Triathlon Insider Secrets

Tips From the Pros to Help You Shave Time Off Your Next Triathlon

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Congratulations! You’ve dedicated many hours of your free time to training, pushing your body to the limit all while improving your speed, time, power and fitness levels. Because of your unstoppable energy and desire to take your newfound abilities to the next level, you’ve signed up for or are considering doing your 1st, 2nd or even 20th triathlon. You’re about to embark on one of the most incredible journeys of your life, and we want to be with you every step of the way so that this next race turns into one of the many triumphs you’ll go on to accomplish.

At Clever Training, our goal is not just to hunt down and bring you the most cutting-edge fitness tools on the market, but to provide valuable resources that help you make informed decisions regarding nutrition, exercise, and workout gear. With so many of our followers taking their passion for running, cycling and/or swimming to the next level, we felt it only appropriate to kick our own resources into higher gear and give you an informative step-by-step guide, filled with helpful how-to’s and invaluable advice from athletes who’ve been racing and honing their sport for years.

“A Triathlon doesn’t build character. It reveals it.” – Unknown
You’ll get priceless advice from the following experts:

- Founding Member of the USA Triathlon National Coaching Commission, Cyle Sage
- Competitive triathlete & CrossFit Trainer, Matt Kinback
- Pro triathlete and Team RWB National Triathlon Team Director, Brad Williams
- Triathlon gear guru & tester, Ray Maker (of www.dcrainmaker.com)
- Triathlete coach, Hank Campbell
- Yoga instructor, Sharon Denton

Our inspiring ambassadors share with you what to expect on race day and what you need to do now so you show up as prepared as possible, anticipating any problems you might encounter along the way and offering up invaluable guidance. They even reflect on their own past mistakes so you won’t make the same! (Plus, be sure check out their favorite workouts).

As you’ll see from our list of contributors and table of contents, we’re covering everything from fool-proof swim techniques and running form to no-fail transitional tips. We even include guidance from our favorite yogi Sharon Denton, who walks you through muscle-soothing stretches that release lactic acid build-up to prevent injury and keep you on schedule.

While this Quick Guide is intentionally compact, providing only the most vital information you need along your journey, we suggest perusing our entire guide once. Then, take each chapter at a time so you can focus on mastering those specific practices before moving on.

We know you are anxious to get started, so without further delay, Ready, Set, GO!

Your Friends at

Clever Training
Many people claim that “swimming is hard” or “it’s the worst of my 3 disciplines!” I am here to tell you that it doesn’t have to be. You can be a successful swimmer just by following these simple steps:

**ALIGNMENT:** Keep your head in line with your torso and look at a 45-degree angle, focusing on the bottom but in a way that you can still see the water line with a small adjustment of your eyes. Be careful not to look too far up, as this will cause a drop in your hips and legs.
**FLOTATION:** Apply a slight amount of downward pressure to your head and chest to elevate your lower half. Think of your body like a seesaw. Your goal is to balance that seesaw out perfectly. From here you will realize your kick doesn’t have to be so hard and elongated. Rather it can be short, quick and propel you forward.

**BREATHING:** A common mistake is to look forward, raise your head and take a deep breath, as opposed to rolling onto your side, aligning your chin and your shoulder and slightly rolling your head until your mouth clears the water line. Think of yourself resting your head on the water and only allowing one eye and half of your mouth to breach the surface. While your face is in the water, you need to continuously exhale.
**ROTATION:** Let your body weight shift from side-to-side from your center line. This forces the body to be more streamlined through the water.

**HIGH ELBOW:** When swimming the freestyle, consciously think about flexing your arm and keeping your elbow high and out of the water. Once your arm exits the water, drag your fingers across the surface and extend your arm, but not completely – keep a slight bend in your elbow, only fully extending your reach once your arm is under water.

**FLUTTER KICK:** The idea of the flutter kick is to provide forward momentum and balance. The downward motion of the kick should coincide with the downward motion of the arm on that same side. The kick has a downward movement and an upward movement. The downward movement is started by flexing the leg at the hip. Following that, the knee bends a little and the foot flexes. In the second part of the down movement, the hip locks into place and the knee is extended, all while keeping the foot pointed. The upward movement is initiated when the knee is still extended. While the leg moves upward, the water pressure against the leg will extend it and the foot will move to a neutral position.

**OPEN WATER SIGHTING:** When you get into a race or an open water swim, the water will typically be dark, making it hard to see where you’re going. The proper technique for swimming in a straight line from point A to point B in open water is to ‘sight.’ As opposed to breathing left or right when you take a stroke, you need to raise your head and look forward. With every stoke and lift of your head, be sure to find and focus on the buoy that you are headed to next. This is a good skill to practice in a pool where you can see exactly where you’re going, then you can apply it to your open water technique!
CYLE'S SUGGESTED WORKOUTS:
This workout should be done once a week. Other swim workouts can be added as needed to support your swimming efficiency, endurance and technique.

