

TRIATHLON, COUCH POTATO-STYLE

Okay. So you see these super lean, super fit, and super good looking triathletes walking around at the local tri event, and you wonder how on earth you can compete with that. "Triathlon is for these guys and not for me. I eat like a king, drink like a fish and catch the ruggar every Saturday afternoon from the comfort of my lazy boy couch."

Not so my dear friend!! You too can make the jump from sloth to triathlete in a few easy steps. You may not win the race, but at least you finished, got the medal and t-shirt and have something to talk about other than Bob's latest haircut and manicure

This is how you do it! I have been somewhat harsh lately with training programs, so this is about as easy as it gets, and is as basic as I can give. For the die-hards, visit my Facebook training page and I'll put you through boot camp, but for the rest of you, here goes:

Swim:

You'll need to swim twice per week. Yep, that's it!

Your first session should preferably be on Mondays, because the weekend has been hard and the body has taken strain. There's nothing better than a relaxing swim in a heated pool.

The other session can be done on either Thursday or Friday.

Swim Session 1:

Do some super circuit weight training (20 to 25 min) before you head for the pool. It will ease the shoulders and build up a bit of a sweat before you take the plunge. Swimming is hard, especially if you're not fit, and it will work your upper body regardless of the distance you do.

- 8 x 25m swim, rest 1 minute at each wall
- Kick 100m, resting after each length
- Swim continuous 100m

Total: 600m

Swim Session 2:

- 2 x 50m swim, rest 2 minutes after each set. Repeat this 4 times.
- Kick 50m, then swim 50m
- Swim 4 x 25m sprints and rest 1 minute after each 25m

Total: 600m

You do not need more than this to complete a sprint race. Just make sure you do it consistently for about 4 weeks prior to your first event. There's no use calling for the lifeguards when you're six foot tall and weigh 100 kilograms!

HINT: Buy a tri wetsuit. It's like adding an extra five sessions per week to your schedule without ever going near a pool.

Bike:

Most of you own a bike already, or can beg or borrow one for your first few events. Your running legs also make this transition pretty simple. I suggest biking at least 3 times per week, with a minimum of 10 to 15km per session.

A mountain bike is fine but opt for slick smooth racing tires for tar surfaces. It makes it so much easier. You don't need these super-fast lightweight machines that the professional guys use. Yes, they look good and sure perform underneath a conditioned athlete, but until you're up to standard, your normal bike will be just fine for what you need.

Bike Session 1 (Tuesday): Flat Course

10km to 15km ride, at a nice and easy pace.

Bike Session 2 (Thursday): Undulating Course with a Few Dips and Rises

This is a 15km ride. Go easy for 5km, ride moderate for 5km and burn the last few when you sniff home. Make sure you slow the heart rate down before jumping off the bike. This you can do by easing up and down the driveway.

Bike Session 3 (Saturday): The Long One

Ride a full 20km - if you're up to it

You can rest after 10km, take a swig of juice and stretch the legs and then head off for the final 10km.

HINT: Make sure you always wear a helmet and a good pair of cycle shorts with a real thick chamois for extra protection.

Run:

For some or most of you, running is what you have been doing for years. As long as you keep the basics intact, this third discipline will be taken care of with no hassles. I suggest three running workouts per week, consisting of the below:

- 1 time trial per week (4km for the unfit and 8km for the fit)
- 1 long run per week (8km for the unfit and 15km for the super fit)
- 1 fartlek or speed workout per week, explained below:
 - Warm up nicely beforehand with a casual jog. When you're warmed up, sprint to one lamp pole along the pavement and then jog the next two
 - Do this sprint-jog lamppost workout for about 5 to 8km
 - You can also do this at the local school track but jogging one lap and sprinting half to make up the distance

HINT: Make sure you do at least one session where you combine disciplines. Cycle to the track (10km) and then do a sprint or fartlek session immediately after getting off the bike. Your legs will thank you for it come you're the big race.

In a nutshell, that is it. Triathlon training does not get any easier than this. There is virtually no risk of serious injury and it should be enough to get you through a sprint triathlon. So get off the couch and take to the road! Triathlon is easy, and anybody can do it!

ENJOY THE RIDE!