

The **220** Triathlon

FREE!

Beginners' Guide



32
PAGES
OF EXPERT
ADVICE

**YOUR DEFINITIVE
INTRODUCTION TO
THE UK'S FASTEST-
GROWING SPORT**

PLUS!

Win free entry to three
of Britain's best races

Everything
you need
to know
about...



The Gear



The Training



The Events

SWIM > BIKE > RUN > FASTER

Welcome

Congratulations: by buying the UK's favourite triathlon magazine, you're one step further down the line to becoming a triathlete, joining the increasing number – about 100,000 at the last count – who regularly race up and down the country.



What follows is all you need to know about triathlon – from decoding tri terms, to how to choose a bike, to planning your training. We even show you how to convert your existing mountain bike into a stealth-like roadster, proving that you don't need to remortgage your house to reach the start line.

But why believe our words of guidance? Well, since 1989 we've been helping triathletes reach their goals, whatever their ambitions, and we've brought together all that experience to give you the definitive beginners' guide to tri.

Of course, we can only provide the expert theory – it's over to you to provide the blood, sweat and (hopefully no) tears. But rest assured, head to 220 each month and we'll give you all the motivation you need to get mentally and physically stronger; in short, to become a triathlete.

JAMES WITTS, EDITOR 220 TRIATHLON

220 Triathlon

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Meet the experts...



ERIC HARR
 is a former pro triathlete who is the author of the best-seller *Triathlon Training on 4hrs a Week*



ROBIN BREW
 is Director of Swimming at Kelly College in Devon. He's held over 20 national GB swimming titles



GUY KESTEVEN
 has been riding and writing about all manner of bikes for over 20 years



JOE BEER
 was voted 220 Triathlon Coach of the Year '04. His aim is to help athletes achieve their goals



ANDY BLOW
 is a sports scientist, top-10 Ironman finisher and he's on the GB long-distance squad



Training for three separate sports will sculpt your physique to that of a swimmer, cyclist and runner

Reasons to Tri

Still unsure about giving the greatest sport in the world a go? **Andy Blow** explains why triathlon is for you by highlighting its many benefits

1 Sculpt your physique

When it comes to giving you a balanced physique, few sports hit the spot like triathlon. The training gives you the toned upper body of a swimmer, the strong quads and calves of a cyclist, and the low body fat levels of a distance runner. Not that anyone would be in it for such shallow reasons... It's all about setting personal bests and being fit and healthy, isn't it?

2 Avoid injury

Doing any single sport for long enough will usually lead to some sort of pain or, in the worst cases, a full-blown injury. This is especially true for runners, who put a great deal of stress on legs, hips and back when training every day. But a mixture of swimming, biking and running will help you to keep a high level of aerobic conditioning with varied stresses across the

whole body. As a result, you'll be able to train more consistently and injuries will be far less common.

3 Meet new people

Triathlon is still a very young sport, and clubs up and down the UK are renowned for their openness to new members. Group swim sessions, Sunday morning bike rides and trips to races are all sociable club events that you can get involved with. While it's true that in triathlon you compete on your own most of the time, it's rare to find yourself training alone.

4 Live longer

It's a fact that physical exercise can prolong your life by fending off the modern-day scourge of heart disease and many other preventable illnesses. Not only



One for all and all for one: the camaraderie among triathletes is one of the sport's biggest selling points

that, but being active can make you much healthier and mobile as you age – so not only do you get more years of life, you get more life in those years. Triathlon provides both the motivation and the means to train the whole body and keep ahead of the ageing game for as long as possible.

5 Travel the world

Triathlon is a truly global sport, with many of the most famous events happening in glamorous locations such as Hawaii, Switzerland and Australia.

This gives you a tremendous excuse to jet off on 'holiday' to some fabulous spots to compete and see the sights. Even if you prefer to keep your racing schedule closer to home, there are events in every corner of the British Isles, so visiting new places and old friends can be planned to coincide with some racing action.

6 Mental benefits

Triathlon is all about setting goals, training for them and then testing the results out on race day. It's true that while you won't hit them every time, when you do it's deeply satisfying and rewarding. This whole process does wonders for your self-confidence, and the regular training can be an outlet for the stresses that come with work and family life. A definite sense of purpose and motivation comes with having a goal, and this can drive you to achieve much more than you thought was possible.

7 Compete against your peers

Some of the most competitive racing in triathlon takes place in the many age-group categories that apply to the amateur side of the sport. Anyone can aspire to represent their country by pitting themselves against other athletes of a similar age, rather than simply being 'also-rans' lumped in with the keen, young pro athletes at the sharp end. They often get competitors in the 70-plus age group at the Hawaii Ironman – clearly putting their retirement time to good use!



Bring out the competitor in you by racing fellow age-groupers



Racing abroad is a great way to see the world, get some culture and keep fit, all at the same time

8 Push yourself and learn new skills

Labour-saving devices do more and more hard physical work for us these days and, as a result, it's possible to dedicate more and more time to wearing a bum-shaped groove into your sofa. Also, as we age, we get set in our ways and stop learning and stop pushing our limitations. Basically, we get sucked into a comfort zone. Training for a triathlon can give you the proverbial kick up the backside to get out of bed for a ride on Sunday morning and to go and get some proper swimming lessons. All of this gets you out of the comfort zone and keeps you sharp.

9 Inspire those around you

It might sound a bit cheesy but, by doing a triathlon, you can definitely have a positive influence on people close to you. Your kids and partner will see you as a bit of a hero, and colleagues who witness you dashing off for a lunchtime run, or cycling to and from work, might think that you're mad at first, but will soon start to believe that they could do the same. You never know, the boss might even give you some extra time to train if they see it benefiting your productivity or the image of the company.



It's hard not to be inspired by seeing someone culminate months of hard training

10 To be 'A Triathlete'

Some people define their identity by religion, career or even their favourite footy team. Put in the effort and you earn the right to call yourself a 'Triathlete'. Sounds good, doesn't it? **220**

Ten triathlon misconceptions

- 1 Triathlon is expensive**
New kit is pricey, but the fickle nature of fashion in the sport means second-hand bargains are easy to find. Check ebay and classified ads for cheap kit.
- 2 Triathlon is only for superhumans**
While the crazy Ironman distance hogs a lot of the limelight, relay and super-sprint triathlons are short enough to be accessible to anyone, so there's no excuse!
- 3 You need to do hours and hours of training every day**
While this is true if you want to win a race, simply finishing a sprint tri can be achieved on minimal training.
- 4 You have to wear pink Lycra and mirrored sunglasses**
No, no, no... Thankfully, triathlon has escaped the 1980s and the clothing is now relatively stylish.
- 5 Triathletes are all serious, teetotal and boring**
Get yourself along to a post-race party and find out first hand.
- 6 You have to learn to swim in the sea to compete**
There are plenty of pool-based races if you're not keen on open-water swimming.
- 7 All triathletes are super fast, super skinny and super fit**
People of all shapes and sizes are giving triathlon a go these days. And there are plenty of events geared towards novices.
- 8 You need to pay for coaching to train properly**
There's so much good advice available on the bookshelves, in magazines and online that you can certainly give it a good go yourself without paying for a coach.
- 9 You have to ride a bike wearing a skimpy swimsuit**
Modern tri-suits are designed to be worn in all three disciplines, so riding in a swimsuit isn't vital.
- 10 You become a jack-of-all trades, master of none**
Multisport training will give you a level of fitness that makes you competitive in each discipline, as well as in triathlon itself.

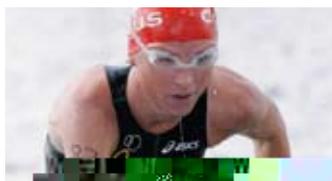
OLYMPIC-DISTANCE STARS



Tim Don

Age 29
Lives Loughborough, England, and Stellenbosch, South Africa
Major results 1st National Duathlon Champs '07; 1st The London Triathlon '07; 1st World Triathlon Champs '06

- + Winning the World Champs
- Just three weeks after winning gold in Lausanne, Switzerland, Don was banned for three months for missing three drug tests



Andrea Whitcombe

Age 36
Lives Middlesex, England
Major results 2nd BG Rhodes World Cup '07; 6th World Triathlon Champs '06; 1st The London Triathlon '04

- + Finishing as top female Brit in this year's World Cup series. Also, winning The London Triathlon '04.
- Controversially missing out to the injured Jodie Swallow for the third Olympic slot at Athens '04



Javier Gomez

Age 24
Lives Pontevedra and Ferrol, Spain
Major results 1st World Cup series '07; 2nd World Champs '07; 1st World U23 Triathlon Champs '03

- + Dominating the '07 World Cup season, ensuring he finished the year ranked world number one
- Being pipped to the post by the relatively unknown triathlete Daniel Unger at this year's World Championships in Hamburg



Vanessa Fernandes

Age 22
Lives Benfica, Portugal
Major results 1st World Cup series '07; 1st World Triathlon Champs '07; 1st World Duathlon Champs '07; 1st European Triathlon Champs '07

- + Fernandes has already equalled the record of 19 World Cup wins. Oh, she's also the current World Champ
- She's 22. She's won nearly every race she's entered. Over to you to find a negative!