**Olympic Race Specific:** A Broken 1500 meters Freestyle
• STANDARD WARM-UP of 600 to 1200 yds/mtrs depending on time, ability, need.
• 10 X 50 YDS/MTRS done on an "interval" that allows you 3 to 5 seconds rest (80% effort).
• 100 EASY KICK/DRILL
• 500 PULL OR SWIM at planned 1500 race pace time. Swim here should feel "long and strong" focus on stroke count and technique. Note: Are you taking the same number of strokes per 50 all the way through the swim?
• 100 EASY KICK/DRILL
• 5 X 100 DESCEND on an interval that provides at least 20 seconds rest.
• STANDARD COOL-DOWN 400 to 600 yds/mtrs of drills, (kicking after main set is encouraged).

Example:
5 x 100 on 1:45 Pace
1st 100 at EASY SPEED (60% effort or less).
2nd 100 at AEROBIC TEMPO (75% effort).
3rd 100 at TEMPO (85% effort).
4th 100 at GETTING AFTER IT OR HIGH TEMPO (95 % effort, but you still have something left).
5th 100 is SWIMMING FOR GOLD (100% effort).

**Ironman Race Specific:**
12 x 100 (in place of the 10 x 50).
1200 pull or swim (in place of the 500).
4 x 300 descend (in place of 5 x 100 descend).
200 easy in between each set.

**Sprint Race Specific:**
8 x 25 9in place of the 10 x 50).
200 straight pull or swim (in place of 500 straight).
4 x 50 descend effort (in place of the 5 x 100 descend).
50 easy between each set.

**WHAT I’VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY:**
Training throughout my career I find that one of the most important things to learn is that you should have swimming "gears," so to speak. Most of us train and race at one speed or two speeds, but we should have at least 4 to 5 speeds, and work in different training zones. For instance, when swimming your descend set, each 100 should be 4 to 6 seconds faster than your last. This set should really give you an idea of what your capable of on race day.
Cyle has been a lifelong swimmer and competitive triathlete. He was a founding member of USA Triathlon National Coaching Commission and served as USAT First Athlete Development Director. He was twice recognized by the US Olympic Committee as the Developmental Coach of the Year for Triathlon (1998-1999) and by the American Swimming Coaches Association for Outstanding Achievement (2006). As an athlete, Cyle has won two National Amateur Sprint Championships and has represented the US as a member of the Pan American Team (1997) and in four world Championship teams. He has also served as Captain of the US Navy Triathlon Team, in addition to being a Tennessee High School State Swimming Champion and NCAA Divisional swimmer. Today, Cyle represents On Running, a rapidly growing shoe and apparel brand out of Switzerland, and continues to be involved in directing and coordinating triathlon and adventure races.
Becoming a better cyclist is not about buying the most expensive gear and wearing the “coolest” kits. It is actually a lot cheaper and easier than that. In fact, it’s as easy as going out and pedaling your bike, a little, a lot, or even just occasionally. By going out and turning the pedals, you will improve; the more frequently and the longer you do it, the greater the progress you will see. Hopefully by turning the pedals and following the tips below, you will start to see improvements and start to enjoy cycling just a little bit more.
TIP 1: PRE-RIDE SAFETY CHECK
Before heading out on a ride, you should check over your bike and equipment to ensure it is safe for the ride.

Checklist:
✓ Tire Pressure between 95-115 psi?
✓ Do your wheels spin straight and not rub the brakes?
✓ When you grab your front brake and rock your bike, is there movement in the front end? If so, you need to tighten your headset.
✓ Is your helmet strap tight? Can you fit no more than 2 fingers between your strap and chin? If you can fit more, you need to tighten the strap.
✓ Do you have enough hydration and food for the duration of your ride? If riding longer than 2 hours, do you have a way to refill and restock your food supply?
✓ Do you have a form of identification with you? (ID Card, RoadID, Identification Bracelet)

TIP 2: WARM-UP
When heading out for a ride that is going to include any intensity, ensure you get a warm-up in. For the first 15-30 minutes of the ride, you should ride easy, or what I will call “conversation pace”. You should be able to converse with anyone that you are riding with and your heart rate should remain relatively low.

If you are attending a ride with friends and the ride is known to start out hard and fast, consider actually riding there or getting there early to spin easy before the start of the ride. There is nothing worse than showing up and hitting a wall at the beginning. That is, unless you want to be trailing behind away from the group and riding by yourself.

TIP 3: NUTRITION/HYDRATION
 Probably two of the most overlooked things in endurance sports are hydration and nutrition. Athletes train hard, put in the work, and then when it comes time for a big event or race, they fail. Often times it comes down to not eating and drinking properly. I recommend that you drink at least 1 bottle of fluid per 45-60 minutes of riding and consume at least 100 calories every 45 mins. The longer the event, the more you should intake per hour in terms of calories. Hydration is very dependent upon the weather conditions and your personal sweat rate. But at a minimum, 1 bottle per hour even if it is cold or cooler out.

