



theTriLife.com 12 week plan for sprint distance triathletes

Who this is for

You have just decided to do your first triathlon – good decision! You are going to have a lot of fun and this guide is to help you along the way.

Before you start this plan you should be fairly active and be able to swim 4 lengths front crawl without stopping (although it may have been a while since you did this!), be able to bike for 30 min – a mountain bike is fine! – and be able to walk/run for 20 min. If this doesn't describe you now work towards these goals over a few weeks.

Your Sprint Triathlon will consist of an open water swim of 400m followed by a 20k bike and then a 5 k run. These all take place in a very safe environment at Dorney Lake, with a supportive team of event marshalls and you will be with lots of other triathletes that may be taking part in their first event.

As with any other form of exercise it is always wise to consult your doctor before you start a training program.

Your training plan

The training plan below gives you a guide as to how you may organise your training and the volume of training that you should do in order to have a great time on race day!

Key features of this plan:

- Steady progression - it is important not to do too much too soon!
- Sufficient recovery – days and weeks. This is when your body adapts to your training and you become stronger.
- The right sessions at the right time. As you get closer to race day you should introduce “brick” and open water sessions as shown in the plan.
- Doing the right thing in race week – neither too much nor too little!

To support this training plan look out for training day camps (see theTriLife.com for more details) and for open water training sessions. A training day will give you all the advice you need to make sure you have a successful day and a coached open water session is a great idea to give you confidence before your race.

The training plan below just gives you the amount of time you should train. If this is your first sprint distance triathlon then it is very likely that improving your endurance in each discipline will be the most important thing you should do. If you swim, bike or run for the time suggested in the plan at a steady pace then you will be ready come race day!



Week	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Total
1	Swim: 20 min	Bike: 30 min	Run: 15 min	Swim: 20 min	Day Off	Run: 20 min	Bike: 45 min	2 hr 30 min
2	Swim: 20 min	Bike: 30 min	Run: 20 min	Swim: 25 min	Day Off	Run: 25 min	Bike: 1hr	3 hr
3	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 30 min	Run: 25 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min	Bike: 1hr	3 hr 25 min
4	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min	Bike: 1hr 15 min	4 hr
5	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 35 min	Day Off	Run: 40 min	Bike: 1hr 30 min	4 hr 30 min
6	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 35 min	Swim: 45 min	Day Off	Run: 40 min	Bike: 1hr 45 min	5 hr
7	Day Off	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 45 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min	Bike: 1hr	3 hr 30 min
8	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min Open water swim: 30 min	Brick: Bike 1 hr 30 min and then Run 15 min	5 hr
9	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min Open water swim: 30 min	Brick: Bike 1 hr 30 min and then Run 15 min	5 hr
10	Day Off	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 45 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min	Bike: 1hr	3 hr 30 min
11	Swim: 30 min	Bike: 45 min	Run: 30 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Run: 30 min Open water swim: 30 min	Brick: Bike 1 hr and then Run 15 min	4 hr 30 min
12	Day Off	Bike: 30 min	Run: 20 min	Swim: 30 min	Day Off	Race Prep	RACE DAY	1 hr 20 min

Swim Training

Your training sessions should try to make the distance that you are going to compete. For a sprint distance this can be between 400m and 750m. Don't worry if you can't complete the distance just yet. Make a note of how far you can swim and the time that it takes you. The next time that you swim aim to swim a little further and longer. By doing this regularly you will soon find that your swimming improves. The secret to swimming is to relax and not to rush your stroke. Try to go slower and perfect your technique rather than trying to be as fast as you can as this often leads to bad habits. It will help you as you emerge from the water also. If you are too exhausted after the swim you will not perform well on the bike or the run.



Most open water triathlons in Great Britain require a wetsuit to be worn. This may feel strange but it can help your swim. Wetsuits help buoyancy and can aid your confidence. It is recommended that you try the wetsuit before the day of the event as they can feel tight and restrict your breathing. Swimming should be done as often as possible in your weekly training schedule.

These 3 swim sessions should help with your swimming:

1. Swim several repeats of 50m with 30 s rest in between. Once you can do 10 repeats then alternate between 50 m at a hard effort and 50 m at an easy effort.
2. Swim 5 x 100 m with 30 s rest in between each one. As you get fitter increase the number of repetitions gradually up to 8. (If you can't swim 5 right now then build up from what you can do).
3. Swim continuously for 15 mins. At the beginning of the program keep this very easy. Towards the end of the program imagine you are in your race and practice swimming for 15 mins with a strong effort.

Bike Training

This is the longest discipline of the three and many first time triathletes often neglect to give it adequate attention. The most important feature of the bike leg is the bike itself. Make sure that the bike has had a recent service and is in good working order. Something simple like the gears working can make a huge difference to your enjoyment and speed.

Make sure you look at the tyres and test to see if they are rock hard. The higher the pressure in your tyres the more likely you are to avoid punctures and the faster you will go due to less rolling resistance. Make sure that the brakes work well.

You must wear a helmet during the bike section of a triathlon so make sure that your helmet is comfortable and tight fitting.

It is not essential to have proper cycle shoes with special pedals although this will help your speed immensely. However, if you are not used to them they can seem tricky at first. If this is your first triathlon it is a good idea to get toe cages for your pedals and cycle in trainers. This way you will be able to get your feet in and out easily and have the ability to go harder up any hills.

The bike is all about how much mileage you do. Spinning classes are great for building up your strength and stamina. Otherwise just spending time on your bike will help you get fitter. Cycling shorts are a worthwhile investment.



If you are feeling more confident on a bike you could try an interval session during one of your rides. Find a stretch that is 1 minute long and sprint at the end of the minute allow 2 minutes easy spinning before repeating a further 5 times. Allow 10 minutes more cycling and repeat the set again.

Run Training

This is traditionally the easiest discipline of the three but after a swim and a bike the run becomes a little trickier. Your legs feel numb and don't seem to respond to what you are telling them to do. It is important that you get the strength in for the run during your training. Long steady runs at a pace that you can talk in full conversation are actually very good for developing leg strength. If the furthest you have run is up the stairs or to the bus then build your running mileage up gradually. Start with walking for one minute and jogging for one minute. Every week try to increase the time that you do for this session.

If you are more confident about your running ability then run continuous for 30 – 45 minutes. You could also try intervals. Jog for one minute and run hard for one minute and repeat until you have completed 30 minutes.

Hill training. Although hills may seem like hard work they make your running far more efficient and add strength to your legs. Find a short hill about 20 – 40 seconds and run up it as hard as you can. Have a breather at the top and jog down. Repeat 4 – 10 times.

Brick Training

You should also try to practice running after you have been cycling or combining cycles with runs – these are called “brick sessions”. This will help get you used to running after the bike leg and will provide you with a great workout. The key is that you change from bike to run as quickly as you can. You may find that you have to run with shorter strides – this is fine. Lift yourself up through your core and get into your stride as soon as you can. Running off the bike will only become easier with practice which is why they are included in the program!

What next?

If you have any queries please contact your coaches at coach@theTriLife.com.

If you are more experienced or if you feel like you need more detail in your training plan you may like to look at our detailed training plans available at www.theTriLife.com.

HAVE A GREAT RACE!