Who's Who of Triathlon

For the majority, triathlon is a battle against their inner selves. For some, it's all about going for gold. Here's a galaxy of multisport stars...

IRONMAN CHAMPIONS



Scott Neyedli

Age 29
Lives Aberdeen, Scotland
Major results 1st Ironman UK '07; top British men's finisher at Ironman Hawaii '07

- + His first year in the professional ranks saw Neyedli win Ironman UK – the first Brit to do so
- While a great result for a novice elite, his 33rd at Ironman Hawaii '07 left him nearly 50mins behind the winner



Chrissie Wellington

Age 30
Lives Wherever training takes her!
Major results 1st Ironman Hawaii '07; 1st Ironman Korea '07; 1st World Triathlon Champs (25-29) '06

- + Winning the Ironman World Champs in Hawaii at her first attempt, becoming the first Brit to win the biggest race in triathlon
- Potentially the future. How will Wellington cope with the pressure of being Hawaii champ?



Chris McCormack

Age 34
Lives Sydney, Australia
Major results 1st Ironman Hawaii '07; 1st Quelle Challenge '04-'07; 1st Ironman Australia '02-'06

- + 2007 saw one of the only athletes to break the 8hr Ironman barrier finally win Ironman Hawaii
- Has a habit of upsetting his fellow athletes, including a long-running spat with two-time Hawaii champ Normann Stadler



Natascha Badmann

Age 41
Lives Zurich, Switzerland
Major results 1st Ironman Hawaii '98, '00-'02, '04-'05; Swiss Sportswoman of the Year '98, '02

- + In '98, Badmann became the first European woman to win Hawaii. She went on to win it five more times
- Now in the twilight of her career, Hawaii gained revenge in '07 where she had to pull out

Triathlon on TV

2007 saw triathlon receive greater TV coverage than ever before...

- The London Triathlon and World Champs were on the BBC.
- Channel 4 devoted many Sunday mornings to Ironman and UK elite racing.
- If you're an insomniac, channel 5 featured Ironman races at an ungodly hour.

NOTE We'll keep you up-to-date with 2008 tri TV coverage every issue.



Fit and Famous

It's not just mere mortals who participate in triathlon – celebrities are now joining the multisport start line in their droves. 220's Liz Barrett met 37-year-old BBC broadcaster Craig Doyle to talk about his love for the Lycra



BBC broadcaster Craig Doyle competed in his first

So how did the triathlon come about?

I was covering it for the Beeb and I just didn't know enough about it so I joined a club. Then I was at the World Champs in Lausanne in 2006. I got drunk and was talked into trying to make the Irish team. It was obviously a very bad year because I managed to qualify... and then I ended up racing all last season.

Have you always been sporty?

I played rugby and golf from the age of about six. I also played for my local football team in Ireland and ran a lot of 10ks.

How have you adapted to your new sport?

I've really enjoyed it. The first year you're just looking to finish – it's all about breaking three hours. But I just wanted to do 2:10s from day one! I think I did about a 2:32 in my first triathlon and that's when I thought I could be alright at this. I just want to get fast now.

What would you say is your weakest discipline?

My bike – I only started cycling this year! My swim used to be okay and my run very good. In Hamburg [2007 World Champs] I ripped it on

the bike and it completely destroyed my run; there was just nothing left.

You're married with three children under five – how do you find juggling work, life and racing?

It's impossible! No, seriously, I find it really difficult and really stressful. I didn't train at all from June, when our third baby was born. And then I did London in August!

What is it about the sport that you enjoy?

I love the set-up, the camaraderie... It's sport in its infancy and it hasn't lost its head or its way. I also like being able to wear Lycra! I remember Bevan Docherty [Olympic silver medallist] saying to me at The London Tri, "Where else can I cycle around the Houses of Parliament in a pair of underpants without getting arrested?" It's just a really cool sport.

What did it feel like representing your country at last year's World Champs in Hamburg?

It was amazing, I loved it. I was commentating as well so I was just terrified I wouldn't do my job properly. But it made me proud, really proud. I think I was like 100th out of 120, so I didn't come last. That was a good thing. I crossed the line and was handed a pint and just downed it.

"We're all taking up triathlon instead of getting the Porsche – it's our mid-life crisis"

Who are your sporting heroes?

As a kid it was Serge Blanco, who played full-back for the French rugby team. Nowadays, I really admire the cyclist Bradley Wiggins. He's just really flying the flag for the sport. And I'm a Man U fan so anything Rooney does I love.

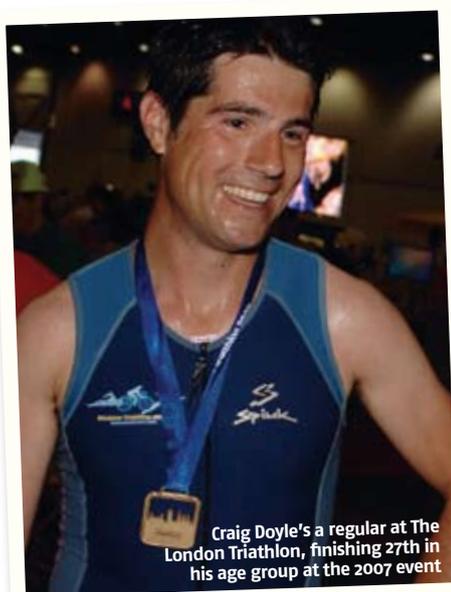
How would you like to see the sport develop?

I'm trying to work with Triathlon Ireland to set up a school's initiative and get school triathlon on the go. We're all taking up the sport in our early thirties instead of getting the Porsche – it's our mid-life crisis – but you need kids starting from a young age. My kids will be getting into it without a doubt.

What advice would you give to first-timers?

Throw away your watch, forget about everyone else and enjoy it. Just stay out of trouble and enjoy yourself. **220**

PHOTOS: LIZ BARRETT, LONDON TRIATHLON



Craig Doyle's a regular at The London Triathlon, finishing 27th in his age group at the 2007 event

Celebrity squad



NELL MCANDREW
Model and TV presenter McAndrew competed in the inaugural Monster Duathlon Team Challenge at Loch Ness back in September.



ALASTAIR CAMPBELL
The former Labour party advisor regularly competes in triathlons to raise money for the charity Leukaemia Research.



JAMES CRACKNELL
The Olympic champion rower is a familiar face at the London and Blenheim Triathlon start lines. He's pictured above at the annual 220 Awards.

Also spotted...

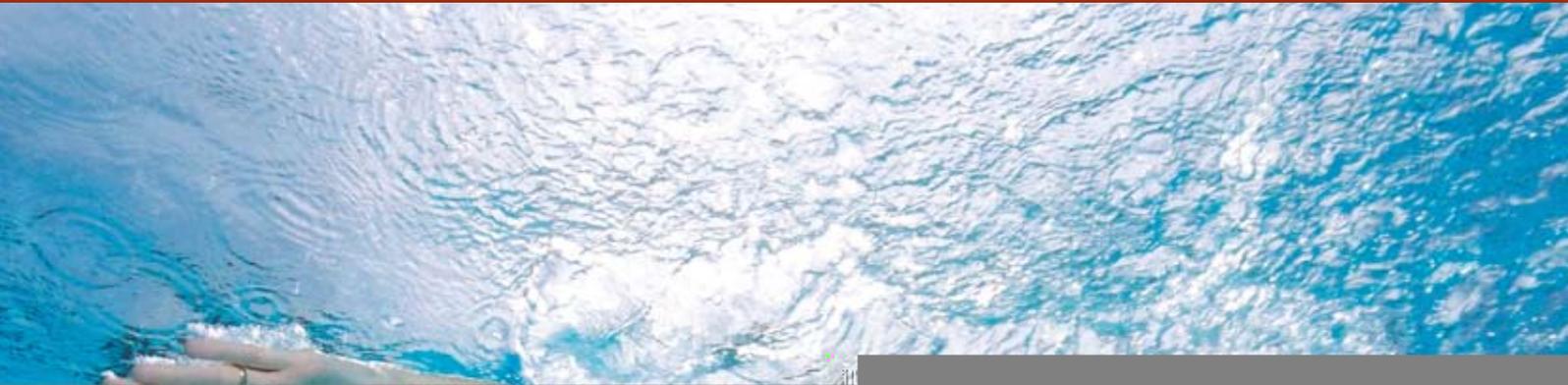
Across the pond, actors David Duchovny (*X-Files*), Felicity Huffman (*Desperate Housewives*) and husband William H Macy (*Fargo*), and Tate Donovan (*Friends*, *The OC*) enjoy competing in the annual Nautica Malibu Triathlon.

Performance

Swim, bike and run faster with our world-class coaches



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16 Better Swimming

Get into Gear

Triathlon requires dedication, motivation – and equipment. Here's what you need to get up to multisport speed (and it won't break the bank!)

One of the wonderful things about triathlon is the gear. The wealth of equipment available for the swim, bike and run will moisten the driest palate; in fact, it's almost a medal of honour that tells people, "Hey, look over here sunshine – I'm a triathlete." Before you know it, 'chamois', 'Lycra' and 'neoprene' will be staples of your everyday vocab.

