cycle leg, and the front for the run. You could make your own, or buy one from a triathlon store. Although it's best to check with the race organisers that you are allowed to use them first...

Sunglasses for a triathlon

It is strongly advisable that you wear sunglasses on the cycle ride part of the triathlon. There are hundreds of designs for sunglasses to wear for sport. Cycling glasses are not really any different to most leisure-based glasses. However, they do usually come with the option of changing the lenses for different weather.

There are lots of designs of cycling sunglasses. Here are some points to think about when you are buying:

- Do they ride up and down when you are cycling? They need to be firmly on your head but not too tight ...
- Will they fit on your head okay when you are wearing your cycle helmet?
- Do you have complete vision in them?



Training

Where to train for a triathlon

With jogging, running and cycling, virtually nowhere is out of bounds when it comes to triathlon training. From treadmills and static bikes at the gym to the great outdoors, the possibilities are endless. Some people never venture from the roads whilst others triathlon train almost exclusively on paths, trails and in local parks — the choice really is yours.

A sensible approach is to start training locally and then venture further afield as you progress. That way, when building up, you are never far from home. Varying your routes is a must; even the most committed triathlete tires of following the same circuit session after session, so use your local knowledge to keep your sessions fresh.

Swimming is obviously more limited — unless you have your own pool, that is. To make the most of your swim sessions, plan them carefully so you get the absolute maximum out of your triathlon training. Hone your powers of concentration and focus during your time in the pool.

When to train for a triathlon

From early morning through to lunchtime and late evening, everyone has their favourite time to exercise and train, and flexibility is one of the great pluses with all three triathlon disciplines. Physiologically, early afternoon has been found to be the best time to train; the body is fully woken up and loose and you have had the opportunity to get well fuelled and hydrated. However, if for example midnight is the most suitable session for your circumstances, there's nothing to stop you training whenever you wish.

If you triathlon train first thing in the morning, as well as a great start to the day, you really boost your metabolic rate (the speed at which your body burns calories). This takes effect during your session and for several hours afterwards, which is a great weight management strategy.

Principles of training for a triathlon

It is common to think that when a training improvement is made, for example running further or swimming faster over a given distance in the pool, that the improvement has been made at that specific time. In fact that is not the case; the improvement has been made some time previously, following an earlier triathlon training session.

During the training session, it is the measurable results that are registered in the form of quicker times or further distances. This is because of the way the body responds to triathlon training. When exercising, the body is challenged. Following a training session, when the body is at rest, it adapts, gets stronger and improvements can be measured during a subsequent session. Hence the most important component of any training programme is rest, so that the body is able to adapt to triathlon training. Inadequate rest can result in excessive fatigue, loss of motivation and at worst, injury.

Structuring your training sessions

Following correct exercise protocols is key to getting the most out of your training, so that you start out on the road to fitness with safe and correctly balanced training sessions. To get the most out of your training, you should adhere to the following sequence each time you train:

Warm Up

The warm up, raises the heart rate, gets blood flowing to the working muscles and prepares the body for exercise. It should be for a minimum of five minutes and replicate the movements or activities of the main session.

For example: when beginning a cycle, five minutes very easy cycling will prime the body for the main training session.



Mobility

Some basic actions to put the limbs through the range of movement that the main session requires will ensure that the joints are loosened up, lubricated and will function more efficiently.

Main session

This will form the bulk of the training session. For example: a three mile run.

Cool down

The cool down should be at a lower intensity than the main session and should bring the body temperature and heart rate closer to pre-exercise levels. Waste by-products of exercise will be flushed from the muscles and tissues, accelerating recovery before the next training session.

For example: the cool-down should be a minimum of five to 10 minutes light CV.

Flexibility

Stretching exercises should be carried out after the main session and cool-down as the body is in a greater state of relaxation than at the beginning of the session. Five to 10 minutes spent stretching the muscles worked will maintain suppleness.

How to Stretch

Relax

It is very important to be relaxed. Physical and mental tension will inhibit your range of movement and prevent your muscles from stretching as effectively. Hence, you will not achieve maximum flexibility benefits.

Ease into the stretch

Gradually move your body or the limb being stretched into the stretch position. Once you feel slight tension in the muscle, (known as the point of bind), which is the limit of the muscle's flexibility, hold the position. Avoid bouncing or any other movements, which could overstretch the muscle and result in injury.