TIP 4: ADDICTING, ISN’T IT?
Once you get addicted to the amazing sport of cycling (which, of course, is inevitable), you are bound to want to purchase all of the latest and greatest gadgets. You may start thinking that the more money you spend, the faster you will get. While that’s true to a point, spending your money in the right places may take you to new levels in the sport. My top 3 recommendations when you want to get serious about racing and start to move up the ranks: Ensure you have a tight fitting racing kit, look around and invest in a cycling coach, and lastly, find a power meter that is within your budget.
WHAT I’VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY:

On my very first century ride (100 miles), which was also my first time being “clipped in” with pedals, I learned something the hard way. I put the pedals on the night before and showed up to the group ride with very little practice. We hadn’t stopped within the first 25 miles, and we pulled up to a stop light with our group of 20 people, slowly rolling to a stop. I unclipped my left foot but then started leaning to the right. In the middle of the group, I fell over and was laying on my back like a flipped over turtle. Pretty embarrassing, to say the least. Lesson learned: always practice clipping in before you show up to a group ride. My advice is to go find a grass field and practice there; it hurts a lot less than falling on concrete. Now when I assist with triathlon camps, the first time on the bike, we spend 2 hours in a grass field going over drills, one of which is clipping in.

BRAD’S FAVORITE WORKOUTS:

Cyclist Specific:
• 15-30 min Warm-up
• 15 min at “Tempo” 75-84% Functional Threshold Power (FTP) or 84-94% Heart Rate
• 2x20 min at 83-97% Functional Threshold • Power (FTP) or 94-95% Heart Rate
• 10-30 min Cool-down

Triathlon Specific:
• 30 min Warm-up
• 30 min at IRONMAN Effort (an effort that you would be able to sustain for 112 miles)
• 30 min at 70.3 Effort (an effort that you would be able to sustain for 56 miles)
• 30 min at Olympic Effort (an effort that you would be able to sustain for 24.8 miles—this should be the hardest part of the workout)
• 15 min Cool-down
Brad will be starting his eighth year of competing in Triathlons. In 2011, Brad turned his focus to long course triathlons and set out to qualify for the IRONMAN World Championships. Under the guidance of Scott DeFilippis, Brad qualified at his first attempt (IRONMAN Korea). Fast forward 3 years, and Brad was back to Kona for the fourth time in 2014. He qualified for his elite license twice in 2013: at the Nautica South Beach Triathlon and at Vineman 70.3. In 2014, he qualified at Challenge New Albany. Brad raced primarily as an Age Group athlete that year. After a tough day at the 2014 IRONMAN World Championships, he bounced back to make his pro debut at the Ocean Lava Triathlon / Spanish Long Course National Championships and finish as 8th Professional. Brad also served in the U.S. Airforce for 10 years and he's currently the Team RWB National Triathlon Team Director. Want to follow Brad? Check him out here:

Website: www.bw-tri.com
Twitter: @BW_Tri
Instagram: BW_Tri
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Almost anyone can run like their life depends on it, but endurance running is a whole different road – and one far less traveled. You’re no longer in zombie or turkey trot mode – now you’re transitioning to a longer trail that’s literally double the distance of what you may be used to running. Before you begin tinkering with your tempo, there are a few things you need to know to up your distance game.

On the surface, running seems as natural to the body as blinking. Think about it: unlike learning to swim or ride a bike, no one ever taught you how to run…you just knew through instinct. Proper form, however, is not just key for injury prevention and running longevity, but triathlon success – particularly one of Olympic proportions. In fact, the biggest mistake you can make as a runner can make is to assume you have naturally perfect posture – chances are, you don’t. Yet...
STEP 1: FORM

When it comes to running, think head to toe: every part of your body is active and must be in correct alignment to keep you at optimal performance from start to finish. Let’s begin with your top half where it all begins.

See page 16 for step by step instructions.

STEP 2: THE FALL

Use gravity to your advantage! Allow the force of gravity to pull you from one pose to the next. A slight lean forward, initiated at the ankle not the hip!

STEP 3: BODY IN MOTION

Pull whatever foot is supporting your body up to your butt. Utilize your hamstring, making sure your knees are pointing down and your hips follow a line up to your hip. Think of the piston example. Straight up, straight down. Allow your fall to keep you moving forward.
BODY ALIGNMENT

HEAD: How often do you look down at your feet when you run? If you find yourself staring more toward the ground, that’s the first indication that your form is OFF. Remember the phrase “dead ahead” when it comes to your noggin and focus on what is in front of you. Continue to look ahead - your feet will catch you...I promise!

SHOULDERS: When it comes to shoulders, think neutral: shoulders back and elbows in. Your shoulders should stay loose and unencumbered, rather than hunched toward your ears. Do you feel really tense up top? Utilize a foam roller to release your thoracic spine. Roll out regularly until you feel your shoulders relax and don’t slide up close to your ears! Shoulders back, head forward, and just remember: loose and limber wins the race.

ARMS: Your arm swing should originate from the shoulder, moving back to front (NOT SIDE TO SIDE!) in conjunction with your legs, with your elbows bent at a 90 degree angle. Your mechanics should flow from your shoulder all the way down to your hand. Since you don’t want to increase tension by stretching your fingers out straight, imagine yourself holding a potato chip between your thumb and index finger; DON’T CRUSH your chip! Follow these tips and you’ll reduce tension build-up in your shoulders. Remember: the posture of your arms dictates the tension throughout your upper body.

TORSO & HIPS: Your mid-body is where everything will start to really sync, and you’ll realize that with enough practice, proper form really IS innate. Think about it: with your head gazing dead ahead, shoulders low and limber, and arms moving in-sync with your legs, your torso and back will stay naturally aligned and upright, encouraging ideal breathing. A raised torso encourages straightened hips (since you DO NOT want them tilting forward like you’re going to pounce the ground) and now you’re well on your way to a perfect running gait.

