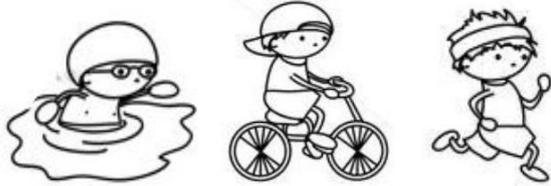


Somerset Try-a-Tri



*“The perfect
beginner’s triathlon!”*

TIPS Pt.1- HOW TO TRAIN FOR THE TRY-A TRI & SPRINT TRI

(The things beginners need to know)

This is article number 1 and as well as uploading it to our race website I'll be emailing it to all Try-a-Tri entrants and also to any entrants in the Sprint Distance event who indicated that it is going to be their first triathlon. Subsequent articles uploaded/emailed out to everyone will give info about Triathlon Transitions, Kit and Equipment, the Rules of Triathlon and finally your "Race Pack" with all that vital race day information.

As usual we are planning a Duathlon (running and cycling) in March and an Aquathlon (swimming and running) on April 21st as stepping stones to the Try-a-Tri which is on the last Sunday in May. These events will only cost £6.75 each as part of Triathlon England's "GO TRI" scheme. Details are at <http://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/multisport-events>

TRAINING FOR A TRY-A-TRI

Despite its name, the sport of triathlon actually includes four disciplines, not three. These are swimming, cycling, running and transition (the changeover from one sport to another). After writing an article about all 4 of these disciplines, I realised it was too much to digest all at once, so Transition will be covered in a separate message.

THE SWIM



The Try-a-Tri swim is 264 metres, or 8 lengths of the Portishead Open Air Pool (above). You can use any frontal stroke you like, but BTF rules do not permit backstroke. All you need to be able to do on race day is complete the distance without bumping into other swimmers or impeding them. There will be plenty of novice swimmers among the entrants so no-one will be judging your style.

Swimmers will be in lanes with others of a similar speed (according to the estimated swim times you have all submitted - you can send revised swim times up to late April if you find yourself getting faster in training).

Adult Improver sessions at your local pool are a good way to improve your swimming. Going to the pool twice a week is ideal - once a week to a lesson where you get some guidance, plus once a week on your own to practise what they have taught you. Having said that, if you go once a week on your own and swim 10 lengths or more without stopping, you should be ready for the race.

Training Aims:

1. Be able to swim approx. 250m (10 lengths of a standard leisure centre pool, or 5 of an Olympic pool) without feeling totally exhausted. Build up to this slowly but steadily with regular pool sessions of "lane swimming". If you have entered our longer "Sprint" event make that 400m (16 lengths of a standard pool or 8 of an Olympic size).
2. Get confident in a lane with other people by swimming at a busy time instead of having a lane all to yourself – get to know your natural swimming pace so you can avoid starting too fast on race day (the most common mistake beginners make).
3. Get to know what it's like to interact with other swimmers - overtaking them and/or being overtaken by them without losing your rhythm.
4. If possible, go to the race venue and have a practice swim there. Get used to the temperature, the size of the lanes and the process of getting in and out at the shallow end.
5. Confident swimmers who want to improve their speed can do the various "drills" (google "swim drills for triathletes" for more info) that improve technique, or get some coaching/advice from a swim instructor. Beginner's just need to work on the basics (points 1-4).

Do all that and nothing will phase you on race day!

THE BIKE



Training for the cycle section should be focused on building the confidence and fitness necessary to complete the 17km / 11 mile course (or 25k if you have chosen the Sprint Distance). There will be some hills, so get used to climbing economically in your training. That means getting up the hills without being "finished" when you reach the top.

With practice you'll learn how fast you can go, both on the flat and up hills, without the effort becoming unsustainable. If you don't have a cycle computer that measures your miles, see if your phone has a distance measuring GPS app on it. Or you can measure your training route in a car. More info about what type of bike to use will be included in a separate article, but so long as your bike is roadworthy, of a standard size and doesn't have fixed gear (meaning you cannot freewheel on it) you should be fine.

Training Aims:

1. Be able to cycle 17km/25km at a steady pace without feeling totally exhausted. On race day, you need to get off the bike with enough energy to run 4km/5km.
2. Starting out on cycle paths is fine, but you need to get comfortable around traffic as well as other cyclists. Graduate to the open road when you can.
3. Ride some hills. Don't "attack" them, just learn to get up them without being worn out at the top. It's normal to feel out of breath as you finish a climb, but you need to build your fitness up to the point where you can get your breath back again within a minute or two of reaching the top of a hill. In a triathlon race, you are allowed to dismount and push your bike up a hill if you need to, so long as you do so safely and without breaching the highway code.
4. When you feel confident on the road, why not get over to Portishead for a ride on the race route? You can find the route on the Map My Ride website and there is a course map on the race web site <http://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/triathlon>



THE RUN



The run is the simplest part of a triathlon, and in the Try-a-Tri it is only 4k (less than 3 miles). If you haven't done much running, or any running at all for that matter, remember the saying "don't try to run before you can walk". Most people start their running training that way - with brisk walking. Once you can walk briskly for half an hour, insert some short jogs into the middle section of your walking session, for example some 2-minute jogs interspersed with walking to get your breath back. Gradually increase the number of jogs and decrease the gaps between them - this will happen naturally as your fitness improves and your muscles get used to the activity.

I won't put a training program here, as there are plenty available online (just google "couch to 5k run program" or similar and you will find a few options). The Try-a-Tri course at Portishead is flat, so hill training for the run is not required.

If you are already a runner, the only thing unique to triathlon that you may want to practise is running straight after cycling. In the world of triathlon this is called "running off the bike".

To get the hang of running off the bike, you just need to cycle until you can feel some fatigue in your leg muscles, then get off the bike and run straight away. The muscles you use on the bike will be warmed up and have the blood flowing through them

nicely, while your different muscle groups used for running will be in the opposite state. The first part of the run can feel stiff and awkward. Practice helps your body get used to the change in activities, and it starts to feel easier. Training sessions of this kind that involve two or more sports are called "Brick Sessions" and are favoured by experienced triathletes. For a beginner they aren't strictly needed - just the icing on the cake.

Training Aims:

1. Get used to walking/jogging/running the full race distance of 4km/5km. If you want race practice, we have a 2-mile running event in Bristol every May - details are on our web site below - you don't need to enter in advance, you can just come along and enter the race on the night:

<http://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/races/bristol>

2. If you have time and feel your running is going well, practise running off the bike. A good way to get experience of that would be to enter our beginner's duathlon event at Tockington – see website <http://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/multisport-events>

I think that's enough info to hit newby triathletes with in one go - contact me if you want to clarify anything. Remember there is a lot of info about the course on our race web site shown below. The bit most new triathletes are baffled by is "Transition" but I will publish a separate guide to that soon, and I'm happy to answer your questions any time.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR TRAINING!!

<http://uk.srichinmoyraces.org/triathlon>

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