

HARLECH TRIATHLON

Sunday 9th May 2010 . Harlech, Gwynedd, North Wales



Your 8-week training plan

The Swim

TRAINING: This element often poses the most problems for newcomers. But with 30 minutes interval training three times a week you should feel more comfortable in the water after three weeks. Try swimming six sets of 100m in 15 minutes – taking two minutes to swim the 100m with 30 seconds rest in between – or factor the timing up and down to suit your ability.

TECHNIQUE: Assume the position – keep your body as streamlined as possible and point your chin downwards at 45 degrees for minimal drag.

Arm yourself – during the stroke, your hand should enter the water 30-60cm in front of your head; during the 'recovery' (when your hand's out of the water) keep it as loose and relaxed as possible.

And...relax – in the early sessions, take plenty of breaks, keep the distance down and concentrate on technique.

KEY

EASY: Low-effort session, moderate distances, short rests, mainly front crawl.

MIXED: Steady session, with arm-only intervals then leg-only ones, using a float. For instance: 100m front crawl, then 50m leg-only crawl, 50m arm-only crawl – repeated for the desired distance.

PACE: Moderate to high effort, with good rests, checking times and using interval training (alternating between high and low-intensity 60-sec bursts).

SPEED: Easy warm-up, then intensive set covering short distances with plenty of rest.

WEEK 1: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.8 TO 2.4KM

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km mixed
Session 2: 1.8 to 2.2km easy

WEEK 2: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.2 TO 3.2KM

Session 1: 1.2 to 1.5km pace
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km easy

WEEK 3: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.5 TO 3.2KM

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km mixed
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km mixed

WEEK 4: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.3 TO 3KM

Session 1: 1.5 to 2km pace
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km speed

WEEK 5: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.3 TO 3KM

Session 1: 800m to 1km easy
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km mixed

WEEK 6: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.5 TO 3.2KM

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km easy
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km mixed

WEEK 7: TOTAL DISTANCE: 2.5 TO 3.2KM

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km easy
Session 2: 1 to 1.2km mixed

WEEK 8: TOTAL DISTANCE: 1 TO 1.2KM

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km pace

SESSION 2: THE RACE

WEEK 1:

Session 1: 30 mins, easy
Session 2: 45 mins, easy
Goals: Don't push big gears and try to achieve 80 to 90 revolutions per minute.

WEEK 2:

Session 1: 30 mins, easy
Session 2: 45 mins, easy
Goals: As week 1, but push your 30-min cycle a little harder.

WEEK 3:

Session 1: 30 mins, steady
Session 2: 60 mins, easy
Goals: For your 30-min cycle, increase the pace every 10 mins from easy to fairly hard.

WEEK 4:

Session 1: 30 mins, easy
Session 2: 60 mins, steady
Goals: For the 60-min cycle, do 20 mins easy, 20 mins fairly hard, and 20 mins steady.

WEEK 5:

Session 1: 60 mins, easy
Session 2: 45 mins, steady
Goals: Try a swim before session 2, and build the pace over the session.

WEEK 6:

Session 1: 60 mins, steady
Session 2: 45 mins, steady, followed by 20-min run
Goals: Session 1 should be as session 2 in week 4.

WEEK 7:

Session 1: 60 mins, steady
Session 2: 45 mins, steady
Goals: Both sessions as week 5, but should feel easier.

WEEK 8:

Session 1: 45 mins, easy
Session 2: Race
Goals: Your taper week – easing off training so you're fresh for the race.

The cycle

The primary rules are to relax and find the right gear. Less than 80rpm – count eight complete leg rotations every six seconds – and you're in too high a gear, which will slow you down at the end of the cycle and leave you tired before the run.

TECHNIQUE:

CHECK IT OUT: Make sure your bike's in a fit state before every training session and most importantly, before the race. Check the tyres are roadworthy and all nuts and joints adjusted to the recommended settings.

RELAX: concentrate on your breathing and try to find a steady rhythm.

SLOW DOWN: Ease off over the last mile so your legs get some rest before the run. And also try standing up on the pedals, off the saddle, to stretch your hamstrings in preparation of the next stage.



The run:

After the cycle, your legs will feel tired, so concentrate on a relaxed, rhythmic breathing pattern, using your arms to power you up any hills. Try using mental tricks to get you through, like aiming for the next horizon, focusing on your breathing or repeating mantras to yourself.

TECHNIQUE:

GET THE KNOWLEDGE: Before the race make sure you know exactly where the water stations, turning points and finishing lines are. Stretch: Modify your race shoes with elastic or spring-loaded laces for a quick transition from the bike to the run.

GREASE UP: Smear a little grease on the inside of your shoes to prevent blisters, and sprinkle some talc in your socks to soak up any moisture.

WEEK 1:

Session 1: 3.2km, easy jogging pace

Session 2: 2.4km on track or measured distance. One 400m lap jogging, four laps running, one lap jogging.

Goals: Keep it relaxed.

WEEK 2:

Session 1: 4.8km, easy pace run/jog

Session 2: 3.2km as week 1 session 2

Goals: Raise the pace on session 2, increasing your stride length and using your arms.

WEEK 3:

Session 1: 4.8km easy pace

Session 2: 1 to 1.2km, mixed

Goals: Raise the pace gradually on the middle kilometers.

WEEK 4:

Session 1: 6.4km, easy pace

Session 2: On the track – two laps easy, four laps faster than week 1, two laps easy.

Goals: Significant time improvement on week 1.

WEEK 5:

Session 1: 4.8km, easy pace

Session 2: 4.8 to 6.4km alternating fast runs with easy jogging. Warm up jog, then four to five 30-90-second bursts, then warm-down jog.

Goals: Alternate fast sections with 2 minutes easy jogging and try to get a real change in pace.

WEEK 6:

Session 1: Run race distance at a very easy pace

Session 2: Cycle race distance, then run 3.2km, doing 2.4km steady followed by 0.8km easy.

Goals: Keep the cycle relaxed and concentrate on your running style

WEEK 7:

Session 1: 1 to 1.2km easy

Session 2: 6.4km: 1.5km easy, 3.4km steady/fast, 1.5km easy

Goals: Your last hard session, so use it to feel good, but remember your technique.

WEEK 8:

Session 1: Relaxed 5 to 6km run

Session 2: Rest

Goals: Take it easy and look forward to the race

The Transition Stage

The fabled 'fourth' element, it's often in the transitions between the swim, cycle and run that races are won or lost. Why? Because on top of the time it takes you to don the correct kit, it takes time for your muscles to adjust to the new exercise.

Ease into each new segment at around 70% of your maximum effort, gradually increasing to your race pace by halfway through the leg. Use the same strategy for each discipline.