

Toronto Triathlon Club Olympic Distance Triathlon Training Program

WHO IS THIS FOR??

This program is designed for the beginner athlete who has some triathlon or individual sport background and is looking to tackle a longer challenge. In order to be ready to start this program you should be able to comfortably complete the first week of training. If training levels in the first week of the program are not realistic for you at this point, we suggest you start with the sprint or try-a-tri program and progress to the Olympic distance when you get comfortable with those distances in all 3 sports.

THE PROGRAM

The goal of this program is to build up your endurance so that you can comfortably complete an Olympic distance triathlon. There will be some optional intensity included in the later stages for the more experienced athletes. The program will include a long swim, an endurance swim, a long ride, an endurance ride, a long run, an endurance run and a Brick (bike/run) workout.

EFFORT LEVEL

Below is a Perceived Exertion (PE) chart that can be used as a guide to judge the appropriate intensities in your workouts. The heart rate (HR) zones are based on lactate test results, for those interested in Lactate Testing please contact Nigel at nigel@nrgpt.com

PERCEIVED EXERTION CHART

PERCEIVED EXERTION	HR ZONE	DESCRIPTION
EASY	Z1	Warm up and warm down, very light effort, breathing is very light
	Z2	Comfortable training pace for long days, breathing again is very light
STEADY	Z3	This effort level can be maintained for an extended period of time but takes some focus, this is where you will first notice a deeper breathing pattern
MODERATELY HARD (Mod)	Z4	Tempo effort, takes greater focus to maintain the effort, breathing becomes deeper and more frequent and conversation starts to become difficult
HARD	Z5	This effort level makes conversation difficult and is mentally taxing, deep and frequent breathing pattern
VERY HARD	Z6	This effort level is very taxing and conversation will not be possible, the effort level will feel extremely challenging and you will have heavy, laboured breathing

For the beginner athlete the majority of your training should be spent at an **easy** to **steady** effort level. Hills will naturally provide some intensity and these efforts should be kept to a **moderately hard** intensity. This will help minimize the risk of injury and overtraining.

THE WORKOUTS

SWIMMING

A set of workouts for the entire program is included and detailed below.

WARM UP (WU) AND WARM DOWN (WD)

For all swim workouts the **warm up and warm down** are done while swimming at an **EASY pace (Z1-2)** and geared towards getting you ready for a bigger effort during the main set. This is also a good time to work on improving your technique. You should break the distance up into smaller, more manageable chunks. For example, 150 m could be done in 3 sets of 50 m. During the WU and WD you should rest as long as you need to, to feel ready to swim the next set comfortably. Be sure to include some **swim drills**¹ in your warm up and to work on proper technique.

MAIN SET (MS)

The main set of each workout is based on repetitive swim sets with a short rest after each. The key to swimming intervals properly is to only swim as hard as you can maintain good technique. If you feel like you are fighting the water then you are swimming too hard and wasting energy, slow down and focus on proper form. During the **MS** the rest period between each set is noted in (seconds). For example, 2x50 (15) would mean swimming 50, resting for 15 seconds and swimming another 50 again.

You will be doing 2 types of swim in your program.

- Day 1 is the **long swim**. The goal of this workout is to gradually build the distance you are able to swim continuously. The main sets of your workouts will be made up of longer intervals that are to be swum at a **steady to moderately hard**. So at the start of your main set the effort should feel relatively easy and as you get near the end of the main set the same pace will start to feel like a steady (Z3) effort.
- Day 4 or 5 is your **endurance swim**. This workout has slightly shorter intervals and should be swum a little bit harder (more **moderately hard** effort) than your long swim. The **MS** for this swim should be done at a mostly **moderate (Z4)** effort level. This workout is designed to increase the speed at which you can swim comfortably.
- Starting in build week 7 you have the option (if available) to start day 6 with an **open water swim** (you can start open water swimming in build week 4 also, follow the same time guidelines as if starting in week 7). The goal here is to get used to swimming in open water as it is very different to swimming in the pool. Never swim alone, always swim with a buddy for safety and wear a brightly colored swim cap to ensure you are visible in the water. You should stay near shore to increase your comfort level. If you are using a wetsuit then make sure you put it on properly, pulling it up as high as you can so that you get a little extra room in the shoulders to increase mobility. The keys with swimming in open water are being able to relax and swim straight. To practice swimming straight, pick a visible object (a large tree) and swim towards it, check how you straight you are after every 6 strokes. Focus on comfort and efficiency, not speed.
- You should always strive to maintain good form. Never swim so hard that your technique falls apart!!