LEGS: This next part cannot be stressed enough: a short stride is crucial to endurance running. While a longer, more explosive stride is necessary for sprinting, long distance events require a shorter stride with quicker leg turnover to conserve energy. Picture this: your knees bend slightly with each push off, with your feet landing underneath your body and your lower legs out of your eye span. Think of your legs like a piston: with every push there is a counter acting pull. Push/pull, push/pull, striking the ground on the balls of your feet. If you can actually see your lower legs striding out in front of you, your stride is too long.

FEET & ANKLES: You’re not off the hook yet! Push off and landing pressure is imperative to a long-lasting, energy-filled run. Remember: PUSH off with your midfoot and then roll toward your toes. Land lightly with your whole foot flat, positioning your weight on the ball of your foot. In other words, exert force into your spring, gaining momentum as your roll toward the tips of your toes, but land softly, with a give and take between toes and the heel-mid-foot region.

TIP
Think of your running position as a number “4”. When you make impact with the ground, your ear, shoulder, hip and ankle should all be in line.
WHAT I’VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY:
Pacing a race is CRITICAL! I came out of college, a young 21-year-old ready to take on the world! I signed up for my first marathon with minimal true marathon training, but I assumed my 8k college race training would carry over. WRONG. I started the NYC Marathon at a 6-minute pace through the first 13 miles. As you can imagine, the 5-mile races I was used to are significantly shorter than a 26-mile race, so the ‘wheels started to come off,’ so to speak! Significantly dropping my pace and seriously struggling through the last 13 miles, I finished at a 2:57 and ended up in the medical tent. LESSON LEARNED! 1) Putting in the proper amount of training for any sort of race is critical and 2) Pacing yourself is even more important. As the athlete, you need to learn to read your body and know what you are capable of, which is what training sessions are really for.

MATT’S WORKOUT
INTERVAL TRAINING FOR 10K RACING

- 400 m warm up
- 10 mins of running drills concentrating on body alignment
- 800 m Run 1:1 Work:Rest
- 1 mile Run 1:1 Work:Rest
- 800 m Run 1:1 Work:Rest
- 1 mile Run 1:1 Work:Rest
- 800 m Run 1:1 Work:Rest
- 4 min rest
- 10 X 100m sprints on 30 seconds

Interval training once a week is a great way to force your body to learn optimal running efficiency while also improving anaerobic capacity. The workout above is a sample interval workout Matt has used to prepare for 10k races. All intervals were performed at goal 10k pace and include a rest period equal to the completion time for each interval.
Matt Kinback was a former Division 1 Cross Country and Track athlete at Providence College and has been a competitive runner and swimmer since the age of 8. Shortly after his college career, Matt ran his first Marathon in New York City in 2007. After accomplishing this goal, he transitioned into a newfound passion of competitive Triathlons. His interest sparked when he completed his first Olympic distance triathlon in New York City in 2009 with a time of 2 hours, 3 minutes. Matt continued to train and race, setting a personal record in 2012 at the Ironman 70.3 in Florida with a time of 4 hours, 29 minutes. Shortly after this race, he was introduced to Crossfit and transitioned into this new sport. Today, Matt still runs regularly, participates in Crossfit events, enters in an occasional triathlon and enjoys coaching others on running, form and endurance training. He is also a Crossfit Endurance Coach at TAS Crossfit in Tampa, Florida.
Generally speaking the first two modes (sport modes and multisport mode) are considered requirements for a triathlon watch. But many people will use non-triathlon watches when they first start out in the sport. This is because the large majority may come from a running background and already have a running GPS watch. In this case, you can definitely use such a watch, you’ll just want to determine in a race whether or not to record the entire portion or just the bike and run portions. Without an open water swim mode, most will get inaccurate results in the water due to loss of GPS signal while underwater (open water swim modes are designed to accommodate this issue).

While anyone can compete in and complete a triathlon successfully without a triathlon watch, many people these days find a triathlon-focused watch to be an incredibly useful tool in training and racing. Specifically, they can help you follow a training or race plan when it comes to pacing – such as hitting a specific heart rate zone or running a specific pace.

Triathlon watches are primarily GPS based, containing a GPS chip inside that displays and records your speed & pace, as well as your distance, times, and splits. Most will also record elevation data and connect to sensors like heart rate straps and cycling accessories.

### TRIATHLON WATCH GUIDE

#### DIFFERENT SPORT MODES:

This means the unit has a specific mode for cycling and running and often times even pool (lap) swimming and open water swimming.

#### MULTISPORT MODE:

This is probably the most important feature, as it allows you to automatically switch from sport to sport (i.e. swimming to cycling to running) during a race. This is typically done with the touch of a button.

#### A QUICK RELEASE SYSTEM

While fewer watches have this, it can be valuable to some – as it allows you to quickly snap the watch from your wrist to your bike, putting it in a more visible location on the handlebars. Then as you finish up the bike segment, you can quickly move it back to your wrist – all without wasting valuable time undoing the wrist strap.
When looking at GPS watches that cater to triathletes, there are essentially four major brands that are globally available, with the following models available:

- **Garmin**: Forerunner 910XT, Forerunner 920XT, fenix®2/Special Edition, fenix®3, epix™
- **Polar**: V800
- **Suunto**: Suunto Ambit 2/2s, Suunto Ambit 3
- **TomTom**: Multisport & Cardio GPS watches

There are also slightly older versions of Garmin devices prior to the FR910XT (such as the FR310XT) that are quite capable. However, some of these models - such as in the case of the FR310XT - lack an indoor swimming mode. This mode enables you to count laps at the pool – all without having to do mental math.

