

June 2015 | active.com | Marty Gaal | Fitness

NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.

The 80-Minute Training Plan

Most triathletes are grown adults with multiple commitments, family duties and time constraints. I have worked with highly motivated world class amateur athletes who have careers and families, as well as beginner or intermediates who do not have nor want competitive goals. Both types of athletes present different challenges.

My experiences have led me to believe that the most realistic training plan for a certain type of athlete is simple and repeatable. This particular approach works for an athlete who is extremely time constrained and highly motivated or is someone who is not as competitively motivated but wants a healthy and realistic training plan.

I call this the "hour-twenty" training plan. It consists of roughly one hour and twenty minute workouts three to five days a week and one longer workout with a day off. In essence, do both weekend workout time slots in one day and take the other day off.

This is a workout that can be completed no matter the time of day, with minimal interference from work or other commitments. There are no double days in this training plan. One and done is the approach.

This training plan is appropriate for sprint to international distance triathletes. It would not be a viable plan for anything longer. If you plan to race 70.3 to IRONMAN, you must make time for longer training sessions.

The key to this type of training plan is that most days will consist of two disciplines. The weekend workout will be the major endurance session of the week. The time allotment for each discipline will vary depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the athlete.

One hour and twenty minutes is enough time to work the various training elements in any training plan—aerobic endurance, anaerobic endurance, lactate threshold, drills and skills and power. It is enough time to burn roughly 700 calories. It is also enough time to burn off life-related stress and spend a little time on yourself.

The table below illustrates a week sample for the motivated and experienced athlete. This example represents a motivated 40-year-old female with 10 years of experience (distances will vary depending on your skill level, time is the same):

Table I. Advanced / motivated hour-twenty example training plan:



Monday	Swim 30 Minutes muscular endurance Run 45 Minutes aerobic endurance	Swim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400 easy swim • 100 easy kick • 8 x 100 mod-hard on :15 rest • 100 cool down Run <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes easy warm up • 25 minutes comfortable fast • 5 minutes easy
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Tuesday	Bike 80 Minutes bike endurance/ muscular endurance / anaerobic endurance	Bike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes easy • 5 x 6 minutes hard (lactate threshold effort) with 3 minutes easy between each • 5 minutes very easy cool down
Wednesday	Strength 20 Minutes power/balance Swim 55 Minutes swim endurance and muscular endurance 5-Minute Transition	Core Strength Workout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standing or jump squats • push ups • planks • pull ups • crunches or sit ups Swim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 easy • 6 x 300 descend 1-3 and 4-6 so 3 and 6 are fast on :45 rest • 6 x 50 drills on :15 • 100 easy cool down
Thursday	Bike 60 Minutes bike muscular endurance Run 15 Minutes specific running 5-Minute Transition	Bike <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 minutes easy • 30 minutes moderate hard steady • 10 minutes easy Run 15 minute steady effort off the bike
Friday	Run 50 Minutes run anaerobic endurance Swim 25 Minutes swim endurance 5-Minute Transition	Run – 15 minutes easy / 10 x 400 on track (or 1:30 on road) at 5K pace with 200 jog easy between / 10 minutes easy Swim 25 minutes easy continuous
Saturday	Day Off	
Sunday	Bike 120 Minutes endurance Run 20 Minutes endurance	Ride 90 minutes to 2 hours solo or with a group, steady moderate effort Run 20 minutes off the bike steady effort

The total amount of training time for the example above is about 8.5 hours. Depending who you talk to, this is either quite a bit or a piece of cake. This sort of plan is effective and works well. The Sunday workout could be a longer run and a shorter ride every couple of weeks.

Table II illustrates the same approach for a newer or less-motivated athlete. This example represents a 25-year-old male getting back into shape:

Table II. Beginner / newly-motivated hour-twenty example training plan:

Monday	Swim 45 Minutes swim muscular endurance Run 30 Minutes run aerobic endurance	Swim 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400 easy swim • 100 easy kick • 4 x 50 drills on :15 • 8 to 10 x 100 moderate on :15 rest • 100 cool down Run 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes easy • 10 minutes moderate • 5 minutes easy
Tuesday	Bike 75 Minutes bike endurance/muscular endurance /anaerobic endurance	Ride 1 hour 15 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes easy • 5 x 3 minutes hard (lactate threshold effort) with 3 minutes easy between each • 15 minutes easy cool down
Wednesday	Day Off	
Thursday	Run 50 Minutes run anaerobic endurance Swim 25 Minutes swim endurance 5-Minute Transition	Run 50 minutes – 20 minutes easy / 6 x 400 on track (or 2:00 on road) at 10k pace with 200 jog easy between / 10 minutes easy Swim 25 minutes easy-steady continuous
Friday	Bike 50 Minutes bike muscular endurance Strength 20 Minutes power/balance	Ride 50 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 minutes easy • 20 minutes moderate hard steady • 10 minutes easy Core strength workout 20 minutes – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standing or jump squats • push ups • planks • pull ups • sit ups or crunches
Saturday	Day Off	
Sunday	90-Minute Ride bike endurance 20-Minute Run run endurance	Ride 90 minutes to 2 hours solo or with a group, steady moderate effort Run 20 minutes off the bike steady effort

The plan above is just under seven hours.

There are many challenges I face as a coach when planning for training and racing. Helping motivated athletes avoid injury and burnout while challenging their limits is their biggest challenge.

Keeping newer or less-motivated athletes consistent with a plan that helps to build their endurance, confidence, and ultimately improve their speed is their biggest challenge.

Each athlete is different, entering into a training plan with strengths and weaknesses. My purpose in writing this article is to detail a method for triathlon training that does not require a lockdown on all your free time while still producing solid results for short to intermediate distance events.

The proliferation of 70.3 and IRONMAN racing, while great for the sport, has many newcomers and even some veterans thinking that they aren't a "real" triathlete unless they compete in long distance events or take part in multi-hour sessions several times per week. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sprint and Olympic-distance triathlons are challenging endurance races. You can suffer greatly and adequately build your character in one or two hours as well as twelve.