¹ Swim drills (or stroke drills) are not described as part of your swimming workouts but you will find **XXX#** swim drills located in the Appendix of this training program. They are helpful but there is no sense in practicing a stroke drill if you are not performing it properly. The best way to make sure you are doing them correctly is to have someone with experience observing you. If there is a swim coach at your pool, hopefully they can analyze your stroke and let you know which of these drills to apply.

Swim Workouts

SWIM1

WU:100
MS:4x50(30)
WD:100
Total: 400

SWIM2

WU:150
MS: 1x100 (45), 5x50 (30)
WD:100
Total: 600

SWIM3

WU:100
MS:4x50(30)
WD:100
Total: 400

SWIM4

WU:200
MS:2x100 (45), 6x50 (30)
WD:100
Total: 800

SWIM5

WU:150
MS: 7x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 600

SWIM6 (recovery week)

WU:100
MS:4x50 (40)
WD:100
Total: 400

SWIM7 (recovery week)

WU:150
MS:3x50 (45)
WD:100
Total: 400

SWIM8

WU:100
MS:2x150 (60), 2x100 (40), 2x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 800

SWIM9

WU:100
MS:2x100 (35), 4x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 600

SWIM10

WU:200
MS:1x200 (60), 2x150 (45), 2x100 (35)
WD:100
Total: 1000

SWIM11

WU:150
MS:3x100(35), 5x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 800

SWIM12

WU: 200
MS: 2x200 (60), 2x150 (45), 2x100 (35)
WD: 100
Total: 1200

SWIM13

WU:150
MS:4x100 (35), 3x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 800

SWIM14 (recovery week)

WU: 150
MS: 3x50(45)
WD: 100
Total: 400

SWIM15 (recovery week)

WU:200
MS:6x50 (45)
WD:100
Total: 600

SWIM16

WU: 200
MS: 1x300 (60), 2x200 (50), 2x100 (35)
WD: 100
Total: 1200

SWIM17

WU:150
MS: 4x100 (35), 3x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 800

SWIM18

WU:300
MS:1x400 (60), 2x300 (50) 2x100 (35)
WD:100
Total: 1400

SWIM19

WU:150
MS:2x150 (45), 4x100 (35) 1x50 (25)
WD:100
Total: 1000

SWIM20

WU:200
MS:1x600 (60), 2x300(50), 1x100 (35)
WD:100
Total: 1600

SWIM21

WU:150
MS:3x150 (45), 4x100(35), 2x50(25)
WD:100
Total:1200

SWIM22 (recovery week)

WU:150
MS:3x50 (45)
WD:100
Total:400

SWIM23 (recovery swim)

WU:200
MS:6x50 (45)
WD:100
Total: 600

SWIM24

WU:200
MS: 1x800 (60), 1x300 (50), 1x200 (45)
WD:100
Total: 1600

SWIM25

WU: 200
MS: 2x200(45), 7x100 (30)
WD: 100
Total: 1600

SWIM26

WU:200
MS:1x1000 (60), 1x500 (45)
WD:100
Total:1600

CYCLING

WARM UP (WU) AND WARM DOWN (WD)

For all cycling workouts the **warm up and warm down** are done while riding at an **EASY pace (Z1-2)** the goal is to raise your heart rate and get your legs loosened up for the workout ahead.

WU: 15 minutes of **easy pace (Z1/2)** riding while slowly building to steady pace and focusing on good pedaling technique and high cadence (90-95 rpm). Make sure you warm up on flat terrain.

WD: You should warm down with easy pedaling (Z1-2) for 5-10 minutes nearing the end of your ride once again paying special attention to your technique and cadence

Main Set: Long Rides: easy to steady (Z2 to Z3)
Endurance ride: steady (Z3)

Please refer to the Perceived Exertion chart for descriptions of the effort felt for each zone.

Your program will use 2 types of cycling workouts:

- **Long ride:** This is your day 6 ride part of the brick workout. The goal of this ride is to gradually build the time (and distance) you are able to complete comfortably as your program progresses. You will ride a greater distance than your goal race but at an easier pace. The **main set** for your long rides are meant to be done at an **easy (Z2)** to **steady pace (Z3)**, with some **moderately hard (Z4)** efforts on the hills. This pace will require some focus to maintain for the duration but shouldn't leave you gasping for breath. When choosing a route pick one based on how you are feeling that day and your level of experience. If you are feeling energetic and are a more experienced athlete then choose a hilly route, the hills will then provide a natural increase in intensity to your ride. More beginner level athletes should choose flatter loops in order to first focus on completing the set out time in the program. Make sure to use your gears while riding and try to maintain a cadence of 80-100. Your cadence will drop on some steep hills, but make sure you use your easiest gears.
- **Endurance ride:** This is your day 3 ride. This ride should be on a flatter less challenging route. The goal of this ride to give you a comfortable time where you can easily keep a steady pace without pushing your limits in duration. It will build your aerobic and muscular endurance over the course of the program and allow you to become more comfortable and efficient on your bike as you spend more hours weekly in the saddle. The **main set** effort level for this ride should be **steady (Z3) effort**. The terrain will you choose will vary for different stages of your training. When choosing a hilly terrain try to choose a route with rolling hills or one or two long gradual hills.