All of the four manufacturers above make very solid triathlon devices. In the case of Garmin, Polar, and Suunto – all three companies include sport modes for swim/bike/run (both indoors and outdoors). And all three of those companies also include a multisport mode in all of the units noted above.

With TomTom, they do not have a multisport mode, nor do they support open water swimming. On the flip side, their TomTom Cardio line-up does have optical heart rate recognition directly at the wrist – meaning you don’t need to wear a heart rate strap to see your heart rate (beats per minute). While this is certainly appealing for running, it’s less practical for cycling (and not enabled it all during swimming). Thus if you’re on a budget, I’d recommend going with a budget Garmin or Suunto device instead (Polar’s devices are a bit more expensive), primarily because they allow you to train in all three sports as required, whereas the TomTom limits you a little bit in the different sports.

Speaking of price, most triathlon watches are a bit more pricey than regular GPS running watches. This is in largely part due to the usually significantly larger feature set. However, the good news there is that both Garmin and Suunto have very good units that are just a tiny bit older but still contain more than enough functionality for any triathlete:

- **Garmin: Forerunner 910XT**
- **Suunto: Ambit 2/2S**

Both of these units include all of the basics like swim tracking (indoor/outdoor), cycling (indoor/outdoor), and running (indoor/outdoor). And in all those sports modes they do a great job. Ultimately, their newer siblings are built largely on the same software base as these earlier units.
Where the older units tend to lack features compared to the newer devices is around mobile phone connectivity and daily activity tracking (i.e. steps and sleep tracking). Both of those areas have really only hit the market in the last 12-18 months and require additional new hardware to function (accelerometers and Bluetooth Smart chips). Thus, it's not just a case of simple software update for the older units.

Looking at the FR910XT and the Ambit 2 series, perhaps the best deal tends to be the Ambit 2S (price fluctuate of course). The reason being that the Ambit 2S generally tends to be the cheaper of the two options and also has an indoor treadmill running mode that the FR910XT lacks. On the flip side, the FR910XT has far deeper structured workout and training options. That means if you want to follow a specific downloadable training plan, the Garmin lineup tends to be a better option.

But what about the higher end units that cost more? Well, there's little disagreement that the Garmin FR920XT is the best all-around triathlon watch. It contains all of the latest bells and whistles such as live tracking (so your family/friends can follow your training/location live via a link), as well as functions like step/activity tracking and Bluetooth Smart connectivity direct to your phone. Further, it has a quick release kit – something that Garmin's fenix®3 and apex™ series units lack (though they have unique features more suited to hiking, if you happen to split your non-triathlon time that way). All three of these watches share the same identical triathlon features, it’s just that the fenix®3 and epix™ also have additional hiking/navigation/map functionality that appeals to a slightly different crowd.

From Suunto and Polar, there is the Suunto Ambit 3 and Polar V800. Both are solid offerings, though most would give the Ambit 3 the slight edge, primarily due to slightly better software integration with 3rd party apps (like Strava). Interestingly, both the Ambit 3 and the Polar V800 also support recording of heart rate data during swimming from a heart rate strap, a feature that Garmin currently lacks. In the case of Polar, that heart rate data is displayed live on the watch, whereas with Suunto, the watch syncs with the strap as you complete your swim session, effectively making the data available for review after each set/swim.

Note, however, that heart rate straps can be tricky business while swimming laps in a pool – especially for men. That's because when you push off each end of the pool the water pressure tends to push the strap down your chest to your waist. For most guys, it only takes a few laps to have the strap acting more like a belt. While there are some tricks that you can employ (like twisting the strap or significantly tightening it) – most of these are short lasting.
HEART RATE STRAPS:
These are pretty much the same across the board – simply look to get a dual ANT+/Bluetooth Smart model. Also, you can look at optical sensors (such as the Scosche Rhythm+, which attach to your upper arm).

CYCLING SPEED/CADENCE SENSORS:
These sensors transmit your cycling pedaling revolutions per minute (RPM – cadence), and speed primarily while indoors (speed sensors). In the vast majority of cases outdoors, GPS-based speed is more than sufficient for triathletes.

CYCLING POWER METERS:
These devices measure your cycling power, which is an indicator of how much force you’re exerting onto your pedals. This is a more advanced sensor type, but prices have fallen in the last year, starting at around $500 USD.

RUNNING STRIDE SENSOR (FOOTPOD):
These sensors are used to gather pace and distance while indoors, such as on a treadmill. While most watches these days will do this internal to the watch using accelerometers, they tend not to be terribly accurate. Thus, if you do a lot of treadmill training, you may want to pickup a running footpod.

As for heart rate straps in general, all of the watches here support heart rate data via heart rate straps above water. Most triathletes will wear the heart rate strap under their triathlon suit within the race. All heart rate straps made today are completely waterproof, even if the heart rate signal data can’t penetrate water far enough to reach your watch. Once you exit the swim, the watch will automatically pick up the signal from your heart rate strap.