Relax your breathing

Always keep your breathing easy and relaxed because that will reduce all-round muscular tension, which in turn will allow you to stretch further. Holding your breath will tense up your entire body, making stretching much harder.

Hold for 30 seconds

To get maximum stretching benefits, you need to hold the stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds. Stretching each muscle for just a few seconds brings no flexibility benefits.

Pain means no gain

Stretching should invoke a mild feeling of 'tightness' or tension within the stretched muscle. Pain when stretching indicates injury or a muscle that has been overstretched. Therefore, never stretch beyond a 'comfortable tightness'.

Rest and repeat

A single stretch for each muscle is very beneficial but if time permits, carry out two stretches for each muscle, separated by a short break of 30 seconds. The second stretch will help extend your range of movement further.

Frequency

Ideally stretch the major muscles after every run but if that proves too time-consuming, stretching twice a week is a suitable target.



Nutrition and hydration

You've brought the bike, found your trainers, joined a pool and got a coach. You have joined the fastest growing mass-participation sport in the world. Now how do you go faster, get stronger and cope with training in three sports? Having a solid nutritional plan for training is the answer to combating fatigue and boosting your performance. As endurance or intensity increases the body burns carbohydrate, leaving the brain and muscles with less glycogen. This dip will result in the body finding it harder to burn fat for energy. Consuming carbohydrates during exercise over an hour will halt this process.

Keeping on top of this replacement is especially important in triathlon. With three demanding disciplines to train in it is easy to fail to adequately replace carbohydrates and nutrients. Compounding fatigue can occur, meaning you won't adapt to the training and see improvements. Keeping the tank as full as possible before, during and after training or racing will mean you reduce fatigue, improve and perform at your maximum potential. It will also leave you feeling less hungry after training, leading to better food choices in your normal diet.

Eat to compete

Consuming carbohydrates during exercise is relatively easy through scientifically designed drinks. Athletes should aim to consume a carbohydrate concentration between six to eight percent during exercise over an hour. This isotonic concentration is ideal for the body to absorb and not cause gastrointestinal distress.

Carbohydrate levels during training can also be achieved by eating sports specific bars and gels. Over the three disciplines a combination of products can be used to sustain levels of carbohydrates and nutrients such as sodium, calcium, potassium and magnesium lost during the sweat process.

Nutrition doesn't end after your session or race ends. Consuming a 3:1 mixture of carbohydrate and protein will repair muscles faster through greater absorption. The critical window is 20 minutes after exercise for maximum nutrient uptake.

Five golden nutrition and hydration rules:

1. Always eat breakfast

Your body needs good quality fuel for training and by waking up your metabolism after sleep; you actually burn more calories through the day.

2. Leave a gap

Allow 1½ to 2½ hours between your last meal and your training session to allow for digestion. Exercising on a full stomach will not only feel uncomfortable but will also inhibit your performance.

3. Hydrate

Drinking water regularly throughout the day is important, but because you are exercising, your fluid requirements will be greater due to sweat losses. However, you will need to focus more on hydration and drinking straight after your workout.

4. Refuel

Your energy requirements will increase as your training increases and the optimum time to begin your refuelling is immediately after your workout. Always try and eat something (a banana is great) as soon as possible after your cool-down.

5. **Don't neglect protein**

Include good quality protein in your diet to support rebuilding because your body will need more to match the increased demands that you are placing on your body.

Tips and advice

Work on your weakest discipline

With triathlon, it is much better to be an all-rounder across the three disciplines than an expert in one because your overall performance will be much better. Hence it is valuable to evaluate which is your weakest discipline and put extra focus into that particular sport. For example, if you're an inexperienced cyclist, try using your bike to commute more so your bike handling skills improve or if you're not a natural in the water, commit to a few early morning swims to focus on technique. Similarly, if you've never run much, consider linking up with your local running club for support, advice and a ready supply of training partners to help you improve.

