

Triathlon Training FOR DUMMIES®

**by Deirdre Pitney and
Donna Dourney**



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Triathlon
Training
FOR
DUMMIES®

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Published by

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

111 River St.

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2008939321

ISBN: 978-0-470-38387-2

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



About the Authors

Deirdre Pitney is a cyclist, a runner, and a writer specializing in fitness and wellness. After completing a 220-mile fundraising bike ride, Deirdre added a third sport, swimming, to her workouts and took on training for her first triathlon.

Donna Dourney is a wellness director, personal trainer, fitness instructor, coach, and accomplished triathlete who has competed for more than 25 years in marathons, duathlons, and triathlons, including a Half-Iron and a full Ironman. She runs a triathlon club for people who want to complete their first triathlons or improve their times and training for their next events. Her experience and knowledge has guided more than 150 nervous beginners from their first training days to the finish line. Donna earned a degree in health and physical education from Seton Hall University. She has held certifications from the American College of Sports Medicine, the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, and National YMCA Strength and Conditioning.

Dedication

Deirdre Pitney: To Cullen and Margot

Donna Dourney: To my husband, Kenneth York

Authors' Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our agent, Jessica Faust of Bookends, Inc., for her guidance. At Wiley, we'd like to thank Tracey Boggier, acquisitions editor, for her vision and belief in this project. Thank you to our project editor, Elizabeth Kuball, for her much dreaded but greatly appreciated submission schedules and for her professionalism, perspective, and exceptional editing and organizational skills. Thank you also to Graeme Henderson, our technical editor, for his enthusiasm, energy and experience, and to Kathryn Born, our illustrator, for her patience and attention to detail.

Thank you to our models, Sue Diebold, Susan Hoeltve-Ward, Philip Klaas, Daniel Mallery, Linda Oh, and Miguel Rustrian, and to the people at High Gear Cyclery, Trek Bicycle Corporation, Giant Bicycle, and De Soto Triathlon Company, for their support. And a special thank-you to Stacey Smith for her sharing her photographs.

And we'd each like to extend our thanks to each other's family and support networks. Our combined contacts and friendships have made this book possible.

Deirdre Pitney: Thank you to Paul Cullen — his name is now in a book, as he always knew it would be — for telling my favorite cycling story.

An enormous thank-you to the two most fun, insightful, and inspiring people I know — Cullen and Margot. I'd need book after book after book to express all the joy and love you've brought to my life. I am more proud to be your mom than I am of anything else I have ever done or could ever do.

To my friends with whom I've spent many miles on the roads and trails — thank you for always being up for a new challenge and for sharing your passions, knowledge, and experience with me.

Thank you to Kathy Johnson Brown and Ed Pagliarini, wonderful photographers and even better friends.

Thank you to my coauthor, Donna, for bringing to this book and to my life more than she knows and probably would be willing to admit. Her straightforward belief in the people she trains and their ability to reach their goals has guided many beginning athletes, including my daughter, successfully across countless finish lines, whether in 5Ks or triathlons.

Donna Dourney: A heartfelt thank you to the four people who continue to inspire me and bring joy to my life every day, my children, Tommy, Danny, Heather, and Shane. You are the light of my life.

Thanks to my family — my sisters and brothers, who are my best friends and who, even though they sometimes think I'm crazy, always have supported and encouraged me in my endeavors. My dad who has always been there for me and my mom who continues to watch over me.

Thank you to my coauthor, Deirdre Pitney, for giving me this opportunity, for putting my random thoughts in order, for being so wonderful to write with, and for touching my life.

I'd also like to thank Rone Lewis and his staff at High Gear Cyclery (Stirling, New Jersey) for sharing their time and expertise and for the use of his cycle shop. Thanks to my friends and colleagues at the Somerset Hills YMCA for their input and support, as well as the use of the facility for our photo shoots.