Which brings us to the last item: other sensors/accessories. There are essentially two common standards for wireless sensors today within the sports technology world: ANT+ and Bluetooth Smart.

Bluetooth Smart is more commonly used with phone-based apps, as well as some newer watch devices like the Suunto Ambit3 and Polar V800 (past Suunto devices have used ANT+). ANT+ is more widely used on the cycling side and with all of the Garmin devices. From a power usage and functionality perspective, both protocols are fairly similar. Unfortunately, there are no triathlon watches that offer support of both protocols. However, there are sensors that offer dual ANT+/Bluetooth Smart support. This means that if you buy a sensor – be sure to buy one that’s dual ANT+/Bluetooth Smart, which ‘future proofs’ you to use your sensor with any watch vendor out there (or phone app).
Of course, none of these sensors are truly required. But they do help you to match your perceived effort to a known effort level – especially useful for training and then ultimately in racing to match your race-day performance to a predetermined race plan.

Like any piece of technology, these won’t do the hard work for you. Instead, they’ll make you better and more focused by ensuring that you’re getting the most out of your training. For example, they can help you minimize overtraining or alternatively tell you when you’re not pushing hard enough. They are more than just tools that help you advance forward; they can often also provide motivation to keep training well beyond just your first triathlon.

RAY MAKER

- Well known for his in-depth athletic gear review blog www.DCRainmaker.com
- Has reviewed several hundred running, cycling and swimming products
- Triathlete, marathon runner and cyclist
- Childhood Skier
- Day Job: Computer Designer Microsoft

Ray grew up in Seattle, Washington and ski raced pretty competitively as a kid. Training for that somehow led to running cross-country his freshman year of high school. After his freshman year, he decided that running was a miserable way his spend his time and proceeded to not run for another 10 years or so (really, no running!).

During those ten years, he used to his spare time to delve into technology and travel. He eventually ended up graduating high school straight into the world of technology, consulting for large organizations (and traveling up to 52 weeks a year). To this day, Ray still designs computer networks and systems and still travels a lot. Many of you will recognize Ray from his highly visited blog www.DCRainmaker.com where he is known for his scrupulous reviews on countless fitness products!
Trick question that I always enjoy asking beginner triathletes is: “How many disciplines are there in a triathlon?” Most respond with three: The base sports of swimming, biking, and running. However, transitions can be considered the fourth sport of triathlon. A race can be won or lost in the Transition Area (TA). Almost any experienced racer can tell you a story of getting beat by just a few seconds to a rival and many times those seconds can be relegated to the TA. Here are some tips to help you navigate and begin the foundations for improvement as you grow in the sport.

**It’s always important not to rush.**
It’s better to sacrifice 5 seconds of safely navigating your way through the TA than it is to spend minutes spilled over on the ground. Tripping over an obstacle that you missed in your haste or forgetting your shoes, helmet or race belt are costly mistakes that can be easily avoided.

**Practice what you do & do what you practice.**
It’s critically important to have a focused and confident attitude going into these transitions to assure they’re successful. Knowing what to expect can provide calmness and clarity in an otherwise “loud” environment. For example, I’ve witnessed an athlete performing a ‘flying mount’ or ‘flying dismount’ for THE VERY FIRST TIME in a race and it usually ends in disaster! If you’ve never run in your bike shoes to the bike mount line, you could be setting yourself up for at least a slip on the pavement or grass, OR you could be setting yourself up for a serious injury.
PRACTICE THE COURSE FLOW OF TRANSITION ONE & TRANSITION TWO.

There are many different types of transition areas just like there are many different triathlons. For example, your local sprint triathlon put on by the rotary club will most likely have a smaller and less crowded transition area than any 70.3 IRONMAN race. The latter can stretch for hundreds of yards and have thousands of bikes crammed together. In both situations, however, it is critical that you know the layout, think ahead and deal with any unforeseen circumstances with calmness yet urgency. At every race you do, on the day before and the morning of the race, you should walk or jog from the swim exit to your spot in the transition area, making mental cues of where to go and how to navigate. Then do the same for both exits from the TA that you will bike out and run out respectively. For example; “I’m on the third row in and fifth rack down on the right.” Also, knowing your race number is vital in case of any confusion.

BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING TO GO WRONG & DEAL WITH IT.

For example, in 2005 at the St. Anthony’s triathlon, I arrived to my rack to find my bike down on the ground and my helmet missing! Someone before me had knocked it over! So, I quickly located my helmet, put it on, then grabbed my bike and was able to do a very quick check to make sure the brakes and gears functioned properly. I stayed calm and was able to mount and get back to work. By knowing that these situations are possible, I was able to mitigate the damage and recover quickly. Always remember, you choose to be here, so make the best of it!
TRANSITIONS ONE & TWO

TRANSITION ONE

As you exit the water, get your goggles off only after you are fully standing. I’ve witnessed races where athletes either remove them too early and lose them in the water or run into an obstacle because their vision on land is compromised.

If it’s a wetsuit swim, get your wetsuit stripped down to your waist so that you can free your shoulders to run better. Then fully remove your cap and goggles.