RUNNING

WARM UP (WU) AND WARM DOWN (WD)

For all running workouts the **warm up and warm down** are done while running at an **EASY pace (Z1-2)** and geared towards getting you ready for a bigger effort during the main set. Make sure to start your runs on flat terrain.

WU: 10-15 minutes of **easy pace (Z1/2)** jogging while slowly building to steady pace and focusing on high cadence (85-90 cycles).

WD: You should warm down with easy **jogging (Z1-2)** for 5-10 minutes nearing the end of your run once again paying special attention to your cadence

Please refer to the Perceived Exertion chart for descriptions of the effort felt for each zone.

- **Long run:** The goal of this run is to gradually build the distance you are able to complete comfortably as your program progresses. You will run a greater distance than your goal race but at an easier pace. The long runs should be done at an **easy (Z2) to steady pace (Z3)** with some **moderately hard (Z4)** efforts on the hills. This pace will require some focus to maintain for the duration but shouldn't leave you gasping for breath. Hills are what will provide some variable intensity to your program. For a beginner athlete or someone who is finding just completing the time set out in the program a challenge, choose a flatter route. For more experienced athletes feel free to choose a hilly route to add some challenge and intensity to this run (again the hills are to be run **moderately hard**, not hard!). When choosing hilly terrain try to choose a route with rolling hills or one or two longish gradual hills as opposed to many short steep hills. Strive to keep your foot turnover high (avg. 85-90 cycles (right foot strikes)/min).
- **Endurance run:** The goal of this run to give you a comfortable distance where you can easily keep a **steady pace (Z3)** without pushing your limits in duration. It will build your aerobic and muscular endurance over the course of the program and allow you to become more comfortable with your race distance on various terrains. The pace for this run should be **steady (Z3) effort**. The terrain will you choose will vary depending on your preference. When choosing a hilly terrain try to choose a route with easy rolling hills or one or two long gradual hills.

BRICKS

Bricks are a very important part of triathlon training and they are sometimes overlooked. Bricks refer to training on two disciplines during the same workout, one after the other with minimal or no interruption in between, just as you would do in a race. Usually when people talk about bricks they refer to a bike/run workout, but bricks could also refer to a swim/bike workout.

The most commonly practiced Brick workouts are the bike/run bricks, mainly because the transition between bike and run is the tougher of the two during a triathlon. When you stop biking and start running your legs can feel "like bricks (hence the name!)". This feeling is more pronounced at the start of the run and your legs usually get better as time passes. Brick workouts help shorten the time your legs take to start feeling more normal thus allowing you to run better and faster.

Brick workouts will include a **WU period building from Z1 to Z2/3 for 10-15 minutes in the first sport** of your brick (The bike for the Bike/run bricks and the swim for the Swim/bike/run bricks). Your transition from one sport to the next should be organized and done as quickly as possible this is practicing for race day, don't rush through your transition but make sure you have thought it out ahead of time to make it as smooth as possible. Near the end of your run you will include a **5 minute gradual WD from Z3 to Z1 effort** focusing on good technique and fast turnover of the legs.

- **Day 2 Brick:** The goal of this workout is to develop your ability to run well off the bike. For the beginner athlete, the focus here is to just get used to running after having ridden. The key is to start off slow on the run, don't go flying out of transition. Your legs may feel heavy to start but will get better as you warm up on the run. For the more experienced athlete some intensity can be added to this workout. In order to determine if you are ready for some intensity you should be injury free and able to comfortably complete all of your hours of training in the week. After warming up on the bike you can add in 15-20min of **moderately hard (Z4)** effort level, then on the run you can build your effort over the first 5min (don't go sprinting off the bike) to a **moderately hard (Z4)** effort and hold this for 5-10min. When it comes to intensity you need to be careful as this is where injury and overtraining are most likely to occur. You should always finish feeling like you can do more!
- **Day 6 Brick:** The main focus of this workout is the long ride, the swim and run are used as an opportunity to get used to doing all 3 sports in a row. The main focus is the same as the long ride description above, while the swim and the run should be done **easy (Z1/2)** to **steady (Z3)** effort levels.