

# Training Tips from WVU Hospitals for the WVU Hospitals Sprint, Splash n' Spin Triathlon

Triathlon Date: August 26, 2006

Goal: to avoid injury, complete the entire triathlon, and to not finish last.

## Finish without injury

The goal of your first triathlon should be to finish, and to understand the event and all its stages. Plan to do your best, but don't feel bad if you finish in the second half of the pack. The goal of our training program will be to have your body and mind prepared to the extent that you can finish safely. Given 12 weeks of preparation, we should be able to have trained long enough and wisely enough so that you can make it through the event without major discomfort or muscle injury.

## Training

Your fitness level as you begin training for the triathlon can help determine a timeline for yourself. Consider your proficiency; also, in each of the three events (running, biking, and swimming), to figure out which aspects might take more time in training. If you are a fantastic runner and have little swimming experience, for example, consider spending more time in the water or on learning about how to swim comfortably.

If you're not a big fan of one of the components of the triathlon, find a partner, a club, or an instructional book that can help you perform better, get the most out of it, and enjoy it. Divide your time so that you maximize the benefits of your training. For your weakest portion, train more. Remember that triathlons usually cover different distances up to the full international triathlon distance of a 1.5K swim, 40K on the bike, and a 10K run. If you've chosen a triathlon, look at the different event distances and use your training time to build up to a fitness level at which you feel prepared to compete. The triathlon that you have chosen covers a 4 mile run, 10 mile bike, and 200 meter swim (4 laps at the Rec Center)

- Key Information:
  - Examine how much time you have during the week to train, and plan for it.
    - This may mean eating something small at 3:00 so you'll be able to come home and bike at 5:30 without hunger tempting you to skip it or postpone.
    - **AVOID FAST FOOD EAT COMPLEX CARBS**
      - Fast food tends to cause people to gain weight-in a triathlon you want to be as lean as possible. The more fat, the harder your body has to work.
    - As you begin, you should plan four to five hours of training in a week. Divide that however you choose, maintaining your own sense of balance with the three events, and increase it as your time and energy allow.
    - This amount of time includes **warming up, warming down, and stretching**, which are crucial for keeping your muscles primed for exercise and avoiding injury.
    - If you find yourself with an extra hour, go out and get in a workout
    - If you have minimal time, do a minimal workout -- it's always better to squeeze something in, as every step puts you closer to your goal.
  - **Invest in the right equipment.**
    - Good pair of running shoes that fit well and provide comfort and support are essential.
    - A pair of goggles will be necessary for the swim. A rubber or foam edge should provide a leak proof fit that fits firmly and comfortably around your eyes.

- Your bike, as long as it's properly maintained (i.e., sufficient air in the tires, gears oiled, chain functioning), does not have to be a \$1000 bike -- simple one that's comfortable for you to ride and manage, and in good enough condition to withstand your training and expectations.
  - The Fastest way to finish last in a cycling race is for your bike to have a mechanical problem. Remember to review your bike for problems or take your bike to a bike shop for maintenance 3-4 days prior to the event. Then ride your bike after it is maintained to make sure everything is working properly.
  - One equipment recommendation for your bike is an odometer that can show you your speed, RPM's, distance, and times. This will help you determine your pacing and to note improvements. (local bike shop)
  - A quality helmet (ANSI or SNELL approved) is imperative. You will not be allowed to compete without one.
  - Carry a water bottle mounted to the frame of your bike. Adequate hydration is essential to your performance. Water is typically provided during the run, but on the bike, you must be prepared with your own.
- Read some books about triathlon training (see amazon.com or Walden book store in the mall)
- Stay properly rested, fed, and hydrated. In the days approaching the event, eat complex carbohydrate-laden foods such as whole wheat pasta. These foods translate into high fuel levels, which you'll need as you compete in the triathlon.
- The standard eight glasses of water a day needs to increase due to your physical activity.
- Weigh yourself before and after a workout to determine how much water you're losing through sweat, and make sure it gets replenished fully.
- **Recovery**
  - Recovery is a key aspect to an endurance athlete. As you begin to get in shape, your recovery time will improve. Initially you will need about 72 hours to recover from a hard workout, and as your fitness levels improve, your muscles will adapt to the stress and repair themselves faster (48 hours).
- **Recovery Timing**
  - It's all in the timing. The initial recovery period is critical.
  - Recovery actually begins when the intense workout starts. An adequate warm-up primes your body for a hard workout and one that produces less damage. A 5-10 minute warm-up thins body fluids, opens capillaries, and releases fatty acids thus sparing glycogen-a precious fuel source that requires time to replenish.
  - Within the workout, drinking 16-24 ounces of sports drink containing carbohydrate and electrolytes every hour reduces stress on the cells and maintains energy levels
  - Then a 5-10 minute, gradual cool down that mirrors the warm-up returns all systems to normal and helps to remove the waste products of exercise, again speeding the restoration process.
  - The first 30 minutes following the cessation of a workout is critical. Your initial needs are for fluids, carbohydrate, and protein. All were used during the workout and the body is primed to absorb them now.
  - We tend not to think about needing protein at this time, but 8-10% of the energy expended may have come from this source. An intense hour of exercise could use 30 grams of protein-about the same as in a three-ounce can of tuna. If this protein is not provided, the body may begin cannibalizing muscle to meet its needs: Not a good situation.
  - Within two hours of finishing the workout, eat a meal also high in complex carbohydrates and protein.