

PAUL HUDDLE & ROCH FREY

TRIATHLON STARTING OUT

Training for Your First Competition



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THE AUTHORS



PAUL HUDDLE During his twelve-year career as a professional triathlete, Paul Huddle finished over twenty Ironman distance events (nine in Hawaii) and well over 300 triathlons. As a partner in Multisports.com, Huddle is involved in production, administration, and instruction at triathlon camps and clinics all over the world.



ROCH FREY A former professional triathlete from Canada, Roch Frey has been involved with triathlon for over twenty years. After winning the Canadian Long Course National Championships in 1993, he turned to full-time coaching and combined forces with Paul Huddle, Paula Newby-Fraser, and John Duke to create Multisports.com.

Triathlon: Starting Out

We'd like to dedicate this book to those willing to make the commitment to train and race the triathlon.

Our thanks to Diane Buchta, who contributed her Periodization Schedule for Strength Training and Beth Hagman who pulled it all together.

The contents of this book were carefully researched. However, all information is supplied without liability. Neither the author nor the publisher will be liable for possible disadvantages or damages resulting from this book.

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E-Mail: info@m-m-sports.com

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FOREWORD

By Bob Babbitt

Triathlon.

There is something exciting about the word. There's something even more special about the sport. Watch the Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Hawaii on television, you'll see lone athletes bucking ferocious headwinds for 112 miles and then staggering through sauna-like conditions on the lava fields during the run. Most people think there is no way they could ever do something like that. Heck, most people think there's no way they'd ever even want to try.

But you're not most people. You watch people facing tremendous mental and physical challenges and think, "I wonder if I could do that."

You know what? You can – and, if you use this book as your guide, you will.

The toughest part of triathlon is getting out the door. Get out the door and go to the pool. Get out the door and ride your bike or take a spin class. Get out the door and put one foot in front of the other for a run around your local high school track.

To become a basketball or football or baseball player, you need a very specific body type, quick reflexes and phenomenal hand-eye coordination. For triathlon, you only need to 'tri'.

I'm serious about this. If you go to the pool, you will become a better swimmer; if you ride, you will become a better cyclist; and if you run, you will become a better runner. Guaranteed. We all swam, rode and ran as kids. If you played at the beach, had a paper route or played capture the flag at recess, you already have the basics. Add to that perseverance and desire, and you're on your way.

This book is step one to getting you to the finish line of your very first triathlon. It's the first step in changing your whole life in a wonderful way.

Most events are not the Ironman. There are events with a quarter-mile swim, a nine-mile bike ride and a three-mile run. Some are even shorter. Many can be completed in less than an hour. Intimidating? Not really.

I speak often about my first triathlon experience and how that helped me in everything I do every day of my life. There will be moments during your first triathlon where you will be sore and tired and ready to stop. You will doubt your ability to get through the day. But you will get past that. Just when you feel that you can't swim another stroke, the swim will be over. The same thing will happen



with both the bike ride and the run. But that last hundred yards to the finish of your race will make any discomfort you might have had seem trivial. There is no better feeling than the finish line high.

The people in the sport of triathlon are the most supportive you will ever meet. When you go to an event, you are not really competing with anyone but yourself. The goal is to get to the finish line. Some people will swim faster, some will ride faster and some will run faster. But the t-shirt you receive at the finish line is the same for the first finisher and the last one. The key is what you take from the event, what you take from the journey.

For the week after your first event, you will be floating on air. Work will seem easier. Your family will be more special. Life will be better. Why? Because you accomplished something you thought you could never do. You took what sounded like an insurmountable challenge and, by breaking it up into bite-size chunks, you succeeded. It's like having a business card in your pocket that lets you know that, whenever things get tough at work or at home or in life, you can deal with it.

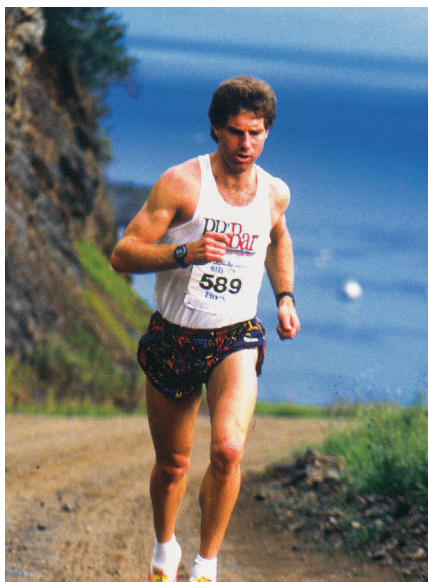
Hey, you can deal with anything.

Why? Simple. Because you're a triathlete.

The journey starts now.

INTRODUCTION

By Paul Huddle



Who needs another book on triathlon? Well, *we* do.

Great. That's two people. I'm sure our publisher will be overjoyed at this.

We've finally arrived at that time that comes to every person's life when, theoretically, you've gained enough experience, material, and/or expertise to write a book. That's not to say that you *should* write a book – but simply that you *could*. Such a time has arrived for us. Whether or not it provides you with the information you need remains to be seen. Keep reading.

This book is the result of over 40 (combined) years of training, racing and coaching in the sport of triathlon. Some of those experiences have been successful – others have been dismal failures. Ironically, the failures have been the best teachers and are the basis for much of the material you'll find in the coming pages. What, after all, is the job of a coach if not to help others avoid the same mistakes they've made?

We've had the good fortune to train with, race with and coach some of the best athletes this sport has ever seen. While this experience has been an invaluable part of learning what works and what doesn't work, it has driven home a point that you, the reader, need to always remember when reading a book like this: You are your own best coach.

You're thinking, "So why am I reading this book?" – right?

