

Overall

If it's your first event focus on completing; not necessarily competing to win. Watch, observe and learn. Apply what you learn to your next event. Look at event photos. You'll see lots of smiles. No one is dragging across the finish line.

Times for each course and overall show a wide range of competitor performance. A triathlon is very doable.

The 8 week plan presented takes just 3.5 hours per week. See copy in PowerPoint or listed separately on the training page.

Panelists had different approaches as to when they started to train. Some stay in general conditioning by running, swimming and stationary biking (off-season) and then ramp up ahead of an event. Others are just now starting (late March, early April) to train.

There are a variety of training plans out there. Just Google! Also, go to mytimetotry.com for a personalized plan.

Train with someone or in a group. You'll make more progress by encouraging each other.

Only one panelist used a personal trainer. Most do their own or with other athletes.

Try to do 2 things. Not always possible. Swim and bike, bike and run, etc. It will aid your overall conditioning.

There are run groups, bike groups and masters swimming groups to help.

You don't need fancy gear to start. See PowerPoint slides for suggestions. If you purchase new equipment be sure to try it out and make sure it's going to work for you the day of the event.

There are a variety of events out there; including off-road triathlons, aquabikes, aquathons, etc. Go to trifind.com to see what's out there.

The Swim

Know your swim time. When all swimmers know their time with reasonable accuracy and line up properly the swim goes much better.

No diving at the start. You must jump in. Swimmers usually start 15-20 seconds apart. A wave start; where everyone goes at once is reserved for open water triathlons.

If someone taps your toe move over and let them pass.

Get your swim time on June 3rd at Ellis Porter pool 11:00am. There will be a fun ride and run afterwards. We'll have tri racks there for familiarization.

The swim for our event is a snake swim. See diagram in PowerPoint. Practice going under the lanes if you can.

Focus on your technique. The more efficient you are the easier the swim will be. Exhale in the water also known as "blowing bubbles" so that when you turn your head to breathe you are inhaling only. Your swimming strokes will be much smoother. You'll be breathing in the pocket created by your movement. Try to keep your lower goggles in the water when you breathe. That will keep you from over-rotating.

Vary your practice by mixing your strokes. It will reduce potential injuries and make practice more fun. Note that you can swim any stroke in a triathlon

Some Panelists swim up to a mile 2-3 times a week. Some less.

If you are using a wetsuit to practice for a lake or open water swim, remember that a wetsuit will make you more buoyant. This buoyancy does not carry over when you swim without it. Note: Wetsuits are only legal when the water temperatures are at 78 degrees or colder. Even at colder temperatures some do not wear wetsuits. So, it would be rare to need a wetsuit. Don't go out and buy one to start. Check race rules and requirements.

Goggles. Look for goggles that have enough suction to stay on your face. Also look for those that have adjustable bridges. Some Speedo brand goggles do, some don't. If your vision is a problem get prescription goggles. Typically priced at \$20.00 Swimoutlet.com is a good source. They also carry tri clothing.

Purchase a good quality suit. It will last much longer. Typically do not wash. Rinse in cold water. If you must wash follow washing and drying instructions to a T. Some hi-tec materials erode with soap and bleach.

Bike

You don't need an expensive bike to start. One panelist started did their first triathlon with a Walmart Mongoose bike. They upgraded when they decided the sport was one they wanted to continue.

Be sure it's in good condition. Have it checked if you're not sure. Make sure brakes work, tires are in good condition and properly inflated.

Be sure you have your helmet. It too should be in good condition and meet the recent standards.

Biking or Tri shoes are helpful, but not necessary. You'll need clip-on pedals with biking or Tri shoes. Pedals can run \$60.00 or so. Biking shoes will be \$100.00 or more. Try shoes on before you buy. The fit should be more snug than running shoes. Biking shoes are more rigid than running shoes so a tighter fit is better. Lots of advice online.

Used bikes are less expensive, but buy a name brand used bike such as Trek, Specialized, etc. have it checked at a bike shop before purchase if you can. Look around at your first event and talk to competitors about what bikes they are using and why.

If your bike breaks down, don't worry. We'll have someone come pick you up. Most events, ours included has a bike service where small things can be fixed before the event. Nick Smith, Redwheel provides this at our event.

Redwheel will rent you – at no cost if you are a tri registrant – one of their hybrid rental bikes. Every bike was utilized last year so be sure to talk with Nick Smith at Redwheel about taking advantage of this.

Practice the bike to run transition. See separate transition info below.

Look for the mount/dismount lines. There will be someone there to remind you of them.

Keep your cadence – biking stroke rate high at 80-100 stroke cycles per minute. A cadence meter is a good idea. Be realistic, sometimes that rate just isn't doable. The 80-100 is ideal. You'll be balancing your stroke rate with the gear you are in. Your cadence will obviously be less going uphill. Try a Y stationary or spinning bike. Most have cadence meters. Note you can use the spinning bikes at West and at Firley if no other classes are in session. The room at West is not locked. At Firley, ask for the key at the front desk. Spinning classes both off-season and during the season are great.

Riding in a group is very beneficial. Some rides are road based and are no drop; meaning you are not left behind. Some are gravel only. See links to Facebook pages.

Rides are as follows:

Tuesday, 6:15 at Binder - mountain biking

Wednesday, 5:30 at Gov Mansion - road ride

Thursday - toss up but usually 6:00 at Red Wheel, Gravel

2 rides on Saturday, both start at 8:00 am at Millbottom - road ride
101 & fun ride (Katy Trail / Greenway)

Rides should be posted on the JCMO Cyclists and/or Team Red Wheel Facebook page.

Running

Panelists ran a couple of times a week. Distances varied up to 5 miles at a time.

Panelists mixed their running with swimming and biking

Really no special equipment here other than a hat and sunglasses.

There are several different run groups you can participate in. See links.

Transition

T1 the swim to bike and T2 the bike to swim transitions were explained.

Get your stuff laid out under your bike so that you can easily change from one course/discipline to the other. You are on your own clock so the less time in transition reduces your overall time.

Practice making these transitions. It will make your overall experience better as you will be less rushed and hurried.

Where your bike is parked in transition according to panelists really doesn't make a difference, but other's do have their personal preference.

Be sure you can find your bike. Some use balloons or a bright towel tied around their bike. Our bike racks are numbered so that will help you a lot.

Nutrition/Hydration

For a sprint triathlon like our JC Triathlon nutrition is not a big deal.

Hydrate yourself the week of an event.

Carry a water bottle or water/energy drink on your bike.

There are water stations on the run. We have 2 at our event.

Don't change your eating patterns dramatically before an event. Eat what you normally do.

If you do purchase energy foods and drinks to use at and during an event make sure they work for you. Can you open it and ride or run? Is it even edible? Does it upset your stomach.

Generally if you want to get your morning bathroom issues out of the way the day of an event eat about 2 hours ahead of the event start. Don't

worry, lots of people are nervous so there's lots of last minute peeing – that's normal, so plan accordingly.

Finish

Smile for you finish line photo.

Get your finisher medal.

Go over to the pool-house for your interim time slip. Relax and get something to eat.

Check your time again to get your overall place and age group place. If you are in the top 3 you will get a place medal. If you are the overall male or female triathlete you'll get a special award.