Run fast but not out of control. Even for those of us who have practiced going horizontal to vertical a thousand times, it is still somewhat of a challenge to your equilibrium. So be careful.

Your helmet is always the first thing to go on your head when you arrive at your bike. Not only is it a rule to not touch your bike without your helmet strapped but it’s also the most efficient way.

If you are going to do a flying mount (PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!) use rubber bands so that your shoes, which are already clipped into your pedals, are positioned at 3 o’clock & 9 o’clock so they’re level for your mount. This insures that your shoes will not get tangled up with you or the ground when mounting.

Get on your bike AFTER the mount line. There is no sense in clogging up one spot on the course. Find a good clear spot and run past the mayhem.

TRANSITION TWO

If you are going to leave your shoes clipped into the pedals and run barefoot to your rack, get out of your shoes .75-.5 miles from the dismount line. Better to be too early than too late!

Know where the dismount line is and go the appropriate speed to ensure you are safe for getting off your bike. See Tip #1 above.

Rack your bike, then helmet off. See Rules for more clarification.

Get your shoes on, then grab your belt with your number and put it on as you run. Think of it like golf. Forward progress.

And lastly, ease into your pace. You should be able to find a groove within .25-.5, miles so be patient and stick with it.

I hope these tips can be of some service but always remember the most important rule HAVE FUN!
CHAPTER 6

RACE DAY CHECKLIST

DON’T FORGET

☐ Photo ID
☐ Membership card (if applicable)
☐ Registration information
☐ Directions to get to venue
☐ Map of the race course
☐ Money
☐ Race outfit

☐ Race number
☐ Timing chip
☐ Sunscreen
☐ Sunglasses
☐ Anti-chafe
☐ Dry clothes
☐ Watch

FOR TRANSITION

☐ Towel
☐ Transition mat
☐ Water bottles
☐ Gels/bars/drinks/electrolyte tablets

SWIM

☐ Wetsuit (if legal)
☐ Cap
☐ Goggles

BIKE

☐ Bike
☐ Helmet
☐ Bike shoes
☐ Bike Gloves
☐ Tire pump
☐ Spare tube(s)
☐ CO2 cartridges
☐ Tools to change tire (hopefully not needed)
☐ Handle bar-end plugs

RUN

☐ Running shoes
☐ Hat/visor
☐ Race number belt
☐ Socks

CLEVER TRAINING  WWW.CLEVERTRAINING.COM
Hank Campbell has been coaching athletes of all abilities for over 17 years now. While studying at Ole Miss, Hank competed in Cross Country and Track & Field, and founded the Ole Miss Triathlon Club. As an elite athlete, he has competed at the Duathlon World Championships, the USA Triathlon pro National championships and countless other races over an 11-year career. He’s also raced multiple Ironman 70.3 events, the Gran Prix of Cyclocross, the Leadville 100 MTB and finished second at the Mercedes Marathon in 2012. On top of all that, Hank has coached multiple athletes to National and World Championships, instructed training groups of 2 to 30 people at a time and loves cheering for every athlete on the racecourse!

“I studied what I was passionate about in school. I wanted to be a better athlete and although I didn’t know it at the time, learning the fundamentals of sports physiology and human movement led me directly to coaching and helping others as well as myself.”
## SAMPLE TRAINING PROGRAM

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**Details:**
- **SWIM:** YARDS
- **BIKE:** MILES
- **RUN:** MINUTES
- **REST:**
- **RECOVERY:**

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**Notes:**
- Recovery days are designated with "RECOVERY".
- Rest days are marked with "REST".

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*This program can be modified based on your abilities
**We encourage you to also allow time for mobility, recovery and stretching, which we will get into in more detail in our next chapter.
Adding a practice of mobility, stretching and yoga to your weekly routine will speed up your recovery process, reduce lactic acid build up, increase circulation, prevent injury and provide tools to handle stressful situations with ease and steadiness.

After every hard session, regardless of age, the body needs to rebalance itself. When you train hard, you must spend dedicated time each week properly recovering from all the work you have done. If not, over time you put your body at risk of training-related injuries. The repetitive pounding and movement causes muscular tears and tightness, which in time will cause imbalance and potential injury. The information provided here can be utilized with any athlete in any form of sport.

Recovery is not to be confused with sitting on the couch, but rather spending time mindfully stretching, lengthening and working through full range of motion (ROM) to maintain elasticity and health of the working muscles. There are many ways you can accomplish this. It’s important to find a mindful recovery practice that suits your needs and interests, so that you will enjoy the process and make time for it.

The practice of yoga is a wonderful way to open the hips, hamstrings, quadriceps, shoulders, chest (heart), decompress the back and even help heal common running injuries of the feet, like plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendonitis. Learning the correct way to breathe in yoga is critical to gaining the tremendous benefits of the practice. There are many styles of yoga out there. Find a style and a teacher of yoga that you feel a connection to, and commit to the practice and experience the healing that comes with a dedicated practice. Having a trained and experienced teacher will help you to understand what you should be feeling in the postures and help you to find your version of the posture to meet your needs.
Mobility training can be done through ROM exercises and on suspension systems, like the TRX. Moving the upper body and lower body through mindful ROM and then holding the different stretches will benefit the health of your body. Doing these exercises also gives an element of strength, balance and agility that will help to bring awareness to muscle imbalances within the body. Again, finding a trainer with knowledge and experience working with the TRX is recommended.