Pushed for time? Cycle

In triathlon, the cycling phase is always the longest of the three individual events and hence it's the discipline where you can make up the most time. For example, a typical sprint triathlon consists of a 750 metre swim, a 20K cycle and a 5K run so clearly the bike section will take the longest to complete. Hence if you are struggling to fit all the training in, make sure you complete all your cycling sessions because an improvement of two or three percent on the bike is worth more than an improvement of two or three percent in the other disciplines because they are shorter.

Back-to-back

It's important to remember that although you're training in three separate disciplines, on race day, you'll be completing those disciplines back-to-back. Hence you'll really help your performance on the day if you complete some 'brick' sessions. A brick session is a double session of either swimming followed by a bike ride or cycling followed by a run – just as you'll be doing when you compete. By training across two disciplines together, you'll not only be better prepared for the real thing but you'll also get an extremely valuable extended workout as well!

Get toolled up

The last thing that you want either when training or in your race is to suffer a flat tyre, so make up a small tool kit of tyre levers, a puncture repair kit and perhaps even an instant inflator and wrap them up in a plastic bag to keep them dry. Stash your toolkit underneath your saddle where it's completely out of the way – but available should you need it. Your tools will add minimal weight but just might help you get home or save your race if you suffer a dreaded puncture.

Spinning classes are good

If the weather is bad or you're just struggling to get out on your bike; a spinning class at your local gym can be just as beneficial. Spinning classes combine endurance, speed and strength training all in the same package so you can get a great cycling workout without going anywhere! Additionally, the group training environment coupled with inspirational music and an instructor to lead the session is both fun and motivating and can really put some impetus into your cycling training. You should also look to complete some 'road miles' in your programme but when you walk out of that spinning studio, you'll know that you've not taken the easy option because spinning is a fantastic way to train for cycling.

Kick those legs

When you swim, most of your propulsion comes from your arms and although you do employ your legs, compared with your arms they have a bit of a ride. Hence when you move into T1 (the swim to bike transition) prime your legs for the cycle section by kicking a little harder for the last couple of minutes. That way, you'll find that your leg muscles are warmed up, primed with oxygenated blood and ready to go. This means that you can get into your cycling straight away – which overall will make you more efficient and can also save you time.

Preparation is key

When you exit the water and head over to your bike, the last thing you want is to be searching for your helmet and shoes and trying to remember where you left your towel. Valuable time can be lost in the transitions between swimming and cycling, cycling and running. Lay out all the kit you intend to use in exactly the order that you will use it. Not only will it make your transitions quicker but you'll be confident that you've got exactly what you need for each separate discipline. Additionally, include transition training as part of your overall training programme until your transitions are automatic, which could save you several minutes on race day.

Spin to T2

The second transition phase where you change from cycling to running (T2), is typically a problem period for triathletes because your legs have to rapidly change from cycling to running. If you get T2 wrong, the first mile or so of your run can feel like you're running with lead boots on, so to help your legs adapt, as you approach T2, drop down to a lower gear and spin the pedals at a high cadence (the rate at which you turn the cranks). This will help flush any waste by-products that have accumulated from the cycle section out of your muscles which will then freshen up your legs and make your run easier.

Where's my bike?

Finding your bike when it's racked up amongst hundreds of others can be difficult if you're just walking around, let alone racing, so make yours stand out from the crowd. The last thing you want is to lose valuable time searching for your bike and other transition gear so try taping something colourful to the handlebars or attaching a balloon to the saddle on a piece of string which you can burst when you set off. That way, your bike will be clearly visible.

Shrink that stride

The cycling section can make your legs feel a little heavy for running, so to help your leg muscles adapt to the different demands that running places upon them, when you change from cycling to running, shorten your stride for the first few minutes. As the run progresses, gradually extend your stride length until you are using your normal length stride. That way you will find the transition from cycling to running much easier and you will find that you run more efficiently.

Training Guide

Sprint Triathlon training guide

To be successful in your training you must build up your fitness levels gradually. Your body will take time to adapt to the new demands and activity. Therefore the training guide factors in easier sessions as well as rest days. When training, listen to your body. If you are tired and feel like a couple of days off then it will be better for you in the long-term to take a rest.

The training guide lasts for twelve weeks. Getting ready to compete in a triathlon event when you have not previously trained is a great achievement. Remember to enjoy the experience and to keep your training balanced with other commitments, like family and friends.

Insight: If you are already doing some training then jump into the programme at a position that matches your current training load.