You see, triathletes are well known for their urge to acquire the latest, greatest, high-tech gear – and for the spending that goes with it. However, most of us don't have a large stash of money to fork out for slick





Cycling shorts ←

Bike shorts or bib longs (pictured) include padding that'll stop rubbing on sensitive areas – so don't scrimp on quality. Besides being less comfy, a cheap pair will wear quickly, exposing your backside to those behind you. Look for cycling shorts that have an eight-panel design, chamois padding and are made with antibacterial fabric.



Tool kit →

A basic tool kit includes a spare tube, tyre levers to remove your tyre, a patch kit and a pump – simply everything you need for basic repairs on the road or trails. It's also handy to purchase a set of Allen keys – Halfords supply a good variety of these – for any basic jobs, like raising or lowering your saddle. A good-quality multitool (pictured) is also a wise choice for multisport.

Tri-suit →

Okay, maybe not an essential – many athletes will use shorts and t-shirt – but, for better or worse, nothing screams triathlete more than a tri-suit. Basically, they're one outfit that you can wear for all three disciplines, so no changes required between swim, bike and run. They come in one and two piece, and contain features like padded chamois, pockets and leg grippers. Simply great.



Heart rate monitor ↑

A heart rate monitor is vital. Little will do more to boost your exercise results than calculating your ideal training zones and sticking to appropriate heart rates during your workouts. All you need is a monitor that displays a continuous heart rate. However, if you fall in love with training by numbers, you can upgrade to one that has bells, whistles and PC downloadable options.



Running shoes ↑

The bottom line with running shoes is this: get the ones that work best for you. Go to a running store, have them observe your running style and then get their recommendations. We all run differently, which could present problems. Thankfully, run manufacturers have taken this into account, so somewhere out there, there's a run shoe for you.

Triathlon on a budget

Bank notes don't have to be seeping out of every pore for you to make waves in tri. The most economical way is to pull together the triathlon gear from friends and family. This accomplishes two objectives:

- 1 You get the gear for nothing!
- 2 By getting the ones you love involved, you build a support network. If you discover you'll stay with the sport – and that's pretty much certain – then go ahead and invest in your own gear.



Become a Triathlete

Follow one of our tailor-made training programmes and head to the start line beaming with confidence. **Eric Harr** points you in the right direction



PHOTOS: DAVE TYRRELL, JONNY GAWLER

Our training plans might not stop all of your pre-race butterflies, but they can at least get them flying in the same direction

Triathlon – the sport that drains every second of your life and has the highest divorce rate in sport. Wrong, wrong, wrong... Would you believe that with a balanced training programme, you can cross the triathlon finish line in just six weeks!

This feature will take you through a survey to determine your specific fitness level and goals, and, based on those results, we'll diagnose your six-week workout. That's right, we'll guide you through a sprint-distance triathlon (500-750m swim, 15-20km bike, 3-5km run) on just six 4hr training weeks.

Of course, your goal race may be more than six weeks away. That's not a problem. You can still glean a huge amount of info from this feature regarding training zones, fitness levels, and balancing hard and easy sessions. You can then use this information with the monthly advice on offer in 220 Triathlon to devise your own programme. Either way, read on to become a better athlete...

Current fitness

Not everyone reading this has the same level of fitness, and nor will you have the same goals. For that reason there are three different training programmes designed for three different types of triathletes, meaning you're sure to find a programme to fit your needs. As you get fitter and pursue grander goals, you can step up to the next level. Complete the fitness level questionnaire and your score will decide which of the following levels you're at:



in Just Six Weeks

Train in the zone

Whatever level of fitness you possess [see 'Current fitness' box below for more on this – Ed], you need to exercise at the right intensity – in the right 'zone' – in order to reach your goals. Throughout all three disciplines, heart rate is the only accurate measurement of your exertion level.

In order to train in the proper zone, you need to know your maximum heart rate (HRmax). A number of factors will influence your HRmax, including your age, genetics, fitness level and overall health. There are many scientific ways to determine your true HRmax, but one of the most simple is simply by exercising to exhaustion and recording your heart rate at that point. This can be dangerous, however, and should only be done under the watchful eye of an experienced coach.

For our purposes, you can determine your approximate HRmax by subtracting your age from 220 (which is where 220 Triathlon got its name).

You can use your HRmax to determine your ideal training zones, which essentially are the three different levels of exercise intensity and are described in detail below. (There's a fourth zone of higher intensity, which we don't cite here, but hold on that till you've improved your fitness levels because it's more appropriate for 'advanced athletes'. Also note: your fitness level will determine how much time you spend exercising in each zone.)

Each zone corresponds to a different target heart rate (HR) range. When training in zone 1, for example, you should be at 50-60% of your HRmax. So if your HRmax is, say, 185 beats per minute (bpm), your HR should be between 92-111bpm during a zone 1 workout ($185 \times 0.5 = 92.5$ and $185 \times 0.6 = 111$).

ZONE 1

These workouts are conducted at an easy pace. Your HR should be at 50-60% of your HRmax and shouldn't exceed 130bpm. This zone builds aerobic fitness, strengthens

immunity and uses your body fat as the primary source of fuel.

ZONE 2

Exercising in this zone should feel 'comfortably challenging'. Your HR should be at 60-70% HRmax. These workouts build great fitness for triathlon, since you'll likely spend most of your time on race day in this zone. These workouts are done at a steady state over a longer duration (10-40mins).

ZONE 3

When your aerobic fitness begins to plateau, it's time to sprinkle some zone 3 work into your programme. These intervals can last anywhere from 30secs to 2mins and should only be performed after at least four weeks of consistent, injury-free training. These sessions will help you focus on increasing your speed. When doing a zone 3 workout, your heart rate should be at 70-80% of your HRmax.

FITNESS LEVEL 1

Just above couch potato

If this is you, then, of all the people reading this, you stand to benefit the most from this programme. Not only will your triathlon performance improve by leaps and bounds, but you'll also find yourself looking and feeling better very quickly. It's likely you haven't been exercising consistently for more than one year and have little or no background in the three sports of triathlon. Your programme is designed to help you simply finish one sprint-distance triathlon, regardless of the finishing time.

FITNESS LEVEL 2

Neophyte

You have a strong interest in improving your health and fitness, and have recently begun to exercise more regularly. Your training programme will help increase your fitness, tone your body and allow you to complete a sprint triathlon in a respectable time.

FITNESS LEVEL 3

Fitness enthusiast

You've been exercising consistently at least twice a week for four or more months and want to challenge yourself by doing a triathlon. Your programme assumes a degree of fitness already. You can cover 12 lengths of a 25m pool without stopping, run 5-8km twice a week and cycle at least 20km (approx 45mins) without having to stop for a rest.

Fitness level questionnaire

Find out which fitness level you're at right now by answering the following questions...

- Have you exercised consistently (three or more times per week) for longer than four months over the past year?
Yes ____ (10 points) No ____ (0 points)
- Have you ever competed and finished a triathlon before?
Yes ____ (15) No ____ (0)
- Have you ever done a single-sport event before, such as a 5km run, a bike event or a swim event?
Yes ____ (10) No ____ (0)
- Have you suffered any acute or chronic exercise-related injuries over the past 12 months?
Yes ____ (0) No ____ (10)
- Do you have trouble retaining the motivation to exercise regularly?
Yes ____ (0) No ____ (5)
- What would you rather do: go for a trail run or go for a beer run?
Trail ____ (10) Beer ____ (0)
- Were you a competitive runner, cyclist or swimmer in high school or college?
Yes ____ (10) No ____ (0)
- Do you currently work 50hrs or more per week (including your commute time)?
Yes ____ (0) No ____ (10)
- If you could, would you compete as a professional triathlete for one year?
Yes ____ (10) No way, José ____ (0)
- What's more important to you on event day: performance or enjoyment?
Performance ____ (10) Enjoyment ____ (0)

TRANSLATING YOUR SCORE...

Add together the points from all 10 questions above and see where your total falls. Then read about your fitness level on the next page.

0-40 Fitness level 1.

41-60 Fitness level 2.

61-80 Fitness level 3.

80-100 Advanced athlete – the programmes here aren't suitable for your fitness level. See 220 for alternative sessions and programmes.

Your programme

Now that you're familiar with the various training elements that are common across all fitness levels, we can move on to look at the specifics of your programme. Take a look at the appropriate training regime in the *Training Programme* box to your right.

You'll notice some sessions are labelled 'breakthrough'. Perform these as instructed but aim to set a new personal best for that particular workout. It'll show you how you're progressing and help keep you motivated. Since most triathlons take place on a Sunday, the programmes have been scheduled to reflect that. Feel free to shift the workouts if the event falls on a different day.

FITNESS LEVEL 1

To allow you to ease into exercise gradually, your programme will last for eight weeks. This will ensure that you don't get injured or overtired by doing too much, too soon.

Begin easy and spend the first few weeks warming up to each sport. For example, you can power walk your first four or five run sessions. Then you'll slowly build up to a maximum, in week seven, of 3:45hrs of training. In week eight you'll ramp things down again, to a total of just 1:20hrs training.

To keep progressing, remember to conduct one breakthrough session every two weeks during weeks two to five – you'll do two or three in total.