Making time for recovery is often overlooked, as the main focus is the task at hand of working on your discipline. Remind yourself that by adding the element of recovery to your training schedule, you will actually have an advantage over other athletes who are not integrating this important aspect of the training system. As we get older, recovery and mobility become more and more critical as we begin to lose muscle mass and tone, a decrease in lactate threshold, a loss of strength and a decline in fast twitch muscle fibers (which are used for reaction time and explosiveness). We also lose elasticity and flexibility in our muscles and joints. As we age, the healing process takes longer; therefore, it is critical to make time for recovery practices to prevent injury, heal injury, strengthen imbalances and lengthen over-contracted muscles of the body – especially hamstrings and hip flexors, which are the two most common areas of tightness in triathletes’ bodies.
Below is a Triathlete Stretching Sequence that can be added to your weekly training schedule. Begin by adding this routine a couple times per week. Use your breath to guide you as you move in, holding and moving out of the stretches outlined below. Your breath should be smooth and steady. Try inhaling for a count of 3 and exhaling for a count of 3, allowing your breath to lengthen as you relax into the stretches. As you continue to breathe, you will find tension melting and begin to discover more ease in your body. It’s very common to tighten the jaw when stretching, so remind yourself over and over again to ‘invite the energy of a smile across your face’. This will literally send the message through the nerves to mirror this energy within your body.

CHEST/HEART OPENER:
Begin by standing with your feet below your hips with your heels slightly turned out. You will feel like you’re slightly pigeon toed. Interlace your hands behind you and begin to lift your hands off of the back of your body. Use a belt or a hand towel if needed to find your grip. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths.

QUADRICEPS STRETCH RIGHT/LEFT (R/L):
Standing on your left foot, take the top of your right foot, flexing your knee and drawing your foot towards your glute, and breathe into the right quadriceps. Try to soften the right knee to face down toward the ground, allowing your sacrum to absorb into your body, so you increase the stretch across the front hip flexor as well as the quads. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Repeat other side.

CALVES STRETCH (DOWNWARD-FACING DOG):
Step both feet back, hands placed about shoulder width apart and feet spaced about hip width apart. Draw your chest toward your thighs and bend knees as much as needed to allow your spine to decompress. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths.
RUNNER’S LUNGE R/L INTO RUNNER’S HAMSTRING STRETCH R/L:
Step your left leg back, going into a deep lunge. Stack your right knee over the ankle and lift the back left thigh, activating strength in the rear leg. Breathe into your front left hip flexors and the back of your right hip/glutes. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Softly place the left knee to the ground (towel padding can be used under knee) and elevate left hand to the sky opening into front hip flexors more. Once again, breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Transition into Runner’s Hamstring Stretch by stepping rear leg forward about a foot print or two and fold over front leg. Try and keep your hips level. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Take Downward-Facing Dog between sides (see above). Repeat on other side.

KNEELING FOOT STRETCH:
Lower onto your knees and curl your toes under, making sure that all of your toes are under you as much as possible. Sit back on top of your heels. Hold here, stretching for 5-10 breaths. If it becomes too intense, come out early.

HIP OPENER R/L:
Lower onto your back and cross your right ankle over your left thigh. You will be breathing into your right outer hip as you draw your legs closer to you. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Now the other side.

LAYING HAMSTRING STRETCH R/L:
Laying on your back, take a belt or towel around the ball mount of your right foot, straightening your right leg while breathing into the back of your right hamstring. Try to keep the left opposite hip grounded onto the floor and soften into the hamstrings and hips. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Repeat to the other side.

LAYING SPINAL TWIST (INCLUDE HIP COMPRESSION AND ANKLE ROM):
Remaining on your back, bring your right knee into your chest and hug your knee in tightly to create hip compression. Hip compression actually lubricates the hip joint. When the leg is released, there is a flush of blood into the hip. As you hug your knee in, rotate your ankle each direction mindfully (5 rotations each direction). Then, draw your right leg over to the left, stacking your hips and softening both shoulders to the earth. Breathe in the stretch for 5-10 breaths. Repeat to other side. Finish by lying on your back with your eyes closed and ‘let go of your breath as you witness your body and your mind’. Rest here for at least 5 minutes.
Sharon works with private clients weekly in Yoga Therapy and in Personal Training. She teaches weekly yoga classes, workshops and events throughout the year. Sharon’s mission is to initiate the process of change and ensure that her clients take the actions necessary to accomplish their goals. She is dedicated to facilitating ongoing support, consulting and coaching to sustain the changes made by her students.

Sharon’s vast knowledge of how the body and mind works and how to optimize health and vitality is evident in her balanced approach to life. Her energizing drive fosters her natural, innate ability to bring out the individuality that lies within us all. She acknowledges and embraces how fortunate and blessed she is to have the opportunity to teach yoga and work with clients one-on-one in yoga therapy and in personal training. She is grateful for all the teachers that have come into her life, including, her husband, daughter, family, friends, students and clients. Sharon sells Natures Sunshine products, is a lululemon Alumni Ambassador and is a current Ambassador for Clever Training. For more information, www.sharondenton.com.