Finally, a very special thank-you to my husband, Kenneth York, whose endless love, support, and encouragement have gotten me through many challenges in my life. He believes in me more than I believe in myself and is always there for me at the finish line, regardless of the race.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Introduction

Triathlons are the new black. They're fitness fashion, and they look good on everyone.

Triathlon events are becoming as popular as the weekend 5K road race. But now, instead of closing off a neighborhood loop, race directors are setting up orange cones, yellow tape, barricades, and bike racks throughout cities and entire towns for these multi-sport events that cover anywhere from 8 miles to an awe-inspiring 140 miles.

Still, as much as we're hearing and reading about triathlons and who's training for them, the number of people crossing the finish lines of these events makes anyone who considers participating in the three-sport showdown one of the select few.

Complete a triathlon of any distance, and you qualify as an athlete of exceptional endurance and dedication. If you're considering participating in a triathlon, or you've already started training for one, this book is for you.

About This Book

You can do a triathlon — and *Triathlon Training For Dummies* will add to your confidence and help you improve your performance, comfort, and fun when you do. This book best answers the questions of triathletes who are new to the sport because it was written from that same perspective, focusing on simplifying the complex equipment needs of triathletes and creating training programs you can understand and follow without a calculator, heart monitor, or PhD.

This book is a collaboration of many experienced triathletes who shared their training tips and event expertise. It's the triathlon-training book for *real* people (because not everyone is an Ironman or wants to be), taking you from novice to knowledgeable.

Depending on the length of the triathlon you choose, you'll find that what motivates most triathletes has nothing to do with beating you. What you're more likely to find is team spirit: We're in this together — let's get it done and see how far we can push ourselves.

That's an energy that's infectious. And the discipline, self-confidence, and fitness that come from triathlon training will enhance other areas of your life. So, don't be surprised if you start a mini triathlon trend in your own circle. People will recognize the positive effects that your training has on you. And they'll want some of that for themselves.

Share your gear. Share your knowledge. The book? Sure, you can share that, too — but we're hoping you'll find the information in these pages so helpful to your daily training that you'll tell your friends to buy their own copies.

In this book, we give you answers to the many questions you're thinking right now: What equipment do I need? How do I find time for training? What do I need to know about transitions? Will I make it to the finish? (Trust us, you will.)

Conventions Used in This Book

We've designed this book in a way that makes it easy to read and understand:

- ✓ When we refer to distances, we use meters or miles for the swim; meters are abbreviated with a lowercase *m* (so 500m is 500 meters) and the word *mile* is spelled out (as in 1 mile). We use kilometers for the bike and run; kilometers are abbreviated with a capital *K* (so 10K is 10 kilometers).
- ✓ Whenever we use a new term, we put it in *italics* and define it shortly thereafter (often in parentheses).
- ✓ When we give you a list of steps to follow, we put the action part of the step in **bold**, so it's easy to find.
- ✓ We put all Web addresses and e-mail addresses in `monofont`, so that they stand out from the surrounding text. **Note:** When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

One last point: Because we're writing this book as a team, when we want to refer to one of our experiences, we use the person's first name (either Deirdre or Donna), so that you know which of us is behind that anecdote.

What You're Not to Read

You have a lot of training ahead of you. We don't want this book to be an excuse for "not having the time to train." So, we've written it so that you can safely skip some pieces, and still have everything you need to know.

Feel free to pass by anything in a gray box — the text in gray boxes are sidebars. You can always come back to sidebars later, when you've digested everything else in the chapter and want to expand your knowledge, along with your fitness. Same goes for anything marked with a Technical Stuff icon — these are details you won't need to know to participate in your triathlon. Of course, if you're the type who likes to know every last shred of information, have at it — you can impress all your training buddies with your know-how.

Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you know how to swim and you know how to ride a bike — but that's as far as we go. Beyond your basic ability to stay afloat and stay upright, we're prepared for anything.