Session key: Swim (S) Bike (B) Run (R) Flexibility (F) Rest (RT)

Week No.1	Phase 1 - Introducing your body to training (1)		
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R + F	Easy jog, target between 5 - 10 minutes. Finish with leg stretches	Don't worry about pace, look to complete the session
Tues	S	Target 5 lengths of 25 metres, ideally completed non-stop	
Wed	B	20 minutes, easy effort, just spinning the pedals	
Thurs	RT		Complete rest day, don't be tempted to cram in an extra session!
Fri	S	Repeat Tues session	
Sat	RT		
Sun	R + F	10 minutes very slow pace run	Initial week is solely aimed at waking up the body to training, pace doesn't matter

Week No.2	Phase 1 - Introducing your body to training (2)		
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	RT		Recovery day after Sunday's longer run
Tues	S	Target 5 lengths of 25 metres, ideally completed non-stop	Focus on stretching out with a long stroke

Wed	R + F	10 minutes jogging, ideally continuous	
Thurs	B	20 minutes over a flat course	Easy pace, serves as a useful recovery from yesterday's run
Fri	S	Easy, recovery swim, focusing on a strong leg kick	
Sat	RT		
Sun	R + F	10 minutes continuous jog / run. Try and complete it non-stop, irrespective of pace	Weeks 1 & 2 are designed to gradually introduce the body to regular exercise as a foundation

Week No.3		Phase 2 - Building up (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B	20 minutes even pace	
Tues	S	Move up to completing 200 metres, with recovery breaks if necessary	Concentrate on technique, not pace
Wed	RT		Optional flexibility session if desired
Thurs	R	10 minutes continuous jogging	
Fri	S	Repeat Tues session, ideally with no recovery breaks	
Sat	RT		
Sun	R	Repeat Thurs session, ideally with no recovery breaks	

Week No.4		Phase 2 - Building up (2)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B	15 minutes easy cycle, focus on spinning the legs, not pushing hard	Easy bike session doubles up as a recovery from yesterday's longer run
Tues	S	Target 250 metres, take recovery breaks if necessary	
Wed	RT		Sole rest day this week, so avoid any temptation to do extra training or exercise
Thurs	R + F	15 minutes slow pace run	
Fri	B	20 minutes cycle	

Sat	S	Repeat Tues session	
Sun	R + F	15 minutes slow pace run	First week with 2 sessions each for swimming, cycling & running

Week No.5	Phase 2 - Building up (3)		
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	S	Target 300 metres with rest breaks as you feel necessary	
Tues	RT		Complete rest day
Wed	R + F	15 minutes continuous run	
Thurs	B	25 minutes continuous cycle	Stepping up cycling
Fri	S	Repeat Monday's session, focusing on a relaxed, efficient stroke	
Sat	RT		Rest day before bigger effort on run session tomorrow
Sun	R + F	15 - 20 minutes very easy pace run / jog	Stepping up running

Week No.6	Phase 2 - First peak week		
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	S	Target 400 metres with recovery breaks as needed	Week 6 peaks across all three disciplines, before recovery week 7
Tues	B	25 minutes continuous cycle	
Wed	R + F	15 - 20 minutes continuous run	
Thurs	RT		
Fri	B	30 minutes cycle session, easy pace throughout	Longest cycle to date
Sat	S	Repeat Monday's session	
Sun	R + F	20 minutes continuous run/jog	Longest run to date

Week No.7		Phase 3 - Recovery	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	RT		Week 7 focuses on recovery & easier sessions before 2nd build-up
Tues	S	Easy 15 minutes relaxed swim with focus on technique	
Wed	R + F	15 minutes continuous run	
Thurs	B	25 minutes cycle	
Fri	S	Repeat Tues session	
Sat	R + F	15 - 20 minutes easy run	Avoid temptation to add in more training. Rest should be rest!
Sun	RT		Reduced sessions & volume in week 7 before next build-up

