

not feel winded as you start riding your new bike and this will tempt you to push extra hard to get your heart rate up and that is the fast track to an over-use injury. The problem is your oxygen uptake system can deliver more oxygen to your cycling muscles faster than those muscles can metabolize it. It takes five or six weeks of riding until you have sufficiently built up your cycling muscles to the point where they can actually put some aerobic stress on you heart and lungs.

Swimming presents even more complicated issues for the runner striving to be a multi-sport athlete. Unlike cycling, after swimming for one minute you may find your heart racing and lungs burning. "I feel like I'm getting a workout" says the typical tri-newbie, "but I'm not going anywhere in the pool." This is not only because a new swimmer is very inefficient but most runners are not used to breathing rhythmically in the water. You have to fully exhale under water or you won't have room in your lungs to take a new breath. It will take several weeks of short intervals in the pool before your breathing becomes comfortable enough for you to try anything close to a long steady swim.

Don't let what I've just said get you discouraged! The good news is it just takes a little time before your body adjusts. After an initial break-in period, runners will find their overall fitness will be a bonus. For instance, my friend Ronnie Schmeer went from a state level cross-country runner in high-school to one of the state's best cyclists by the end of college. Cycling and swimming won't

make your running any faster, but you will pick up these new sports quickly. The key as with any new training program is to start slow. The first three weeks should feel very easy. Remember, you are training all those "little muscles you never thought you had". Training soon gets much more difficult; peaking at about six or seven weeks. Focus on keeping your training steady and consistent through this period and you will have a much greater chance of success.

Creating a Training schedule

It is not entirely obvious how one goes about adding and combining additional workouts without turning into an over-trained, droopy eyed, ornery bag of bones. Here are a few guidelines.

1. Beginning triathletes need do six moderate workouts per week, two of each sport. Competitive triathletes need to do ten or more workouts per week.
2. Just like in running, you can gradually increase training volume, or intensity, but never both at the same time with out running the risk of injury.
3. Triathletes can rest their running muscles even when they are riding or swimming, and visa-versa. But all triathletes should take a couple easy days a week with maybe just one light workout. Beginners should take one day off entirely.
4. Break your preparation up into phases. Phase One is when you slowly build up to a regular routine.

Don't be scared—you can master the swimming leg.



This should take at least six weeks and is perhaps the most difficult part of training. No hard or fast workouts, just work on skills and technique. Phase Two is when you gradually add distance to three of your workouts, (one in each sport). This is your base and foundation for everything else so take your time and build up slowly. The third phase, as you might have guessed, is when you add some intensity to your workouts. In this phase you may want to lower your overall mileage a little bit. Intensity can mean hill repeats, speed work on the track, cycling time trials around Mercer