Each week you'll need at least two days off from training. You need these days to allow you and your body to rest and recover. Besides which, it's just as important to dedicate time to other non-athletic activities.

FITNESS LEVEL 2

While you need to be smart about this programme and ease into it, you should also challenge yourself mentally and physically. Doing so will allow you to break through new levels of physical and mental performance.

To that end, remember to incorporate one breakthrough session every 10 days during weeks two to five of your training. That means you should do about three



When following the programmes, make sure you take at least two days off a week to allow your body to rest and recover

breakthroughs in total. The programme is designed for you to start slowly, with only 2:15hrs of training per week for the first two weeks. Your third and fourth weeks will consist of about 4:20hrs per week. In your one hard training week, your total workout time rises to 4:50hrs. The last six days before your triathlon require just 1:40hrs of training to make sure you're sufficiently rested before your event.

FITNESS LEVEL 3

Your training is as follows: about 3hrs of exercise in the first two weeks, close to 5hrs in weeks three and four, and 5:45hrs in week five. Then just 1:45hrs in week six, leading up

to your event. Remember to incorporate one breakthrough session each week from weeks two to five of your training programme. That means you should perform four breakthroughs in all. On your days off, recover with a relaxing activity such as a hot bath, yoga or a nap.

RACE DAY

Race day is your time to shine, a culmination of all your hard work and determination. Give it everything you've got. Many truths will be revealed to you on your day. You'll know what we mean when you cross the finish line – and when you reflect on your race after it's over. You'll never be the same again. **220**

Race-day tips

You've done the training so you're ready to go, right? Not quite. The following tips may seem obvious but without them all your hard work could count for nothing.

1 Don't stay in bed. If you've travelled up the night before, aim to wake up about 2hrs before the race start. If you're travelling on the day, you may have to be up even earlier. Have a light breakfast of toast, coffee and fruit juice.

2 Get to the race venue with plenty of time to spare and rack your bike in the transition area. Arrange the rest of your kit so it's easy to grab during T1 and T2.

3 About an hour before the race, go through any visualization drills that you have prepared and then begin a light warm-up. Try some easy jogging and start to prepare for the swim.

4 Put on your wetsuit, goggles and hat, and make your way to the swim start. If you can get into the water early then do so, and after a few minutes of swimming try some short sprints.

5 Get ready for the start. This means simply focusing on the task ahead. Good luck for what lies ahead.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Fitness level 1

WEEK 1: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 30min power walk/run (zone 1)
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday 45min bike (zone 1)
Sunday Rest

WEEK 2: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 30min power walk/run (zone 1)
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday 45min bike (zone 1)
Sunday Rest

WEEK 3: EASY

Monday Rest
Tuesday 20min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 35min power walk/run (zone 1)
Thursday 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday 45min bike (zone 1)
Sunday 15min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 4: EASY

Monday Rest
Tuesday 20min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 35min power walk/run (zone 1)
Thursday 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday Breakthrough: 45min bike (zone 2)
Sunday 15min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 5: MODERATE

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: 30min swim (zone 2)
Wednesday AM 30min bike (zone 1); PM 30min run (zone 2)
Thursday AM 20min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday (Brick) 20min bike (zone 1) and 15min run (zone 1)
Sunday Strength train for 20mins

WEEK 6: MODERATE

Monday Rest
Tuesday Swim for 30mins (zone 2)
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 45min bike (zone 1); PM 30min run (zone 2)
Thursday AM 20min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday 30min bike (zone 1) and 20min run (zone 1)
Sunday Strength train for 20mins

WEEK 7: HARD

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: 30min swim (zone 2)
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 45min bike (zone 2); Breakthrough: PM 30min run (zone 2)
Thursday AM 20min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength train
Friday Rest
Saturday 40min bike (zone 1) and 20min run (zone 1)
Sunday 20min strength training

WEEK 8: EVENT

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min bike (zone 1)
Wednesday 15min swim (zone 1)
Thursday 15min run (zone 1)
Friday Rest
Saturday AM 10min swim (zone 1); PM 10min bike (zone 1)
Sunday Race day

Fitness level 2

WEEK 1: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday AM 40min run (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday AM 60min bike (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Sunday 15min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 2: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 30min run (zone 1)
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday 45min bike (zone 1)
Sunday 30min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 3: MODERATE TRAINING

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: AM 35min swim (zone 2); PM 20min strength training
Wednesday AM 30min run (zone 2); Breakthrough: PM 45min bike (zone 2)
Thursday AM 20min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday 60min bike (zone 1) and 30min run (zone 1)
Sunday Rest

WEEK 4: MODERATE TRAINING

Monday Rest
Tuesday AM 30min swim (zone 2); PM 20min strength training
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 40min run (zone 2); PM 45min bike (zone 2)
Thursday AM 20min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday 60min bike (zone 1) and 30min run (zone 1)
Sunday Rest

WEEK 5: HARD

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: AM 35min swim (zone 2); PM 40min strength training
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 45min bike (zone 2); Breakthrough: PM 40min run (zone 2)
Thursday AM 30min swim (zone 1); PM 20min strength training
Friday Rest
Saturday Test tri: 20min swim (zone 2), 40min bike (zone 2), 20min run (zone 1)
Sunday Rest

WEEK 6: EVENT

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min bike (zone 1)
Wednesday 20min swim (zone 1)
Thursday 20min run (zone 1)
Friday Rest
Saturday AM 15min swim (zone 1); PM 15min bike (zone 1)
Sunday Race day

Fitness level 3

WEEK 1: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 1)
Wednesday 30min run (zone 1)
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday 45min bike (zone 1)
Sunday 30min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 2: ADAPTATION

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: 30min swim (zone 2)
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 40min run (zone 2); 20min strength training
Thursday Rest
Friday Rest
Saturday Breakthrough: AM 60min bike (zone 2); PM 20min strength training
Sunday 15min swim (zone 1)

WEEK 3: MODERATE

Monday Rest
Tuesday Breakthrough: 30min swim (zone 2)
Wednesday AM 30min run (zone 3); PM 40min strength training
Thursday 30min swim (zone 1); 60min bike (zone 3)
Friday Rest
Saturday 50min bike (zone 1) and 20min run (zone 2)
Sunday 20min strength training

WEEK 4: MODERATE

Monday Rest
Tuesday 30min swim (zone 2)
Wednesday Breakthrough: AM 40min run (zone 2); PM 40min strength training
Thursday AM 40min swim (zone 2); PM 60min bike (zone 3)
Friday Rest
Saturday 50min bike (zone 1) and 20min run (zone 2)
Sunday 20min strength train

WEEK 5: HARD

Monday Rest
Tuesday 40min swim (zone 3)
Wednesday AM 30min bike (zone 1); PM 45min run (zone 2) and 40min strength training
Thursday Breakthrough: 60min bike (zone 2)
Friday Rest
Saturday Test tri: 30min swim (zone 1), 50min bike (zone 2), 30min run (zone 1)
Sunday 20min strength training

WEEK 6: EVENT

Monday Rest
Tuesday 40min bike (zone 1)
Wednesday 25min swim (zone 1)
Thursday 20min run (zone 1)
Friday Rest
Saturday AM 15min swim (zone 1); PM 15min bike (zone 1)
Sunday Race day

Let me ask you a question: how well can you swim at the moment? Can you swim a length in a 25m pool? If your answer is no, swimming lessons are a must. If you can swim a length using front crawl, but it's a struggle, it's decision time: you can carry on swimming breaststroke or you can work on improving your front crawl. Both are valid styles – at all races you'll see loads of triathletes breaststroking – but we'd go for the latter as in the long term it will definitely help you swim quicker.

The good thing about triathlon is that you'll gain such a high fitness level through the bike and run training that the primary swim aim can be focused on improving technique. And with the weather turning over the next few months, now is the perfect time to go indoors and get in some pool time.

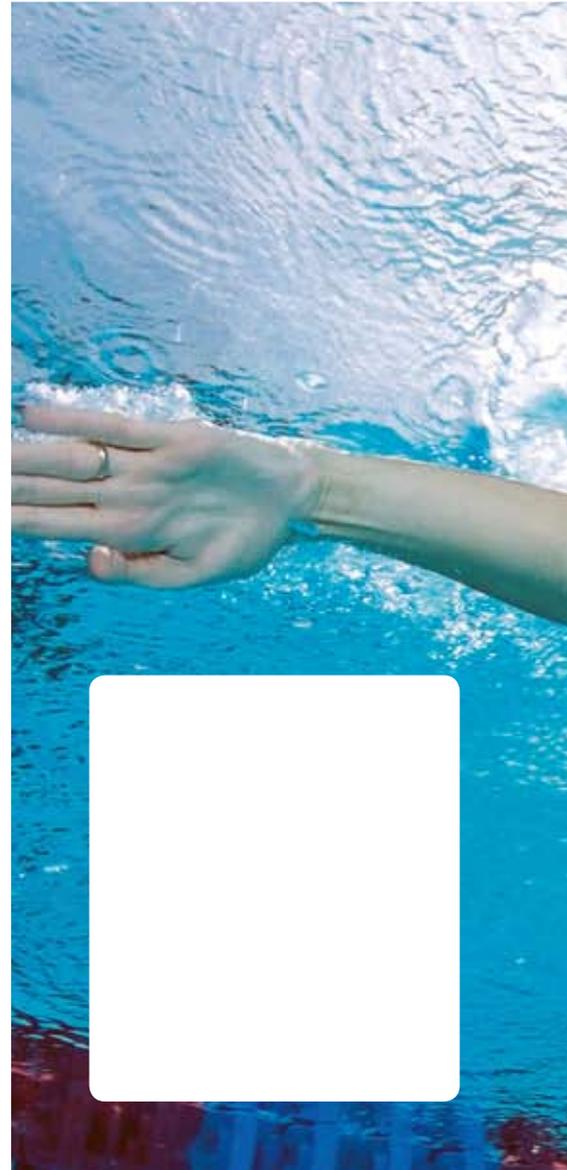
When it comes to how much time you should spend in the water, obviously the

more the better. It might sound a lot but if you can squeeze out three sessions a week, of no less than 30mins each, that would be perfect. If you can only do two, just make them count.

