

beginner duathlon training plan

getting started

Goal of this plan. The purpose of this plan is to *complete* a short course duathlon. The races on this page are examples of sprint distance duathlons, which take most people 1-2 1/2 hours. As long as you are basically healthy, you should be able to complete this plan without any baseline of cardiovascular exercise. Remember, part of the challenge is in the training. Prepare diligently and you will have fun and feel good on race day.

Prior Preparation. As long as you are healthy, no previous exercise program is necessary to complete this plan. It is recommended to consult with your physician before starting any exercise program.

Focus on building minutes not speed. While this may look like a lot of training, remember that you should complete the assigned workouts in your proper training zone. This means that you should be able to carry on a conversation while biking and running. Don't try to push your hardest during training sessions. Just complete the distance and try to save a little reserve after each workout. That will help you complete all the training sessions without getting overly fatigued.

Intensity. This can be quantified many different ways. Try to keep your effort level in some semblance of a comfort zone. In terms of percentages, aim for a 5-8 on a scale of 1-to-10. This could be described as "moderately easy to moderately hard." If you use a HR monitor, focus on your training zones of 50-75% HR. For most people, this means they need to slow their running and include walk breaks.

Words of encouragement. This plan is intended to be challenging but realistic to a true "beginner". Challenge yourself to complete as many workouts as possible. Do not chastise yourself if you miss a couple of days; just get back on the program as soon as possible. Remember, the journey is part of the reward. Completing a duathlon is an amazing experience. Getting prepared is part of the fun.

Extra training/range of training. The workouts in this plan are designed to help you survive your first foray into the sport of duathlon. Completing all the minimum workouts should have you well prepared to finish. If you have time and energy to do more than what is assigned in this plan, then you will be extra well prepared for the race. Just remember not to add extra to the Rest Days. Keep those free for stretching and letting your body recover.

Substitution of workouts. If you have to adjust the workouts in this plan, there is no problem to switch days. Life circumstance, weather, facilities, etc. may dictate what you can do and when. Just remember that this plan includes regular rest and recovery. Do not shortchange your rest days or you may become overly fatigued.

Cycling. A portion of the bicycling workouts may be completed on stationary trainers or spin bikes. A spin class at the fitness center or a stationary bike are good substitutes if you can't ride outside.

You should also be comfortable riding your bicycle on streets. The last few weeks before race day it is especially important that you can shift, steer, and break proficiently. If you are new to cycling on the road, just use a comfortable bike like a cruiser, hybrid, or mountain bike. No one will judge based on your bike. Just make sure you are able to steer, ride in a straight line, break, and use your gears. Make sure you have it tuned up well in advance of the race if things do not seem to be working properly.

When cycling, focus on maintaining a high cadence with medium resistance gears. Think "spin to win". Avoid use of excessively hard gears where your feet are moving over slowly. Be sure that you practice riding your bike on terrain similar to the race course. Concentrate on shifting down *earlier* in the hills so that you can keep your rhythm all the way to the top. Make sure you have bike handling skills to be able to ride around light traffic.

Running. Remember you can walk as needed during a duathlon. If you are a new runner or are carrying extra weight, I recommend the Fun Run technique to alternate between jogging and walking as a strategy to build endurance. Don't push the pace, just try to keep jogging for a few minutes and then take a walk break when you needed. You can even walk to complete the triathlon.

Technique. The secret to improving running and cycling is to focus on increasing your *cadence*. That means try to take quicker strides not longer strides while running. On the bike, keep the gears on slightly lower resistance and spin your feet faster. A good goal is 70-80 rpms running and 80-90 rpms while cycling.

Keep Going! There will be times in training when you are tired and want to quit. Practice perseverance in training and you will finish strong on race day.

Disclaimer. Consult with a physician before beginning this or any exercise program. Reduce or discontinue training and consult with a physical medicine (chiropractor, physical therapist, sports medicine) specialist if you experience recurrent joint pain or other physical symptoms.

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the workout

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Run/walk: 30	Off/Stretch	Bike: 60	Run/walk: 20	Bike: 20	Off/Stretch	Bike: 60
2	Run/walk: 20	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 25	Bike: 60	Bike: 20	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 10 Bike: 50 Run/walk: 10
3	Run/walk: 20	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 30	Bike: 70	Bike: 30	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 45 Bike: 15
4	Bike: 30	Off/Stretch	Bike: 45 Run/walk: 15	Bike: 60	Run/walk: 30	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 15 Bike: 45
5 Rest week	Run/walk: 20	Off/Stretch	Bike: 30	Run/walk: 20	Bike: 30	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 15 Bike: 30 Run/walk: 15
6	Run/walk: 30	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 30 Bike: 30	Run/walk: 25	Bike: 75	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 10 Bike: 60 Run/walk: 10
7	Bike: 30	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 10 Bike: 60	Run/walk: 30	Bike: 60	Off/Stretch	Bike: 90
8	Run/walk: 20	Off/Stretch	Run/walk: 10 Bike: 10 Run/walk: 10	Bike: 15	Off/Stretch	DUATHLON!	Off/Stretch