

12-Week Triathlon Training Plan

We asked Triathlon Ireland National Development Coach Stephen Delaney to design a 12-week training schedule suitable for aspiring triathletes with a basic level of running fitness. If you're able to complete a 5K run and want to convert that into all-round fitness for a triathlon this is for you.

Intensity Levels: Level 1 = easy Level 2 = aerobic (M pace) Level 3 = Tempo Level 4 = Interval (VO2max)

Week	Day	Swim	Bike	Run	Comments
1-3	M	4x4 minutes aerobic swim L2 with 1 min rest		45 mins easy run L1 with 6x10 second progressive strides	Swim warm up (5 mins) to include 4x15m progressive sprint efforts
	T		45 mins easy cycling L1. Keep gears low to keep cadence high 90 rpm target		For midweek cycling, if it's unsafe to cycle in the dark use a turbo trainer
	W	4x4 minutes aerobic swim L2 with 1 min rest			Week 2 5x4 mins Week 3 6x 4mins
	Th			60 min run with 2x10 mins tempo L3 with 5 min rec	Runners - be wary of trying to continue normal routine - allow body to adapt to swim and bike in the early weeks
	F				Substitute Pilates or gym sessions for further conditioning.
	Sa	5x 4 minutes aerobic swim L2 with 1 min rest		Long run 1.15 progressive L1 to L2	Week 2 swim 5x4 mins Week 3 5x5 mins
	Su		1 hour 30 mins easy bike L1-L2		Increase bike 10 mins per week if comfortable
4-6	M	6x 200m descending 1-3, 4-6 with 1 min recovery. Efforts progress L2 to L3.		45 mins easy run L1 with 6x10 second progressive strides	Descending times for swim means each effort is progressively harder. Avoid going too hard on first
	T		60 mins with 4x5 mins steady effort L2 with 2 min rec		Not a threshold effort. Still conversational.
	W	4x25m hard 25m easy, 4x100 L2 with 15 sec rec, 4x50m hard 50m easy			Warm-up and down always. The harder the session, the longer the warm down
	Th			60 min run with 2x10 mins tempo L3 with 5 min rec	
	F				Focus on weakness in early weeks. If swim and bike not ready it will not matter that your run is great!
	Sa	4x300m L2 with 45 sec rec.	1hour 30 min L2 after swim		Focus on maintaining pace across each effort
	Su			Long run 1.15 progressive L1 to L2	
7	M	10x100m with 20 sec rec.		45 min L1	Try to maintain even pace.
	T		60 mins with 2 Set 4x1 min hard 1 min easy, 10 mins between sets. Maintain cadence 90rpm		
	W	4x 25m hard 25m easy, 4x 100 L2 with 15 sec rec, 4x50m hard 50m easy		30 mins easy L1	
	Th			60 min run with 20 mins tempo L3	
	F				
	Sa	4x300m L2 with 30 sec rec.	1hour 30 min L2 after swim		
	Su			Long run L2	Solid steady L2 run if recovered properly from rest of training
8	M	2x500m L2 with 2 min rec		30 mins L1 or rest	Easy runs for recovery
	T		60 mins L2. Include 6x10 second sprints with 3 min between efforts		
	W	4x25m hard 25 easy, 100easy + 1 min rec, 1x600 L2		30 mins L1 or rest	
	Th			45 mins L1	
	F				
	Sa	3x400 L2 with 1 min rec			
	Su		1 hour 30 mins easy bike L1-L2	20 mins run off bike	Keeping cadence high on the bike makes it easier to transfer to normal run pattern

Week by week, this plan will enable you to build core fitness and skills progressively across the three triathlon disciplines, without making unreasonable demands on your time. All it takes is commitment!

Treat times and distances as a guide to where you should be in any given week; don't overtrain or push yourself beyond what feels realistic for you. Above all, don't forget to enjoy your training - triathlon may be serious, but it's always fun!

Week	Day	Swim	Bike	Run	Comments
9	M	4x 3x100m descending L2 -L3with 15 sec rec. 1 min between sets		30 mins L1 or rest	
	T		60 mins with 4x 4mins L3 with 2 mins rec		
	W	4x 25m hard 25 easy, 4x 50 hard 50 easy, 2x 100 hard 100 easy		45 mins L1	
	Th			60 mins with 2x15 L3	
	F				
	Sa	1x1000m L2 with 15m hard every 100m	60 min bike after swim with 15 mins L3 after 10 min WU		Try to keep time from swim to bike as short as possible
	Su		60 mins with last 15 hard	30 mins direct after bike	
10	M	Pyramid set: 100/300/500/300/100 with 10 sec rest per 100m		30 mins L1 or rest	Highest pace that can be maintained across session
	T		60 mins with 5x5mins L3 with 2 mins rec		
	W	3x500m L2 with 45 sec rec			
	Th			10x1.15 fast with 45 sec rec	Maintainable pace! Warm up and down.
	F				
	Sa	3x100 descending 15 sec rec, 100 easy recovery, 3x400 descending with 30 sec rec			
	Su		3x 8 mins bike hard direct to 3 mins run, 4 min recovery between sets		Arrange to do as group with someone to mind bikes.
11	M	5x 100 very hard with 2 mins recovery		45 min L1	Last high volume week
	T		60mins with 10x2min hard 1 easy		
	W	4 x 400m L2 with 1st 100 L3, 40 sec recovery on each		30 mins L1 or rest	
	Th			4x1K at projected race pace with 1 min recovery	
	F				
	Sa	12x100 with 15 sec rec. Best maintainable pace		30 mins L1 or rest	
	Su		3x8 mins bike hard direct to 3 mins run, 3 min recovery between sets		
12	M	2x300m hard with 1 min rec, 200m very hard, 200 easy		45 min L1	Low volume week but with intensity
	T		45 mins with, 5 min race pace 5 easy, 3 min race pace 3 easy, 1 min race pace 1 easy.		Remember a lot more packing of gear for a Tri so prepare early in the week.
	W	5x25 hard 75 easy continuous		30 mins L1 or rest	
	Th			45 mins with, 90 sec fast 90 easy, 60 fast 60 easy, 30 fast 30 easy	
	F				Rest possible easy 30 mins
	Sa			RACE	
	Su				

CONGRATULATIONS - YOU'RE NOW A TRIATHLETE!