The key to an improved swim is getting a number of factors working together. You achieve this by breaking the swim down into sections, which you work on with drills, and then put them all together.

In the annotated photo on the right, we've broken the stroke down into parts so you can get a feel for what a good front crawl is and how it's achieved. Now don't worry – we don't expect you to hit your local 25m pool and start swimming like Michael Phelps. Oh no, this feature is designed to show you that technique is vital to a good swim.

For more information, go to issue 214 of 220 *Triathlon* for our 12-week swim training programme, which also gives you the drills you'll need for a beautiful front crawl. **220**



BODY BALANCE

Body balance describes the body's ability to stay level; to maintain a streamlined position throughout the stroke; to employ a body rotation to assist the co-ordination of the arm action and leg kick.

TECHNIQUE TIPS

- 1 Keep your body straight; think tall.
- 2 Rotate your body about 45° on both sides.
- 3 Head position determines balance. Mid-forehead to mid-head should be on the waterline.
- 4 Improve your leg action to help balance the stroke and improve your body position.

LEG ACTION

The leg action provides balance and timing to the front-crawl stroke. There are a number of kick patterns – kicks per stroke – that you can use, ranging from two to six kicks.

TECHNIQUE TIPS

- 1 Kick from your hips.
- 2 Keep legs straight but not with knees locked out.
- 3 Rebound leg at end of kick.
- 4 Maintain flexible ankles.

BREATHING

Breathing holds back most beginners, but a little practice should sort you out. Ultimately, being able to breathe to both sides will assist your open-water swimming.

TECHNIQUE TIPS

- 1 You should exhale underwater; avoid rushing your breathing.
- 2 Use body rotation to assist breathing.
- 3 Turn your head 45° only.
- 4 Return to the centre line after each breath.

TIMING

The timing of the stroke is the co-ordination between the arms and the legs. Get your timing right and the stroke will flow in a smooth, rhythmical fashion.

TECHNIQUE TIPS

- 1 One hand enters the water as the other begins the push phase.
- 2 One hand exits the water before, or just as, the other hand begins pulling.
- 3 Perform a two-, four- or six-beat kick.

From MTB to MPH

Convert your mud plugger to a serious tarmac scorchers and you'll literally shave minutes off your bike split. **Guy Kesteven** shows you how...

More mountain bikes are sold than any other kind of bike. Their chunky looks and promise of adventure make them the pedal-powered equivalent of an urban 4x4. Loads of them turn up at every tri event, too, being flogged round the bike leg in a blur of spinning legs. If that sounds like it could be you, have you any idea how fast you could go with just a few cheap speed cheats?

Many of the exact same things that make mountain bikes great at going off road are exactly what make them such a slog on smooth surfaces. Knobbly tyres growl, drag and squirm on tarmac, adding masses of rolling resistance. Upright riding positions that stop you going over the bars instead turn your body into a parachute when you're going over 15mph. Even the contact points of saddle and handlebars are designed to be comfortable at totally different angles to those of an efficient aero position.

And unless you're particularly bad at steering, there's no need for the speed-sucking squish of suspension on the road. Furthermore, mountain goat gears mean your legs will have a really 'baaa-d' (sorry!) time spinning fast enough to keep up with your new speed-friendly swamp buggy.

If all this sounds seriously expensive and complex then don't fret. The changes we're making here are all simple and remarkably cost effective. Plus, you'll be able to reverse them all easily for any cross-country action or just a towpath trundle with mates. **220**

SUITABLE SADDLE MTB seats are designed to support an upright pelvis, not one rolled forward in an aero tuck. You can reduce potential numbness by angling the nose of your seat down slightly, but a proper soft-nosed tri saddle is the best way to get to T2 with your two 'T's still intact. Pushing the saddle forward will also steepen the effective seat angle of the bike. This is essential for easier aero breathing and a more forgiving run start.



Clothing

Baggy mtb clothing might look better down the local pub, but that's where everyone else will be when you finish flapping against your own wardrobe-generated headwind.

Ditch the baggy shorts and t-shirt in favour of close-fitting Lycra and you'll be faster and more



TRI-BARS Big, broad, upright handlebars mean a big, broad, upright riding position, which creates your own personal headwind. Get aero with a pair of cheap 'clip-on' tri-bars and save yourself seconds every mile. Remember: get as narrow and flat as possible, but not so much it affects your breathing, and get used to altered handling before riding fast.



LONG STEM This is one conversion we see a lot, but one we wouldn't recommend. Long stems can really mess with the handling of an mtb, making it unresponsive at speed and 'jack-knife' prone when going slow or standing up sprinting. If you want a longer position, stretch further down your tri-bars.



CLIPLESS PEDALS Flat or toe-clip pedals and trainers are useful for short sprint events. However, the power and comfort advantage of 'clipless' pedals and compatible stiff-soled cycling shoes far outweigh shoe change delays in triathlon's second transition. Treaded MTB shoes are more surefooted and versatile than road shoes, too.



SUSPENSION LOCKOUT Your arms may appreciate front suspension, but any up and down bounce on the road is getting rid of essential energy that could be making your wheels go round. Most modern forks and rear-suspension have a lockout or 'Pro Pedal' lever. Alternatively, you can just pump up air shocks until they stop moving.



For sale: spanking new steed

Look out for the following when choosing a two-wheeler...

TYRES AND WHEELS Light wheels require less energy to roll faster, but weight saving could come at the expense of puncture resistance on the tyres. Look for aluminium rims with good braking surfaces.

CONTROL LEVERS Many bikes have gear shifters that are integrated into the brake levers, so you can slow down and change gear without taking your hands off the bars. They need practise to get used to but are well worth paying for.



CHAINSET With 'double' or 'triple' chainsets (with two or three chainrings, respectively), you get a variety of gear options. Stronger riders use a 'double', but you might be better off looking for a 'triple' to make hills easier as you get started.

PEDALS It's best to look for pedals that allow you to use running shoes. When you're confident about your riding, you can upgrade to pedals that mechanically attach to the soles of dedicated cycling shoes.

Bike Buying Tips

It's the biggest purchase you'll have to make as a beginner in triathlon, so you'll want to make sure you get it right. Joe Beer shows you how

Pearing into the transition area at any triathlon is a sure-fire way to induce a bad case of bike envy. And while it may be tempting to mollify the green-eyed monster by swapping your life savings for a full-carbon, featherweight race missile, your Chopper, shopper, folder or off-roader will cope perfectly well with your first forays into the world of triathlon.

However, when the time comes to really take on your times – when you want to go from simply completing to competing – you'll want to upgrade to a fully fledged race bike.

Fit for purpose

As with purchases in all areas of life, there's a certain price point to hit at which the products will be best suited to your needs and your funds. The further you stray beyond it, the more you'll be paying for something you can't make the most of.

Five-hundred pounds is a great point to start looking for a beginner's bike. Below that and the economies of scale don't kick in to give you quite as good a deal. At that price range the components will be more durable, the quality of build higher and the whole package will weigh less.

Above that and you start paying for materials, components and manufacturing processes that you might not be ready to benefit from. Bikes may get lighter as they get more expensive, but you don't need to break the 5kg (10lb) bike barrier just yet.

The biggest component of the bike is the frame – think of it as the chassis on which you hang the components and wheels. The frame could be made of a number of materials – aluminium is the most likely but steel is an option on some older models. Much has been written about how the different materials ride but, as a general rule,

both provide suitable ride characteristics. If you want a smoother ride, invest in well-padded gloves, thick bar tape and a saddle that offers impact damping.

Long-term investment

You're unlikely to find exotic materials like carbon fibre and titanium at the £500 mark, but the frame is definitely the area you want to focus your investment on. It's wiser, and easier, to get a bike with a better frame now and upgrade the components later, rather than get a bike with great components on a second-rate frame.

Of course, the most important aspect of buying a bike is making sure it's the right size. So make sure you spend plenty of time test riding any potential purchases before you part with your cash. Do that and you can be certain of rolling into your next race with the right wheels for you. **220**

Improve your Run... in 30 Minutes

You give us half an hour – we'll transform your running speed. Make the most of your lunch breaks with these swift sessions from **Andy Blow**

You don't need to devote huge amounts of time to improve your running. In fact, with a bit of planning, you can achieve a lot in just 30mins...