Week No.8		Phase 4 - 2nd build-up (1)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	R +F	25 minutes very easy pace run	You should be feeling fresh after week 7 recovery + rest day yesterday
Tues	S	Target 500 metres, aiming for continuous swimming	
Wed	RT		
Thurs	B	45 - 50 minutes cycle	Make sure you spin the legs in an easy gear for the last 5 minutes to keep your legs fresh for tomorrow
Fri	R + F	Repeat Monday's session	
Sat	S	Repeat Tuesday's session but try and complete the distance non-stop	
Sun	B	Long, easy, relaxed cycle ride, 50 minutes	Moving up across all disciplines this week

Week No.9		Phase 4 - 2nd build-up (2)	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	S	600 metres is the target. Try and minimise any recovery breaks	

Tues	R + F	25 - 30 minutes run, select a flat route	
Wed	B	Repeat last Sunday's 50 minute ride	
Thurs	RT		Complete rest day, try and avoid other activity
Fri	R + F	Repeat Tues session, looking to consolidate rather than improve on speed or distance	
Sat	B	45 minutes cycle	Choose a different route, ideally with a few hills for interest
Sun	S	Target 600 - 700 metres	Big swimming week this week, aim for continuous swimming without rest breaks

Week No.10		Phase 4 - 2nd peak	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	B	60 minutes cycle	2nd peak week for training volumes
Tues	R + F	30 minutes run	
Wed	RT		Complete rest day
Thurs	S	750 metres. Take recovery breaks if needed but try and minimise them	
Fri	R + F	Repeat Tues run, a little faster if possible	
Sat	B	50 minutes cycle, easy and relaxed	Keep the intensity low ready for swim session tomorrow
Sun	S	Repeat Thurs session. Go all out to complete the swim without breaks	

Week No.11		Phase 5 - Start of taper	
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	RT		Complete rest day after maximum week in week 10
Tues	R + F	25 minutes run	
Wed	S	600 - 700 metres non-stop swim	
Thurs	B	50 minutes cycle, comfortable speed	

Fri	S	Repeat Wed session, with technique focus throughout	
Sat	RT		Check bike over for roadworthiness
Sun	B + R	45 minutes easy cycle, followed by 20 minutes easy run	Keep the intensity low throughout and practice the transition from bike to run

Week No.12	Phase 5 - Main taper & race		
Day	Session type	Training	Training notes
Mon	RT		
Tues	S	Final swim session, 500 metres comfortable	Exit the pool feeling like you could do a lot more
Wed	B	Final bike session, 40 minutes with plenty of spinning!	
Thurs	RT		
Fri	R + F	20 minutes light jog / run	As with the swim, finish the run feeling like you could do more
Sat	RT		Optional light flexibility session if you wish
Sun	S + B+ R	Race day, enjoy the experience!	Stay relaxed during the swim and ease into the race at your pace

Motivation

Staying motivated can be one of the toughest aspects of training. Bad weather, work, family and friends can all make it difficult to stay focused and keep keen. To stay enthusiastic make sure you do the following:

- Keep a balance. Training should not "get in the way" of life. Make sure you maintain previous commitments to work, family and friends
- Vary your routes
- Treat yourself when you achieve a goal; either a tasty meal or a new piece of kit
- Remember why you chose to train and what you have achieved since beginning
- Read an inspiring story or autobiography
- Talk to other cyclists
- Write a blog

Some inspirational quotes:

"Champions do not become champions when they win the event, but in the hours, weeks, months and years they spend preparing for it." - T. Alan Armstrong

"You are never a loser unless you quit trying!" - Mike Ditka

"Top results are reached only through pain. But eventually you like this pain. You'll find the more difficulties you have on the way, the more you will enjoy your success." - Juha Vaatainen

"If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail." - Steve Prefontaine

Good luck!

You have come to the end of the schedule, and your fitness has improved dramatically from little or no cardiovascular (CV) activity, to being able to compete in a triathlon event. In the week leading up to your event you have more rest days. Use this time to check over your clothing and gear so that everything is in tip-top condition for your big challenge. In your taper weeks get prepared for the race day, packing energy products and other accessories.

On the race day itself, remember to have fun and chat to people who are also taking part; you might pick up some last minute tips.



So, what next?

You will have made significant health and fitness gains, and equally important, you have progressed safely. By maintaining your training, you will be making a major contribution to your long-term health and fitness, and this schedule can also serve as a foundation and springboard to increase your fitness levels further. Now you've completed your race, you may be tempted to step up and try to improve your finishing time.

Disclaimer

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