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English1010: Introduction to Writing

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The culture around triathlons

Have you heard of a marathon? Now imagine doing a marathon with a 100 mile bike ride and a swim. That's what is called a triathlon. According to Ac Shilton from The New York Times , 'By definition, a triathlon is a single race, consisting of swimming, biking and running — almost always done in that order ' (Shilton 2). The ultimate fitness test, some would say, is the triathlon.

The triathlon is not just one race but split up into different races with the same format of swimming, biking, and running. In order from shortest distance to longest distances, the different

Triathlon Distances in Miles/Kilometers

Race Type	Swim	Bike	Run
Sprint Triathlon	0.5 miles (750m)	12.4 miles (20km)	3.1 miles (5km)
Olympic Triathlon	0.93 miles (1.5km)	24.8 miles (40km)	6.2 miles (10km)
ITU Long Course Triathlon	1.86 miles (3km)	49.6 miles (80km)	12.4 miles (20km)
Half Ironman / 70.3 Triathlon	1.2 miles (1.9km)	56 miles (90km)	13.1 miles (21.09km)
Full Ironman Triathlon	2.4 miles (3.8km)	112 miles (180km)	26.2 miles (42.195km)

triathlon races are named the Sprint Triathlon, Olympic Triathlon, Half Ironman and the Ironman. As displayed in Figure 1, the races range from 3.1 miles to 26.2 miles in the running section of the race. In other words, triathlons are not distance specified but have a variety of distances to race from. Nevertheless, According to the New York Times, a triathlon started in Hawaii where some men argued about which sport is the hardest out of swimming, running and biking. So they decided it would be best to do all three of them in a race to see which is the hardest. They planned a race to swim the distance of Waikiki Roughwater swim, which is one of the hardest swims, then bike 100 miles, lastly then run a marathon (Shilton). Thanks to three guys arguing, we now have the ultimate fitness challenge, consequently this was the start of the Ironman.

How would people even start to do a triathlon? Mrs. Valentine says, well I went up to Idaho to work in a recreation camp and my friend started to tell me about her dream to do a Triathlon and the whole summer we were talking about it. Later on, my boss sent a text telling the work group chat that he has two open spots for a triathlon. So me and my friend with 2 day notice did a Sprint Triathlon (personal interview Valentine). She was pulled in by her peer to do a Triathlon. While others tell us that he started because his dad did one when he was fifteen. Later on he started doing relay triathlons, where he competed in only the running section. Eventually he was able to do a triathlon for himself (Nuenschwander's interview). For him, he got into Triathlons for his family influence. Connor says that when he went to boarding school and his host father had massive calves, that Connor wished he had his Calves and started wanting to do a triathlon." (Longson's interview). According to the interviews, they started because they knew someone else started a social conversion. Why do people want to keep doing this sport? Kyle N. says "It's how I get away, how I go to focus on myself and find satisfaction with self-improvement", (Personal Interview Kyle). While others find it as a thrill-seeker "I remember growing up hearing of triathlons and wow someday I want to be that good and that is the coolest thing ever and my family would be like yeah you're crazy enough to do that", (Michele interview). The joy and satisfaction is rewarding as she says. Connor tells us " It's addicting the dynamic of triathlon because you got the three disciplines, It's a lot of fun", (Longson's Interview). The sport it-self may not be a big team oriented sport but of Discipline. A discipline that gets old. A lot of athletes come from one of the sports backgrounds like running, swimming or biking but this race requires you to be good at all of them. Joining a triathlon may not be for everyone except they are willing to accept the ultimate fitness challenge.

Before anyone steps up to the starting line, what is needed is the training to exceed your race plan which makes this the ultimate fitness test. According to Frontier, “All participants were moderately trained triathletes, competing in various regional short-distance triathlon events in Northern Germany with an average training volume of 11 h 54 min \pm 1 h 54 min of endurance training in swimming, cycling, and running per week at baseline testing” (Held G. Röhrken). The

