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Spring Into Triathlon Season!

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What is Triathlon?

- One event comprised of three sports: swim, bike, run – typically in this order.
- Varying distances: Sprint, Olympic, Half-Ironman (70.3), Ironman (140.6).
- Grown into worldwide sport, originating with first unofficial triathlon in the U.S. in 1978.
- USA Triathlon is the governing body over the sport and most sanctioned events require athlete license.
- Austin Stats: ~10 pro triathletes live and train here; 10+ triathlon training groups and even more “free”/informal groups; 30+ local races annually.

Terms and Definitions

- *Brick* – bike and run combined.
- *Bonk* – Sudden energy loss and feeling fatigued, usually caused when glycogen stores in the liver and muscles are depleted, resulting in a major performance drop. Also “hitting the wall”.
- *Century* – 100 mile bike ride
- *Fartlek* – Swedish term meaning 'speed play' that is a relaxed method of interval training.
- *Getting Chicked* – when a guy gets passed by a girl.
- *PB* – personal best (see also PR - personal record).
- *The Washing Machine* – Referring to an OW swim start.
- *Transition Area* – Place where a triathlete keeps gear (bike, wetsuit, running shoes) during a triathlon.
- *Triathlon Lifestyle* – Swim, bike, run, eat, sleep.
- *Wrench* – Bike mechanic.
- More terms at: www.beginnertriathlete.com

Triathlon History in Review

- 1904: Olympic event called “triathlon”, consisting of the long jump, shot put, and a 100 yard dash.
- 1921: Petit Perillon swim club in Marseilles, France held an event called “Course des Trois Sports” consisting of a 7K bike, 5K run, and 200 meter swim. Lulu Helmet, the only female entrant, won.
- 1974: The San Diego Track Club Newsletter headline read, “Run, Cycle, Swim – Triathlon set for 25th”, consisting of swim, bike, and run. The intent of the event was to provide a break from the grueling track workouts and considered something fun and different.
- 1978: The first Ironman distance triathlon in Hawaii. 15 men started and 12 finished. Gordon Haller, a 28 year old Honolulu cab driver, won in a time of 11:46:58. The prize was a stick man soldered together called “the Ironman”.
- 1980's: US Triathlon Association formed – now USAT; ABC Wide World of Sports airs Julie Moss crawling to finish line at IM Hawaii; race participation jumps from 108 to 1500+ by end of decade.
- 2000: Triathlon makes its Olympic debut at the games in Sydney, Australia.
- 1993 to 2003: USAT membership grows by 300%+ from 15,937 to 47,373, not including 60,000 non-USAT athletes.
- 2009: USAT annual membership 125,000; sanctioned events will surpass 3100 by year end.

1. PICK AN EVENT OR RACE

Ask Yourself:

- ! Am I excited about the event?
- ! Is the event sanctioned? Is it safe?
- ! Does it require travel or other expenses?
- ! Do I have the skills to complete the event?
- ! Is it important that I know other people doing the event?

TIPS:

- Pick events that are fun and interesting to you.
- Register early! Races fill up.
- Wrap a vacation around an event.
- If you have kids, look for “family friendly” races with kids’ events.
- Nothing provides more motivation than a race date on a calendar.

Examples:

- 5/9 The Rookie
- 5/16 Skeese Greets Women's Tri
- 5/31 CapTexTri
- 6/6 Danskin Women's Tri
- 6/20 Varsity Triathlon
- 7/11 Couples Triathlon
- 7/18 Marble Falls Triathlon
- 8/1 Jack's Generic Tri
- 8/22 Sweet & Twisted Women's Tri
- 9/6 Austin's Triathlon
- 9/19 Red Licorice Olympic Triathlon



Search the web for many more local events or races!

2. GET GEAR

Ask Yourself:

- ! What do I already own and can use for training and racing?
- ! Do I really need {fill in item here}. If so, make a list and prioritize.

TIPS:

- Use the same gear for training and racing.
- Less is more – don't get bogged down with too much gear.
- Don't be overly influenced by magazines or others around you.
- Make sure purchases fit your long term needs.
- Used can be just as good as new (check out Craig's List).
- Research products and talk to others (athletes, local shops, groups, etc.) before making a purchase.



NEED to Have

- ✓ One "outfit" you can swim, bike, and run in.
- ✓ Swim goggles.
- ✓ Swim cap (usually provided by the race).
- ✓ Bicycle (mountain, tri, road).
- ✓ Bicycle helmet.
- ✓ Bike shoes (tennis shoes, bike-specific shoes).
- ✓ Safety Pins (to pin race number on, usually provided by the race).
- ✓ Water bottle for bike.
- ✓ Running shoes (can use same shoes on bike).
- ✓ Bag to carry all your gear.

Nice to Have

- ✓ Body glide
- ✓ Race belt
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Flip flops
- ✓ A bazillion other tri-specific things ☺
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ Watch
- ✓ Small towel

3. TRAIN

Ask Yourself:

- ! What is the reality of my available time to train (making time vs having time)?
- ! What are my training and racing goals (survive vs thrive)?
- ! Am I more motivated to train with a group or solo?
- ! Do I know written bicycle laws? Or unwritten pool laws?

TIPS:

- It's OK to miss a workout.
- Try to train by time vs. distance.
- Maintain your strengths, train your weaknesses.
- Combine workouts: bike+run, swim+bike, swim+run.

General Guidelines

- ✓ Max 10% increase in weekly training volume.
- ✓ Train volume first then add intensity.
- ✓ Nutrition: recommended if run +1 hr or bike +90 min.
- ✓ Hydration: always train with a water bottle.

Resources

- ✓ Training schedules.
- ✓ Training groups (free, for hire).
- ✓ Personal coaching.
- ✓ Training resources (websites, blogs, clinics).



4. RACE / PARTICIPATE

Ask Yourself:

- ! Are there time cutoffs?
- ! Do I need a USAT membership (\$39/annual-\$10/day)?
- ! Do I know where I am going on the race course?
- ! Are there any special considerations (course, gear, weather)?
- ! What am I most nervous/worried about?

TIPS:

- Attend any pre-race meetings and/or read communications from race directors or race officials.
- Get to race venue early – you are not the only one racing.
- You are responsible for knowing the course.
- You are responsible for knowing the rules.
- Learn from the experience.
- Thank those who supported you.
- Have fun and enjoy the moment!



Day Before Race Process

- ✓ Pack all race gear.
- ✓ Pick up race packet.
- ✓ Eat well throughout the day (does not mean overeat) and stay hydrated.
- ✓ Go to bed early and set two alarm clocks.

Race Day Process

- ✓ Get up early.
- ✓ Eat breakfast.
- ✓ Drive to race start, allowing for plenty of time to park, haul gear, get body marked, get transition set up, go to bathroom, etc.
- ✓ RACE!
- ✓ Enjoy post-race festivities.
- ✓ When showering, carefully wash AROUND body marking numbers so you can proudly wear them as a badge of honor for a few days.

Final Thoughts

1. The best learning occurs by doing.
2. Your first race is most likely only the beginning.
3. Austin is a great triathlon community filled with resources. Use them!
4. Enjoy the multisport experience!