If you're just getting off the couch, you'll find a training schedule with some tips for you. If you've already tried a triathlon or two and you want to find out how to do them better, faster, or farther, you'll find all you need to do that, too.

How This Book Is Organized

Triathlon Training For Dummies is divided into five parts, each with chapters covering the details of that topic. You can read just one part depending on where you are in your triathlon training or specific chapters within the parts. The organization of this book makes it easy to find what you need. Here's an overview.

Part I: Starting Your Triathlon Training

In this part, you find tools you can use to select the event that's right for you and your schedule. First, we fill you in on the five triathlon distances and how far you'll swim, bike, or run in each one. We offer tips on selecting a triathlon that's right for you. From there, we take a look at the equipment you need

to train for, and participate in, a triathlon, and we offer suggestions on picking gear that fits your goals and your budget. We also give you guidelines for evaluating your fitness level and tell you what to expect if you feel you need to get a doctor's approval before beginning your training.

Part II: Taking It One Sport at a Time: Swim, Bike, Run

This part covers the basics of each of the three sports. In your triathlon, you'll start with swimming, then get on your bike, and then head off on foot for your run — we cover the three sports in that same order in this book. From there, we tell you how to put them all together and transition smoothly from one sport to the next. In each chapter, we give you a list of the benefits you'll reap from training in each of the three sports. We provide details on mastering the correct stroke, spin, or form to conserve energy and prevent injury. In this part, we also tell you the benefits of building a support network and training with other triathletes.

Part III: Training for Your Triathlon

In this part, you find out what it takes to live like a triathlete. First, we discuss how what you eat affects how you train. We offer tips on keeping your energy up for training by fueling with the best foods. Here, you also find easy-to-follow training schedules for each event distance, broken out by week, sport, and day. We leave out the jargon and confusing distances and keep it simple, so that you can focus on training and not doing math. After nutrition and training schedules, we present a detailed guide to making your muscles stronger and more flexible to improve your triathlon performance and reduce your chances of being sidelined due to injury. If you do find yourself nursing sore muscles or aching joints, this part is where you can find out what's ailing you, why, and how to make it better.

Part IV: Planning for Race Day

This part is there for you as your event approaches. First, we talk about *tapering* (cutting back on training in the weeks before your event). We tell you why tapering is important and how it can impact your performance. In this part, we also give you a checklist of items to pack for your event and tell you how to catch some shuteye in the nervous nights before your race. This part is where you find details on what to expect when you arrive at your event

location and what to do, step by step and minute by minute, as you prepare for your event to start. If you're feeling nervous or doubtful, check this part for tips on staying positive and relaxed. And, after your event, this part is there with tools to help you decide what to do next.

Part V: The Part of Tens

In this part, we give you ten reasons you should do a triathlon — refer to this list anytime you need a little motivation. We also debunk ten common triathlon myths that may be causing you some worry. We give you a great insider's list of ten items that will make you look and feel like an experienced triathlete, even at your first event. And we offer ten Web sites to help you find triathlons based on event distance, time frame, or location.

Icons Used in This Book

We've designed this book so that you can focus your attention on becoming a triathlete, not a research assistant. So, we use icons to identify certain information that you'll find especially useful or important. Here are the icons in this book, along with the kinds of information they signal:



When you see the Tip icon, you'll find information that will save you time or make you a more efficient triathlete.



This book is a reference, which means you don't have to commit it to memory — you won't be quizzed on it. But occasionally, we tell you something that's so important you'll want to remember it. When we do, we use this icon.



People seem to have lots of misconceptions about triathlons. Some of these myths can scare potential triathletes away from the sport; others can just add to their nervousness as they approach the event. The information next to the MythBuster icon sets the record straight.



When we have a story to tell about our own experiences competing in or training for triathlons, we mark it with this icon.



