



The Program

Here's Hobson's easy-to-follow schedule, which progresses at a smart (injury-preventing) rate.

To train for a triathlon, you must be (or become) proficient at swimming, biking and running. Also, before beginning the plan below, it's best to have been exercising regularly (three or four hours a week) for at least three months prior. "This training plan has plenty of workouts that go further than you will on race day — you don't want to train short," Hobson says. The extra margin will give you an energy reserve you can call on during the race.

Don't worry if you're starting out in something less than the best shape of your life, though: When you cross the finish line, you will undoubtedly find yourself in much better shape than when you began. ●

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Tri It Inside

IF YOU DON'T FEEL ready to take on the variables of an outdoor triathlon (unpredictable weather, crowded transition areas, open-water swimming), take your triathlon indoors. While the exact format depends on each race director, indoor triathlons eliminate the jostling and jockeying for position that are intimidating for many beginners: You swim in a pool, bike on a stationary machine and run on a treadmill. Indoor tris can be a good stepping stone for outdoor ventures.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 1	Swim: 50 minutes • After 10-minute warm-up†, 5 x 1 minute of 90 rpm (count the number of times your right leg goes down in 20 seconds, and multiply by 3); finish ride in effort level 6-7*	Off	Swim: 60 minutes • Warm-up: Alternate 100-yard swim, 100-yard kick (use kickboard) x 4 • Main Set: Pyramid, with 30 seconds rest between each distance: 100, 200, 300, 400, 300, 200, 100 • Cool-down: 10 minutes	Run: 45 minutes in effort level 2* • Check cadence: count left foot strikes for 15 seconds; goal is 21 strikes	Swim: 40 minutes • Warm-up: 10 minutes, easy (do form drills if you want) • Main Set: Moderate 20 minutes, straight swim • Cool-down: 10 minutes	Bike: 75 minutes • Ride a rolling course, if possible; effort level 2-3.* Stay seated on the climbs to build strength in hip flexors	Run: 40 minutes • Find a flat route, and stay in effort level 6-7*
WEEK 2	Swim: 60 minutes • Warm-up: Alternate 100-yard swim, 50-yard kick x 3 • Main Set: 6 x 200, moderate pace, 10 seconds rest between each 200, then kick 300 steady • Cool-down: 200	Off	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 1, Thursday	Bike: 50 minutes • After 10-minute warm-up, pedal 90% with right leg for 1 minute; spin 1 minute with both; then emphasize left; repeat 10 times. • 5-minute cool-down in effort level 6-7*	Swim: 45 minutes • See Week 1, Friday; increase straight swim to 25 minutes	Bike: 90 minutes • See Week 1, Saturday (add 15 minutes)	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 1, Sunday (add 10 minutes)
WEEK 3	Swim: 45 minutes • See Week 1, Wednesday; eliminate the 400-length in pyramid	Off	Swim: 50 minutes • See Week 1, Friday; increase straight swim to 30 minutes	Run: 50 minutes • After a 10-minute warm-up, find a moderate hill and sprint up it for 20 seconds. Walk down. Repeat 6-8 times. Finish run in effort level 6*	Bike: 50 minutes • See Week 1, Monday	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 1, Sunday (add 10 minutes)	Bike: 90 minutes • See Week 1, Saturday (add 15 minutes)
WEEK 4	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 2, Monday	Off	Run: 50 minutes • 10 minutes in effort level 6; 30 minutes in level 8; 10 minutes in level 6*	Bike: 50 minutes • See Week 2, Thursday	Swim: 55 minutes • See Week 1, Friday; increase straight swim to 35 minutes	Bike: 75 minutes in level 2* • During the ride do 2 minutes at 90 rpm, 2 minutes easy; repeat 6 times	Run: 60 minutes • See Week 1, Thursday (add 15 minutes)
WEEK 5	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 1, Wednesday	Off	Bike: 60 minutes • 10-minute warm-up, then do 6 minutes in a big gear on flat road; 5 minutes easy. Repeat 3 times. Cool-down in effort level 6*	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Thursday	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 2, Monday	Brick/Combo: • Bike: 90 minutes • Warm-up, then 30 minutes in level 7;* easy for rest of ride • Run: 20 minutes, level 6*, directly off the bike	Run: 60 minutes • Find a hilly route, and spend time in effort levels 6, 7, 8*
WEEK 6	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 1, Wednesday	Off	Bike: 50 minutes • See Week 4, Saturday	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Thursday	Swim: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Wednesday	Brick/Combo: • Bike: 80 minutes • 20 minutes, effort level 6; 10 minutes in level 7*; 10 minutes, level 8*; repeat • Run: 15 minutes, easy	Run: 45 minutes • First half, easy; second half, increase the tempo to race pace (level 7-8*)
WEEK 7	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 2, Monday	Off	Bike: 60 minutes • After warm-up, spend 30 minutes in level 7*, 85-95 rpm. Finish with easy ride	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 4, Wednesday	Swim: 60 minutes • Warm-up: 15 minutes • Main Set: 3 x 400, first 200 all-out, second half, fast pace; 5-minute rest between sets • Cool-down: 15 minutes	Brick/Combo: • Bike • Warm-up, then bike 15 minutes, followed by 1-mile run; both in level 8-9*. Repeat three times. Then 20-minute easy ride	Off
WEEK 8	Swim: 60 minutes • See Week 1, Wednesday	Off	Bike: 60 minutes • See Week 5, Wednesday	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Thursday	Swim: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Wednesday	Bike: 90 minutes • 20-minute warm-up, then 20 minutes in level 9*; 10 minutes in level 6*; 15 minutes in level 8*. 25-minute cool-down	Run: 60 minutes • See Week 6, Sunday (add 15 minutes)
WEEK 9	Swim: 45 minutes • See Week 3, Monday	Off	Bike: 60 minutes • See Week 7, Wednesday	Run: 50 minutes • See Week 5, Sunday (subtract 10 minutes)	Swim: 50 minutes • See Week 3, Wednesday	Bike: 50 minutes • Easy, light on pedals; level 6-7*	Brick/Combo: • Bike: 50 minutes, hilly ride • Run: 30 minutes, flat course
WEEK 10	Off	Bike: 45 minutes • See Week 4, Saturday; repeat sequence only three times	Swim: 45 minutes • Warm-up: easy 400 • Main Set: 3 x 75 (25 fast, 25 slow, 25 fast); 10 seconds rest between sets. Repeat. Then 4 x 25 fast, 30 seconds rest; 2 x 50 fast, 30 seconds rest • Cool-down: 200	Run: 35 minutes • After 10-minute warm-up, stride on grass (picking up your pace, taking longer steps): count 30 steps with left foot, walk 90 seconds. Repeat 6 times	Swim: 25 minutes • Warm-up, 10 minutes • Main Set: 25 fast, 30 seconds rest; repeat 6 times. • 5-minute cool-down	Brick/Combo: • Bike: 20 minutes • Warm-up, then go for 90 seconds at race pace. Repeat 3-5 times • Run: 15 minutes easy, then stretch	Race Day!

† Be sure to warm up before and cool down after each workout.

*For an explanation of effort levels, see "The Effort Meter," page 23.