Firstly, identify the time slots during the day where you might be able to get 30mins to train – on the way to work, at lunchtime and so on. Next, decide on which aspect of your running you most want to improve – technique, speed, efficiency (out-and-out endurance will be difficult to improve when time is limited). Thirdly, have a look at the four sessions and get out there. You'll find that you'll enjoy this type of training and gain so much more than you would by just tapping out a steady jog or by 'giving it a miss'. **220**



PHOTOS: JONNY GAWLER

SESSION 1 100m repeats

Aims

Improve running technique and efficiency at pace.

Warm-up

10–15mins easy running, gradually increasing pace.

Main set

Run about 100m at a fast pace (75% of effort), turn and jog back slowly. Repeat three times. After the third rep, walk back 100m and perform three reps at 90% effort with a walk back between each one. Then perform three reps, again at 75% effort, with jog-back recovery in between. Repeat the whole process – three sets of three reps – and follow with a 10min cool-down jog.

SESSION 2 Acceleration running

Aims

Get used to running at or above race pace in a safe, controlled way.

Warm-up

This is included in the session.

Main set

Start off running easy for about 1 mile. Increase your pace by about 15secs per mile as you go through the session until the last mile where you run at or slightly above 10km race pace. Make sure that you leave 3 or 4mins easy jogging at the end as a cool-down.

SESSION 3 Negative split run

Aims

Learning to run quicker over the second half of a race run than the first.

Warm-up

This is included in the session.

Main set

Choose an out-and-back route that's relatively flat. For a 30min session, run out at a steady pace for 15mins, turn and run back, increasing your pace to get back in 12–14mins, leaving some time for a short cool-down jog. The difference in pace should be significant but not overly dramatic.

SESSION 4 30min fartlek session

Aims

Improving top-end pace and turn of speed.

Warm-up

10mins of easy running, gradually increasing pace.

Main set

Best done in an open area on a mixture of terrain – for example, parkland with hills, track and roads – and with a partner or small group. Take it in turns to put in efforts of between 30secs and 2mins at a fast pace, with the others having to follow wherever you go (no overtaking!). Take equal recovery jogs after each rep.

Brick training

Get off the bike, run and you'll get 'jelly' legs. It's caused by the change in bloodflow from cycling to running. However, by practising running off the bike, your legs will acclimatise to this unique sensation. Using a turbo trainer – a device which transforms your bike into a static bike – is ideal. Here's an example run, bike, run, bike, run session (or 'brick', as triathletes coin it) for a sprint tri:

- 10min run @ 65% of maximum heart rate.
- 20min bike @ 70%.
- 10min run @ 75%.
- 15min bike @ 80%.
- 5min run @ 85%.



Practise running off a turbo trainer to get used to the dreaded 'jelly' legs

Whether you're competing in your first sprint triathlon or battling an Ironman, you need a sound nutrition strategy to reach your potential. You see, what you eat and drink in the weeks and days before the race makes a huge difference to your performance.

Carbing up the field

Let's start with the basics: a carbohydrate-rich diet – from foods like potatoes, pasta and rice – is essential for all athletes because carbs are turned into glycogen in your muscles, which then fuels your training. When your muscle glycogen stores are high, your sessions will feel easier; in short, you'll be able to keep going longer and faster.

If you train for less than 2hrs per day you'll need to eat 5-7g of carbs per kg of bodyweight per day; that's 350-490g for a 70kg athlete. If you train up to 4hrs daily, you'll need 6-8g of carbs per kg of bodyweight per day; that's 420-560g for a 70kg athlete.

Be aware also that for runs or rides longer than 60mins, you'll need something other than water to keep your energy levels up. Take with you a supply of sports drinks (or fruit juice diluted 50/50 with water) and/or carb-rich snacks (such as energy bars, gels, bananas or breakfast bars).

You'll need to begin fuelling within the first

Fuelling on the move



Join a Club

As a newcomer to triathlon, joining your local tri club is the best way to get into tri shape. **Graham Coull** from Stirling Tri Club explains why...

So you've decided to enter your first triathlon – fabulous, that took both courage and commitment. But if you're not a member of a triathlon club, you're missing a trick. The majority of clubs in the UK place a strong emphasis upon fun and enjoyment, irrespective of their members' level of skill or ability. New members are encouraged to set their own training targets, and are then supported in reaching these through practice, coaching and events.

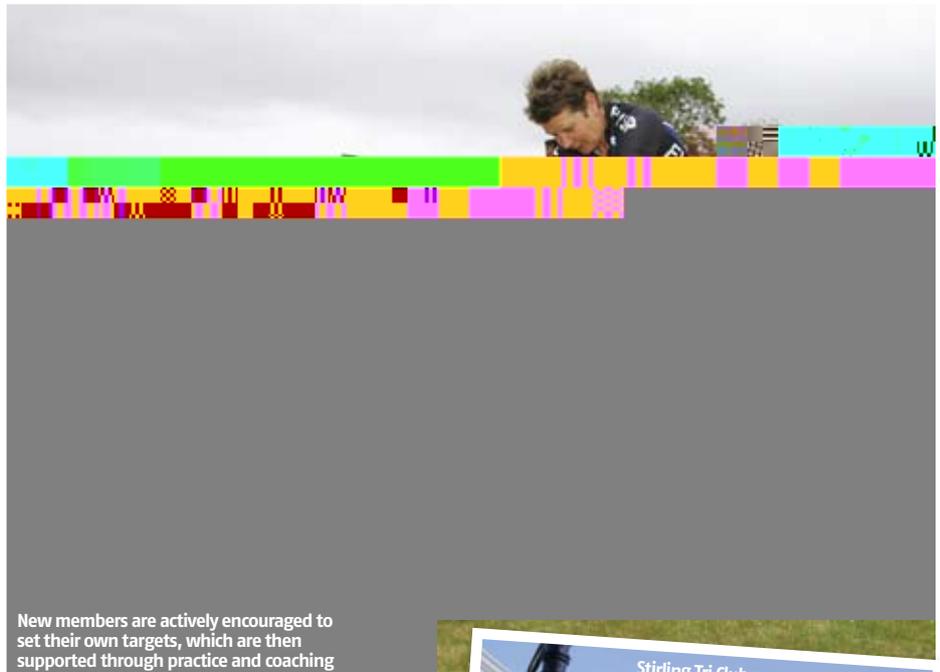
While competitive results are important for some members, for others the key feature is their participation and attainment of personal goals. But the over-riding feature in every club has to be motivation.

Swim, bike and run sessions

Triathlon clubs offer regular access to swimming pool lanes and coaches who are familiar with all levels of athlete, from amateur to pro. The swim sessions will be set according to your ability, even if that means breaststroke for 50m. Believe me, you'll soon be covering 2,000m in a 45min session.

Bike rides are a great way of getting to know like-minded individuals. You'll have a set route planned for you, so you don't have to think about where to go and at what speed. The groups will be set by ability, keeping the pace at a level you're comfortable with but stretching you enough to improve. It's a great feeling when you start to move up the groups as your confidence and ability grows.

Run sessions are easy to organise and form a key part of most clubs, with many offering run clinics to improve technique. Structured sessions are also integral. It might work like



New members are actively encouraged to set their own targets, which are then supported through practice and coaching

this: a sprint one week, a steady run the next and a long run at the weekend.

Membership fees will vary, depending on the level of support, insurance and coaching offered. For example, at Stirling Tri Club it's £20 for 12 months' membership and £10 for juniors. You then pay a nominal fee for each coached session you attend, £1 being the maximum at Stirling. Some clubs offer an all-inclusive membership, which has a higher initial fee but no on-going costs. These fees are minimal given the huge enjoyment and improvement you'll enjoy. Joining a club is stress free in that the sessions are all taken care of – all you have to do is turn up ready to



Stirling Tri Club on an organised cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats!

train. Your fellow club members and coaches will provide you with all the motivation and encouragement you could ever need. So what are you waiting for? Visit www.britishtriathlon.org to find your nearest tri club. **220**



Club bikes will be pre-set in terms of route, speed and ability – all you have to do is turn up and ride

Novice training plan

Below is how Stirling Tri Club set out a week for beginners. You can do them all or pick and choose...

Monday	7–8.30pm	Circuit session for all-round body strength and conditioning.
Tuesday	8–8.45pm	Improvers' swimming session with four qualified coaches covering three lanes of eight people. Main focus is technique.
Wednesday	7–8pm	Structured run session focusing on technique and high reps over different terrain.
Thursday	7–8pm	Turbo class – a brilliant workout and great fun in a group.
Saturday	8–9am	Swim session drills and a main set.
Sunday	9am	A group bike ride split into groups with a qualified coach in each group, at a pre-defined distance and pace.

Tri Clinic

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
Tri Clinic, 220 Triathlon, Origin
Publishing, 9th floor, Tower House,
Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN
OR EMAIL
220triathlon@originpublishing.co.uk

Your multisport questions answered by our team of experts

If you have a triathlon query, send us your question and we'll try to answer it in the next available issue of 220 Triathlon. Include as much relevant information as you can. Sadly, we cannot reply to your questions personally.