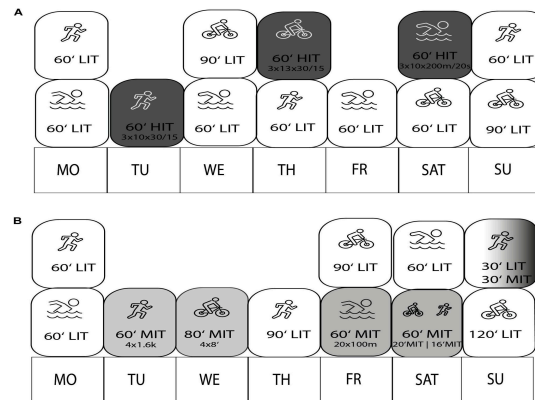


Figure #1

time commitment is compared exactly to what the local triathlete tells me that it's about 11 to 15 hours a week (Kyle's Interview). However, workout programs are constant of all three arts as shown in Figure 2. As seen, various days will have two types of disciplines to train. In other words, it's called “a brick workout” (Kyle's Interview). For example, doing a run then swimming 2 kilometers the same day. Training may also vary depending on the race. Some triathlons may take place on open-water (like a pond, lake or ocean). The training for open-water is different because of the waves, the rocky shoreline, The dark water (where you can't see anything) and crowded races with other competitors and swimming to a buoy (to have a sense of where you are swimming). Training for this may want to do some of your swims in open-water to get used to this type of environment. With rigorous hours training and the elements of open-water make training for triathlon part of the ultimate test.

Nevertheless, some might not have heard of it but there is another discipline in the triathlon. “Nutrition is the fourth discipline in the triathlon”(Kyle’s Interview). Accordingly, the two parts of nutrition that makes or breaks your triathlon, will show up in pre-race nutrition and during the race nutrition. However, pre-race nutrition plans are based on maintaining energy during the race and to not cramp up during the race. For pre-race, Triathletes usually do the same routine; Carbo-load; Carbo-load means the night before the race, the night meal consists of anything that has a high carbohydrate concentration like bread, pasta, oats, etc.... “The carbohydrate requirements of an athlete throughout the triathlon depend on the gender, height and weight of that individual. Moreover, it is recommended that an athlete consume 1-1.5 grams/kg body weight/ hour of the event” (Clark, et. al., 1992). then morning of race-day Triathletes follow the rules of thumb to not try anything new but stick to the routine, so your stomach is upset. “I eat a banana with side oats in the mornings" (Kyle’s interview). While Kyle eating may not be the same with other triathletes. Like Conner says “Espresso, black cafe, it’s rocket fuel, mixed in with a oat drink with protein powder.” (Conner’s interview). With all types of participants, the food choice may differ but the idea to not try any new foods doesn’t change. Then when the race starts, nutrition becomes just as vital as pre-race because if not properly given nutrition, you’ll start cramping. Luckily during the race, there are aid stations to help fuel your body. They place the aid stations every 15 miles for the biking section and 3 miles for the running section (Kyle's interview). In training, before and during race makes nutrition the fourth discipline to the ultimate fitness test.

In conclusion, the triathlon doesn’t just consist of one but multiple disciplines of swimming, biking, running and ‘nutrition’. The achievement of [an ironman or triathlon] is not in just finishing the race, but in the growth of mindset and discipline to complete rigorous goals.

The goal will be achieved with proper training and nutrition to tackle the triathlon, the ultimate test of endurance.

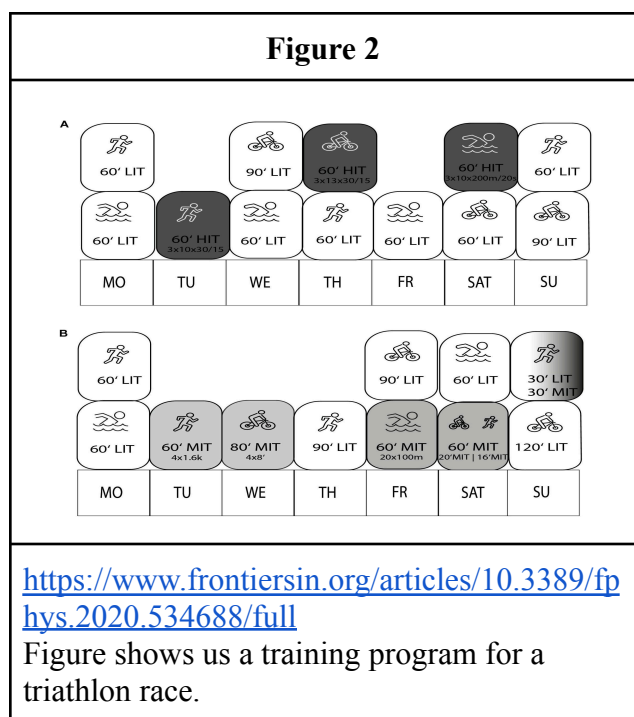


Figure 1

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<https://bettertriathlete.com/triathlon-distances/#>

This shows the different types of races that are available for the sport of Triathlon.

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