



Q: Dear Coach: I'm thinking about giving Triathlon a go - I swam at school, I have an old bike in the shed, and I'm sure I can remember how to run. What advice would you give for a real beginner? - 48 but still tickin'!

A: Dear Still-Tickin': The good news is that you have the basics to begin training for triathlon. Triathlon is a sport welcoming of all ages, gender, and abilities. First things first: I recommend seeing your local GP for a health clearance.

The most important thing for you is to walk before you run. You must start slowly. With your swimming, jump in the pool, swim a length, rest, and repeat at least half a dozen times. You have to get the feel for the water like you would have had back in school.

Grab your poor old bike out of the shed and take it to your local bike shop. Give it a quick once over maintenance check and then see if the staff can help you with a basic bike fit. Like a pair of shoes, a correct size and well-adjusted fit of a bike is crucial to your performance and injury management. Again, start slowly and gradually. I recommend starting with a 10 - 15 minute easy roll and increase by 5 minutes every time you ride.

Running requires a little care as it is high-impact and likely to remind your joints that you're alive. Start off with a 5 minute walk, followed by 1 minute run, 1 minute walk and alternate the run-walk sequence up to 5 times, ending with a 5 minute walk. This is just the beginning. The early goal for your running is to get to the point where you will be running for the full 20 minute duration. Gradually increase the ratio of run to walk.

You want to train two of each discipline - swim, bike, run - each week. This means - two swims, two bike rides, and two runs every week for your early training - 6 sessions in the week! Eventually you want to get to the point where you can swim, bike, and run consecutively. Transitions are another question! And triathlon events vary in terms of distance and time.

Still-Tickin', please note that in your local area you have a great swim coach, Judy, at Tully Pool. I'll be running Tri-Clinics in 2009, and we're resurrecting the Cassowary Coast Triathlon Club. We look forward to seeing you there!

Regards, Coach Tim