

Getting Ready for your First Tri!

By: Kim Boere, OES Coach, BS, CSCS, CPT, USA Triathlon Level 1 Coach

If you are reading this then you are probably already involved in some considerably challenging workouts and endurance events. You know as an endurance athlete the rewards and benefits of cross training. Or maybe you've been a cyclist for a while and have been considering a new challenge. Whatever your reason for considering the challenge of a triathlon, it takes a few steps to ensure a smooth and fun outcome. Read on and discover just how easy it is to get started.

1. Set a date—figure out what race you would like to shoot for and commit to it. Go to www.trifind.com or www.active.com for local events. Often the first step to doing anything new will be to gain an understanding of the event you are shooting for.
2. Schedule your workouts! Whether it's on Training Peaks or another on line system or a good old calendar, structure is important to ensure you are getting each sport in each week. You can get a lot accomplished in just 4 days per week. Be sure to focus on approximately 2 days per week of each sport as well as doubling up at least one day per week to prepare (also known as “Brick Workouts”).
3. Get your bike and get outside! This is the easy part if you already are cycling. If you are attempting a shorter (Sprint) triathlon and you are used to doing longer bike rides, you may need to switch up and do some higher intensity, short workouts to train for your specific event.
4. Get good running shoes and comfy gear-it's important! Many running stores will video tape you running to determine the best shoes for you. Clothing needs to be “tri” specific since there aren't any clothes changes in these events. Your gear needs to be able to go from water to bike to run!
5. Get help and coaching in your weaker areas. If you are inefficient in one of the three sports, get some guidance to build up and improve.
6. Swim in a lake at least once before the race! Often overlooking this component can really rattle you in a race when you are only used to swimming in a pool. Go with buddies for safety.
7. Focus on improving your strengths and get adequate at your weaker areas. Get great at the strengths and you'll have more fun. You can always get by on the weak areas but don't ignore them completely.
8. Participate in smaller races or running events to practice before the big event. Practice events can build confidence as well as allow you the space to review the logistics.
9. Drink plenty of water and eat for fuel! Planning out your fuel is critical to success. Get help if you are unsure how to approach nutrition planning.

10. Have fun, challenge yourself and smile when the photographer snaps your photo at the finish!

Much like any other athletic event or challenge, diving into Triathlon can be a smooth and successful addition with preparation and planning. When in doubt, always consult a coach for more personalized programming and answers for your specific needs. Whether you are attempting your first or twenty-first triathlon, multi sport training and racing offers a variety of new and exciting challenges. Remember that most of us are participating in sport for the fun and fulfillment it can bring. Enjoy!

Kim Boere, provides coaching through Optimize Endurance Services. Contact her at 321-217-7414 or kim@optimizeendurance.com