Hopefully, you're reading this book because you would like to participate in a triathlon and are interested in finding the safest, most efficient and, possibly, the fastest

route possible to the finish line. You're looking for some basic guidelines to help you accomplish this goal. This book will provide those guidelines, but we want you to be part of the process.

Realize that, for every champion this sport has produced, there have been as many different training programs. Ask Chris McCormack, Dave Scott, Paula Newby-Fraser, Michellie Jones, Mark Allen, Conrad Stoltz, Erin Baker, Karen Smyers, Greg Welch, Simon Lessing, Heather Fuhr, Lori Bowden, Scott Tinley, Luc Van Lierde, Barb Lindquist, Natascha Badmann, Spencer Smith, Scott Molina, Joanna Zeiger and Loretta Harrop for their training programs, and you'll get 20 different answers. Yes, you'd definitely find some common themes, but the primary reason each of these athletes has had success is that they've been able to adapt the concepts and guidelines that are central to the endurance sport of triathlon to their individual backgrounds, goals and time constraints. This, then, is your job – and it should be considered the key to optimizing your individual potential.

As you follow the program outlined in this book, you'll begin to establish a strength training routine, determine your heart rate zones and plan your week-to-week training. You must incorporate every aspect of what you know about yourself into this process. What is your athletic background? What are your strengths and weaknesses? What is the distance of the event you're preparing for? What is your goal for this event (finish or time)? How many hours a week do you need to devote to work and family – and how much time does this leave for training?

In essence, you should plan your training around your life and not the other way around. Triathlon should be a healthy addition to your life, not an added stress.

While looking at the tangible aspects of your life when executing your training plan, you should learn to trust your intuitive side as well. What does this mean? It means that when you read a passage or suggestion for your training in this book (or any book or article) and it hits you as being exactly what you need in order to improve, trust that feeling.

By the same token, if you read something that you know on a gut level will absolutely, positively not work – trust that instinct. Yes, you'll need to experiment with training intensity, volume, nutrition, etc., but many times you already know what will and what

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won't work. While experience is the best teacher, learning from the experience of others and applying those lessons individually can get you to your goals much more quickly and with much less grief.

Finally, keep in mind the fact that this is a simple sport. What could be simpler than swimming, cycling and running? These are the same core activities most kids do on afternoons after school and all summer long. Aside from the technical aspects of swimming, proficiency in these three disciplines is primarily dependent on fitness.

If your goal is solely to finish, your fitness level doesn't even need to be particularly high. These aren't terribly difficult skills to master, but they do require a modicum of repetitive practice.

As you sit there right now, we're willing to bet that you could get through a sprint distance triathlon. It might not be pretty. It might take you significantly longer than you'd like – but you would probably finish it.

Take comfort in the knowledge that the first triathletes didn't have coaches, training programs, fluid replacement drinks or energy bars. They had the same desire you probably have to combine three basic modes of human self-propelled transportation in a fun and interesting way. They wanted a fresh challenge, and got it by combining three activities they loved. Through their experiences, we get to enjoy the same healthy lifestyle and satisfaction that comes with training for and completing your first triathlon.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF TRIATHLON

Before you move forward, we suggest you consider the following “Golden Rules” of triathlon:

- 1.** Treat triathlon as a sport in and for itself – not a collection of three single sports. Because many first time triathletes come from single sport backgrounds, they try to apply the same training principles from their primary discipline to the other two. If you tried to train each discipline like a single sport athlete, you'd be swimming hard five or six times a week, cycling hard three to four times a week and running hard three to four times a week. This schedule will quickly lead to over-training, injury, illness, joblessness and divorce. When training for triathlon, do only one truly hard workout in each discipline each week. That's right, only one hard workout per sport per week. The core of your training will include five “key” workouts each week: one harder (higher intensity) swim, bike and run workout and one longer ride and run. Everything else should be added and adjusted according to your strengths and weaknesses, goals and time constraints.
- 2.** Plan recovery into your training schedule. It's usually not difficult for most triathletes to do the hard work necessary to complete a triathlon but, once rolling, it's hard to get them to slow down. All of the hard work in the world is absolutely useless without the recovery necessary to absorb it. If you don't plan recovery into your training schedule, you probably won't get any and your chances of over-training and the problems associated with it will increase exponentially.
- 3.** Gains in athletic performance come from consistent training over a longer period of time. It's not how much you did last week that is important, but how consistently you have trained over a period of months.
- 4.** When it's convenient, don't hesitate to do back-to-back workouts. Too many triathletes try to avoid riding after swimming or running after riding. Since the nature of our sport includes swimming, cycling and running all in succession, doing this in training helps you prepare for these transitions – and it saves on showers! If you're going to run on the same day that you ride, do your run

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after riding. This tends to be the most difficult of the two transitions. By doing it frequently in training, it will become much easier when you race. The only exception to this is when you are planning to do a hard or long run. These key workouts need to get priority and should be done first.

5. Never do a long and/or hard bike workout on the same day you do a long and/or hard run workout. For example, do not do your long run on the same day as your high intensity or long bike ride. Since both cycling and running are lower body activities, you'll fatigue these muscles with the first workout and won't be able to get the most out of the second workout. It is okay to do a long or hard swim workout on the same day as a long or hard ride or run, however. Since the primary muscle groups involved in swimming are upper body specific, you won't negatively impact your ability to execute a quality ride or run (and vice versa).
6. Injuries, unfortunately, do occur. If you take time off at the first sign of an injury, the opportunity for quick recovery is best. If you're unsure about a persistent injury or pain, seek out a qualified health professional.
7. Have a plan, but be flexible and learn to trust your own instincts in following the planned schedule. Nothing is etched in stone.

GOOD LUCK!