Steve Trew is a triathlon coach, writer and commentator. He coached the GB tri team at the Sydney Olympics '00



Joe Beer was voted 220 Triathlon Coach of the Year '04. His aim is to help athletes achieve their goals



Lucy-Ann Prideaux is a registered nutritionist who provides dietary support for athletes of all abilities



Andy Bullock is the current 220 Coach of the Year. He began coaching in 2001 while studying for an MSc



Andrew Potter is an experienced BTA-qualified coach whose expertise is in open-water swimming

Lifestyle overhaul

? Realistically, how many hours should I dedicate to training? And should I expect a complete change in lifestyle?

Lauren Peters, Wolverhampton

➔ It depends on whether you want to make multisport your lifestyle, your life or an addiction. Luckily, the sport is a much broader church than in the early days so excess is not the norm, but there are still those that do too much training and don't have much else going on. There's no exact rule but we'd propose the following:

1 Less than 4hrs per week and you're not going to have enough sessions to fit the necessary skill work in, and not have the endurance you'd get if you devoted more time.

2 Many age-groupers (that's most of us) doing the sport as a challenge, within a busy and varied life, commit to 6-12hrs a week. In reality, this requires more hours because there are things like travel and changing time to factor in, but thousands of athletes get great results on this amount.

3 With a mid- to long-course goal or with lots of free time, some do hit the 14-20hr total. But the sport can be achieved and medals won on less.

4 Beyond 20hrs, with no professional prize money at stake, in our humble opinion it's probably an obsession that has got out of control. It also leaves many other areas of life sadly barren and a very low-humoured athlete to boot.

Find your level of commitment and enjoy the time with those you train with. Work to a goal and enjoy what you get from your hard work and dedication. To be on the start line makes you a winner already. But be sure also to have

non-triathlon friends who can keep your feet on the ground and the sport in perspective. **JB**

Recovery query

? What should I do to recover following my first race? And how long should I leave it before I attempt my next race?

Hannah Palmer, Stockport

➔ The following points are general, and you should bear in mind that you, as an individual, may be different. But the starting point for a full recovery is as follows:

Sprint distance between three and six days.
Olympic distance between six and 15 days.

Effectively this means that a 'new' triathlete should be able to race sprint-distance races on consecutive weekends with some tick-over training sessions in between. For Olympic distance, I'd recommend two weeks. Do remember, though, that if you're racing a lot, the intensity of your training sessions will suffer and race performance will fall off.



To aid the recovery process post race, make sure you drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine

DID YOU KNOW...?

Transition is the bit in between the sport. Transition one (T1) is the swap over from swim to bike; transition two (T2) is the swap from bike to run.

Many coaches say, "Do what you did to get tired, but do less of it and do it slower." Certainly, a gentle swim, bike or run will get the blood moving around and help flush out toxins.

Because of its non-weight-bearing nature, swimming is the most post-race friendly activity.

Work on a third of normal training the day after the race (or even less) and gradually build it back up following the guidelines above and below.

It's vital to eat immediately post-race. Make it something sensible – simple carbs and protein rather than a cream cake. If you drink coffee, then maybe not immediately afterwards. If you're going to drink alcohol, be sure that you have enough water at the same time. Alcohol is a diuretic and drinking that alone will not aid post-race recovery.

One final point: if you've been ill or injured, then recovery time will be extended. **ST**

Diet dilemma

? I'm 37 years old and in training for my first triathlon. I know I need to change my diet to support my training (and lose a stone!) but do I need low fat, high carb or should I just cut calories?

Paul Taylor, Luton

→ It's not my intention to confuse you further, but you will in fact need to adopt all these approaches, to some degree, in order to build a high-performance diet.

If you're overweight, you've likely been consuming excess calories. The simplest strategy is to look at the foods you currently consume and drop those that provide little nutrition but relatively high amounts of calories. Alcohol,

Weighty issue

? I've been lifting weights at a gym for a few years now and am looking to compete in my first triathlon in 2008. I've about 8hrs per week to train. Should I still do weights in my tri training programme?

James Gordon, London

→ The key here is to look at your strengths and weaknesses in your new sport.

Triathlon is a sport of three disciplines and each requires specific training. A history in lifting weights is good if you want to be strong but, while there are some benefits in strength gained from the gym, it doesn't necessarily make you better at triathlon if you don't practise the individual disciplines. Your first concern should be to focus on getting fitter in each.

Look at dividing your 8hrs up into a set amount for each discipline, and over the winter allocate a little more time to

chocolate bars, pastries, muffins, buns, chips and crisps spring to mind! Looking to see where you're getting your calories from each day, and having this increased awareness, is fundamental to good nutrition.

Of course, by incorporating a consistent training regime into your life, you'll not only increase your fitness but naturally lose body fat, too, by increasing your body's energy expenditure. Capitalise on this fully by choosing the right foods for optimal energy production and optimal fat metabolism.

Switch to natural wholefoods, avoiding processed, high sugar, high saturated or high trans-fat foods. Think plain porridge oats and fresh fruit for breakfast; tuna and rice or pasta salads for lunch; and cook up delicious grilled chicken or salmon with stir-fried or

your weakest discipline. But don't neglect your strengths, so that come race day you can use them to your advantage.

Some gym work in the form of conditioning is good, but this should generally be based around joint stability and injury prevention. If you're able to prevent injury and train week after week, you'll progress much faster than training for a few weeks and then having to have a week off

due to a twisted ankle or a shoulder impingement. Remember: consistency is the key to improvement.

If you still feel you need to gain strength in each discipline it is possible. For example, you could use hills when training for the bike or run, and paddles, a pool buoy or a few pairs of swim shorts in the pool. Using each discipline effectively will make your training more productive. **AB**

Building up strength in each discipline is the key to success in triathlon: using paddles in the pool is just one way

DID YOU KNOW...?

Wetsuits are required for all swims where the water temperature is below 14°C.

streamed veg in the evening. Snack on fresh fruit; drink plenty of water (as opposed to canned drinks, coffee or alcohol); choose quality proteins such as fish, eggs and lean meats; quality low GI carbs including wholegrain rice, quinoa [see *Nutrition*, issue 216, page 61 – Ed] and oats; and plenty of fresh fruit and veg to ensure you get your five a day. **L-AP**

Pick a suit

? I already own a wetsuit, which I use for surfing. Would it be okay to use it for triathlon as well?

Paul Bates, Carlisle

→ The short answer is 'yes', but only to see if you actually like triathlons.

Triathlon wetsuits are specifically designed for swimming, and not only comply with the regulations on thickness but are cut for the posture you adopt when swimming in the water. This means they allow you to stretch out more, as they're longer in the front and shorter in the back.

Additional flexibility around the shoulders is aided by special material to facilitate an easier stroke. They also allow less water in to reduce excess weight.

So, in short, try the sport out and then choose from the many options available, which, in the context of the investment you'll make in buying a bike, is well worth making in the long run. **AP**



Invest in a tri wetsuit once you know you enjoy the sport and wish to continue



Entry-Level Essentials

Five-grand bikes, £300 wetsuits and £100-plus trainers – they're not required for triathlon newcomers. We test the best from the budget market...



Aqua Sphere Mexico £22.99

The Mexico is one of three items from Aqua Sphere's new Aqua X Power swimwear line, and is constructed using Xtra Life Lycra fibre. The blurb for this material boasts many things, including high chlorine resistance, excellent shape retention and great muscle control, not to mention being quick drying. And judging by the tests carried out, these claims certainly stand up.

Your body is held tightly, but without any discomfort, rubbing, chafing or restriction of breath. The oft-used cliché of feeling like you're slicing through the water is strangely apt when you're wearing the Mexico, and its quality and hold mean you could use it for racing as well as training. Overall, one of the finest suits we've tested.

- + Ultra fitted and ultra comfortable, allowing you to cut through the water; built to last
- Designed for 'bell-shaped' bodies but the sizing is small. A 'try before you buy' item

9

➔ **Aqua Sphere UK**
01254 278873 www.aquasphereuk.co.uk

Zoggs Odyssey Max £14.99

The Zoggs Odyssey Max is a great choice for triathletes training in the pool and racing in open water. The Odyssey Max are slightly larger than standard pool goggles, meaning that they not only give great visibility but also feel far securer in open water than smaller goggles.

With good suction and fit, they don't need to be done up too tightly to avoid leaking, and feature Zoggs' new 'Ratchet Quick-fit' adjustment mechanism for faster fitting, which is great in a race.

Zoggs' CLT (curved lens technology) means the Odyssey Max goggles have wide peripheral vision, and their Fogbuster technology will stop the lenses from misting up, even during swims over longer distances.

- + Great for pool swimming and open-water racing in terms of visibility and fit
- Scraping the barrel, we'd say there's plenty of stiff competition in this price bracket
- ➔ **Zoggs**
01276 486500 www.zoggs.com

9

Outland Tri-Bar £39.99

Nothing beats a tri-bar for adding speed to your riding, and we haven't seen a 'proper' tri-bar as cheap as this one. Rather than the usual, heavy, single-piece bent pipe, with two bar-sliding clamps and lumps of foam for your elbows, these bars are genuinely multi-adjustable units.