You can get through a triathlon without knowing a lot of technical stuff. We've labeled it with this icon, so you can skip it if you're not itching to know details that won't get you to the finish line faster. Information marked with the Technical Stuff icon offers numbers, formulas, or behind-the-scenes details on gear.



Fortunately, you won't find many Warning icons in this book. When we provide information regarding your safety or health that we don't want you to miss, we identify it with the Warning icon.

Where to Go from Here

You don't have to start with Chapter 1 and read every page of this book in order before you start training. If you've already committed to training and selected an event, turn to Chapter 10 to get a feel for where you are in your training and where you'll need to be — the training schedules in that chapter break down each distance into manageable bits that will get you motivated. As you begin training, be sure to check out Chapter 3 to find out what equipment you need and what you don't. Then be sure to read through the chapters on each sport — Chapter 5 for swimming, Chapter 6 for cycling, and Chapter 7 for running — for an overview of the most efficient form and technique. And don't forget transitions: You have to get from one sport to the next — start practicing now with the tips in Chapter 8. If you're just in the thinking-about-it phase — and, hey, that's where everyone starts! — head to Chapter 16 for the friendly nudge you need to get started.

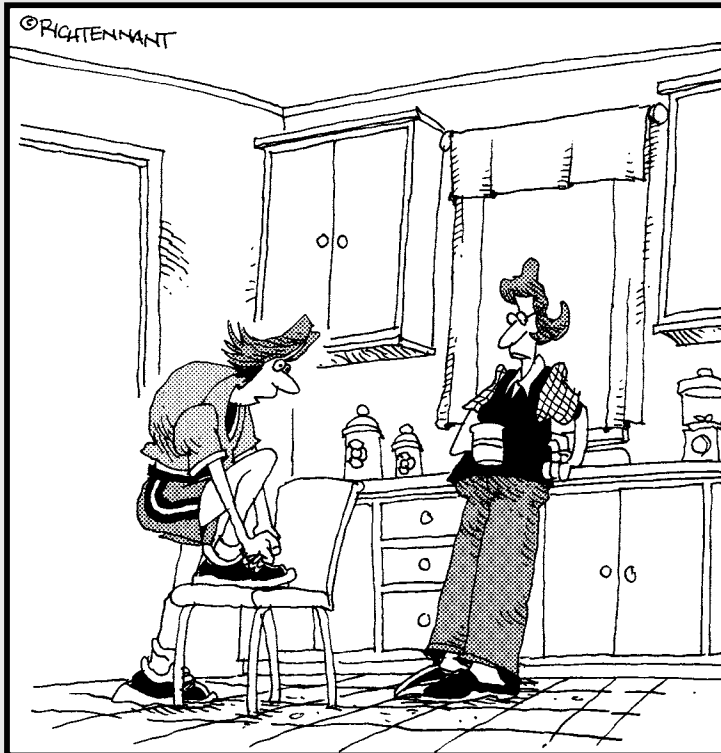
Wherever you start, with the tools in this book, there's one place you'll finish: arms held high, crossing that finish line, able to officially call yourself a triathlete. We're behind you every step of the way!

Part I

Starting Your Triathlon Training

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Why train for a triathlon? I guess after 18 years of raising kids, running a part-time business, and volunteering at the hospital, I wanted to challenge myself."

In this part . . .

We fill you in on the first steps to take now that you've decided to train for a triathlon. In these chapters, you discover how to choose a triathlon event and what to consider if your event is far from home. You're training for three sports — swimming, biking, and running — and you need equipment; Chapter 3 is where you find an overview of everything you need (and don't need) to train for and participate in a triathlon.

In Chapter 4, we give you a list of questions to ask yourself before you start to train. We let you know what to expect at a physical with a doctor and what you could gain from an evaluation with a fitness professional.

You also find out how to enlist the support of family and friends to cheer you on and keep you focused. The triathlon is an athletic event that challenges your personal limits and brings surprising social perks. In this part, you see how training with other triathletes can keep you challenged and motivated.