The two separate extensions clamp under the bar, which keeps the elbow pads low – very useful considering most cheaper bikes have a tall cockpit that needs the lowest tri-bars possible. It does mean that there's no climbing grip close into the bars, but the long, raked, upwards section of the extensions offers the option of a relatively high hand position.

The armrests can be shifted backwards and forwards and in and out about 1.5cm, while the plain arm pads absorb road shock fairly well. The forged clamps keep weight low (528g) and shims are provided to fit most bars. One final positive: extension 'tidemarks' and bolt torque ratings are laser etched for easy set-up.

- + Adjustable tri bars with a universal fit at a great price
- Limited hand positions and single bolt fixings that need regular checking
- ➔ **Raleigh**
01773 532600 www.raleigh.co.uk

8



Aquasphere Mako Wetsuit £114.99

The Mako represents outstanding value at a little over a hundred quid. The suit comprises varying thicknesses of neoprene, from 5mm to 1.5mm: 5mm on the body's front and thighs for buoyancy; 1.5mm and 2mm under the arms and around the neck to limit fatigue while swimming. The neck of the suit is low cut and didn't leave any chafing marks.

Our only concern was the sizing. We had a large to test, which should have been fine. However, the suit felt incredibly tight and it took a helluva long time to get on. As with many wetsuits, a longer zip would also help but, overall, a fine suit for newcomers.

- + Excellent value for money; well constructed; good neckline
- Not designed for the bulkier athlete; a longer zip would help in transition
- ➔ **Aqua Sphere UK**
01254 278873 www.aquasphere.co.uk

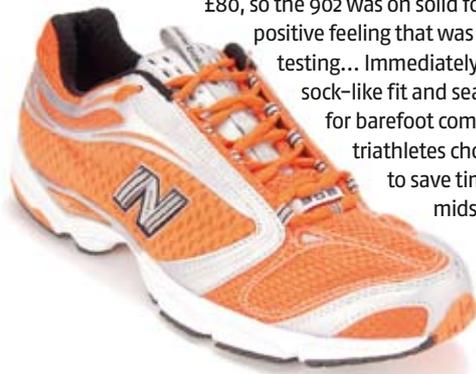
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New Balance 902 £75.00

These days, it's nigh on impossible to get a pair of run shoes for under £80, so the 902 was on solid footing from the off – a positive feeling that was heightened during testing... Immediately, you'll notice the sock-like fit and seamless interior – a must for barefoot comfort. (Note: many triathletes choose to run without socks to save time in transition.) The midsole of the shoe is as light

as a feather. However, NB still manage to provide different densities of foam that, in turn, contribute to an excellent, comfortable ride. All in all the 902 is a fast shoe for racing and training.



- + A reassuring shoe that lives up to the 'look-at-me' colourway
- The lacing system is secure but not the quickest during transitions
- ➔ **New Balance**
0800 389105 www.newbalance.co.uk

9

Lake CX 110 £64.99

These entry-level Lake tri shoes are great value for money. The foot moulds really well, with no ripples or ridges under the broad single strap. There's no obvious 'lift' at the toe or on the well-padded heel either, although fit is on the long and narrow side.

The single reverse strap has a big rubber end, which 'stands up' on your foot for really easy grabbing when whipping it off in second transition, although it looks less aero than other shoes. Despite a lack of vents, it dries fast and the lack of draughts is a definite bonus on cold, winter days.

The nylon sole feels stiff enough underfoot and has drillings and plates for all popular pedal systems. Lake shoes last forever, too.



- + Solid fit and tough construction makes this a great-value shoe
- No drain holes (but no draughts either); suits long thin feet better than fatties
- ➔ **Moore Large**
01332 274200 www.moorelarge.co.uk

8

Giro Stylus £39.99

The Stylus is sleek, compact and weighs only 275g. It has plenty of vents – 24 to be precise, which is plenty enough to offer great airflow channelling and a cool head even on the warmest of days.

It uses Giro's Roc-Loc 4 retention system, which employs separate tension and positioning adjustments, both vertically and horizontally, for a comfy and secure fit. It has an 'imolded' shell, so the hard-wearing plastic outer is bonded directly to the impact-absorbing polystyrene inner.

Inside are sweat-mopping Coolmax pads that can be removed and washed.



- + Good looks; well ventilated; cosy; great value; comes in five colours, three sizes
- Doesn't provide the heavyweight protection of top-end models
- ➔ **Madison**
www.ultimatepursuits.co.uk

9

Ciclosport CP16 £49.99

The slim-line CP16 is a simple monitor with enough features to get you by for basic training across all three sporting disciplines. It has an easy-to-adjust strap with quick release for swift removal. There are just two buttons: one takes you through each of the modes while the other simply sets each mode as you require, making it an extremely straightforward operation.

There's a bar-graph heart-rate (HR) display as well as the usual number display, so you can see by the colour of the blocks where you are as your HR increases, and an independent stopwatch. The chest strap is bulky but didn't cause any problems during our test. It's also equipped with a bike handlebar mount.



- + Good value for money; easy to use; will suit smaller wrists
- Only covers the basics; limited accuracy due to whole second timing
- ➔ **Jim Walker**
0870 752 8777 www.jimwalker.co.uk

8

First-Timer's Tale

Meet one of triathlon's latest recruits and discover why she's now hooked...



Emma Glynn, 27, is a chartered surveyor from Bristol and has just finished her first season in triathlon. She had never participated competitively in any sport until her first race

in June this year, but had enjoyed racquet sports and the odd recreational swim and cycle.

So what made you try triathlon?

A work colleague suggested that I should give it a go. Coincidentally, around the same time, my company announced that they were going to host the inaugural Property Sprint Triathlon at Dorney Lake, Windsor. By the end of our 2006 Christmas dinner, and after a few glasses of wine, I was taking part.

Where did you learn about the training, nutrition, equipment and so on?

There was a website set up for the Property Triathlon, which provided lots of helpful tips and links to other useful websites. I also

spoke to friends who were either experienced triathletes or colleagues competing for the first time, and read mags such as 220.

Did you find buying the new kit pricey?

I bought a £500 introductory-level road bike plus various prices of kit to go with it. I also hired my wetsuit for the season. It was brand new and a lot cheaper than buying one.

How many hours did you set aside for training?

I built up the training over six months. In the weeks before the race I was training twice a week in each discipline and aiming to do the expected race distance. This probably equated to 6-7hrs training per week.

How have you had to change your diet?

I concentrated on trying to make it as balanced as possible while also increasing my protein, carbs and fruit/veg intake. I also ensured that I drank plenty of water each day. In the race I stuck to bananas and Lucozade.

Which aspect of the race were you most apprehensive about?

The open-water swim. Although not my weakest discipline I'd only trained outdoors on a couple of occasions, and then with only two or three other people. And my first training session had been a nightmare! But after a couple of sessions in training I found that the key was to keep my breathing steady and not to race off too quickly at the start.

Talk us through your first-ever triathlon...

I stayed close to the back at the start of the swim and managed to come out within the top half without any major issues. The cycle stage was four laps of the lake, which was fast and flat. There were quite a few mountain bikes there so I felt quite fast on my shiny new road bike. Running is my worst discipline and was very much a trudge to the end.



Emma's essential tips

- 1 Practise swimming in your wetsuit in open water before your first race.
- 2 Don't feel despondent in training if you can't reach the distances straight away.
- 3 Look at websites, magazines and other publications for training and nutritional tips.
- 4 Opt for a sprint or a 'Try a Tri' for your first race. They're a good introduction to the sport.
- 5 Join your local tri club – they'll provide coaches and a good training programme.

“By the end of our Christmas dinner, and after a few glasses of wine, I was taking part in my first triathlon”

But somehow I managed to keep going, and the exhilaration when I crossed the finish line was overwhelming. So considering my apprehension at the start, I don't think it could have gone any better. I loved it.

Have you done another one since?

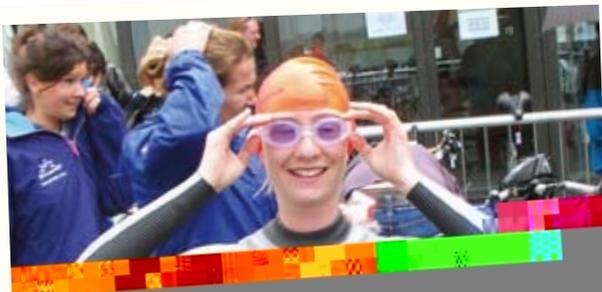
Yes, I signed up for the Cotswold Sprint within a week of completing my first race. The swim was a lot harder, mainly because I ended up right in the middle of the pack and I had people swimming over me. But overall I knocked 10mins off my first time.

You've mastered the sprint, but what's next?

Now that winter's here I'd like to concentrate on training for an Olympic-distance in 2008.

Finally, what makes this sport so special for you?

The variety in both the disciplines and the distances, and the people who take part. Everyone I have come across in the sport has been so friendly and supportive, both in training and during races. **220**



Emma's first race was a sprint event at Dorney Lake, Eton: "The exhilaration when I crossed the finish line was overwhelming"