

## The plan

# ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS GUIDE

KICK START YOUR FITNESS WITH THIS FOUR-WEEK PLAN FOR FIRST-TIME TRIATHLETES

## Meet the expert

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**EVERYONE HAS to start somewhere, even world champions like Alistair Brownlee. So if you're completely new to triathlon this is the best place to be. This four-week training plan is designed to get you into the swing of regular swim, bike and run training so you can soon start calling yourself a fully-fledged triathlete.**

It will help you build a solid fitness foundation so that by the end of it, you'll be in an ideal position to try any one of the race-specific training plans we publish every month in *Triathlon Plus* and our articles on [Triradar.com](http://Triradar.com). In fact, in next month's issue we'll even be giving away a

free beginners supplement and a training plan that would be ideal for you after completing this one, to take you to your first tri race.

Anyone who's reasonably fit and healthy can try this plan, but it's always a good idea to get a check up from a doctor if you're not 100% sure. And if you find the training too hard, please don't give up straight away. Try halving or even quartering the distances for four weeks, and then increase them gradually from there until you can manage the full amount. These sessions shouldn't kill you, so just reduce them if they're too hard. It's not a contest to see how much you can punish yourself.

If you come from an individual swimming, cycling or running background, it's not a bad idea to use this training plan to gradually build up your experience of the other two disciplines. For example, if you're a runner, use these swimming and cycling workouts and stick with your existing run training.

## Need to know

### SWIM

The quickest way to improve your swimming is to invest in one-to-one lessons, so you don't waste hours reinforcing bad technique later on. Get yourself some swim toys too. Start off with a pull-buoy, which goes between your thighs to help your legs float, and a float that you hold out in front of you to practise your kicking. You'll also need a good pair of goggles that don't steam up or leak, and a swimming costume that doesn't flap about or restrict your stroke. Start your swim training in a local pool where they have separate lanes for serious swimmers (that's you!) preferably when it's quiet.

### BIKE

You don't need a posh racing bike at this stage – any safe and functional bike will do

as long as it fits you properly. You'll need a helmet, mitts and padded cycling shorts too. There's a lot to get your head around when you first start cycling, like maintenance, punctures, changeable weather and finding quiet routes. Even the hard saddle will take a few weeks to get used to. All these things get easier in time, so be patient.

### RUN

The key thing when you start running is moderation. Too much too soon, and you'll get injured within a matter of weeks. Two or three runs a week is plenty. You don't have to be breathing hard or feeling totally knackered for it to be effective training. Chill out, walk a bit, and you'll gradually improve over the weeks and months, without succumbing to injury.



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## WEEK 01

Mon

**Run**  
15 mins as run 1 minute, walk 1 minute  
**Notes**  
Make sure you start out with proper running shoes. Most running shops will recommend the best shoes for you, based on an analysis of your gait

Tue

**Swim**  
16 x 25m as (alternating 25m FC, 25m KICK, 25m BREAST, 25m PULL) + 20sec rests  
**Notes**  
I'll be using various abbreviations in these swim sets, so check out the KEY at the bottom of the page

Wed

### Rest day

Don't be tempted to train. You'll improve quicker if you take the rest days. Your body adapts to training when you rest

Thur

**Bike**  
Ride 30mins at a steady pace  
**Notes**  
On the flats you should be going easy enough that you can breathe easily just through your nose if you choose to

Fri

### Rest day

Sat

**Swim**  
8 x 25m as (alternating 25m FC, 25m BREAST) + 20sec rests 4 x 50m as (50m KICK, 50m PULL). You can include fins, hand paddles and snorkel if your pool allows  
**Notes**  
If you've had swimming lessons and been given drills to practise, incorporate them into your warm up

Sun

**Brick**  
Ride 30mins at a steady pace, straight into run 10mins alternating 1min walk/1min run  
**Notes**  
Get your saddle height right. As a rule of thumb, when you're sitting on the saddle, you should just about be able to rest your heel on the pedal with your legs straight. Other adjustments like handlebar height, and saddle fore/aft take a bit more time, so check out some bike fitting videos on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## WEEK 02

Mon

**Run**  
20mins as 1 minute run, 1 minute walk  
**Notes**  
You don't have to run hard. Try and run at a chatting pace. If that's impossible shorten the runs and increase the walks

Tue

**Swim**  
**WU** 8 x 25m alternating FC, BREAST + 15sec rests **MAIN** 8 x 50m alternating 50m PULL, 50m KICK + 30sec rests **WD** 4 x 50m BREAST  
**Notes**  
Ride at an easy pace, but work hard up the hills

Wed

### Rest day

Thur

**Bike**  
Ride 45mins at a steady pace  
**Notes**  
Some of your bike rides can be off-road if you prefer

Fri

### Rest day

Sat

**Swim**  
**WU** 8 x 50m alternating FC, KICK + 20sec rests **MAIN** 8 x 50m PULL as 25m easy, 25m hard + 30sec rests 4 x 50m KICK as 25m easy, 25m hard + 20sec rests **WD** 4 x 50m BREAST

Sun

**Brick**  
Ride 40mins at a steady pace, straight into 10mins run, alternating 1min walk/1min run  
**Notes**  
Keep your tyres up at the pressure recommended on their sidewall. An upright track pump is best

## WEEK 03

Mon

**Run**  
25 mins as 1 minute run, 1 minute walk  
**Notes**  
You can increase the length of the runs to 90secs if you feel up to it, decreasing the walks to 30secs

Tue

**Swim**  
**WU** 8 x 25m alternating FC, BREAST + 15sec rests **MAIN** 4 x 100m as (alternating 100m PULL, 100m KICK) + 45sec rests **WD** 3 x 100m BREAST

Wed

### Rest day

Thur

**Bike**  
Ride 1 hour at a steady pace  
**Notes**  
If you're getting saddle sore, try using some chamois cream or Vaseline. If that doesn't help, it may be a bike-fitting issue that's causing you problems, so seek expert help

Fri

### Rest day

Sat

**Swim**  
**WU** 8 x 50m alternating FC, BREAST + 20sec rests **MAIN** 4 x 100m as (alternating 100m PULL, 100m FC) + 45sec rests 4 x 100m KICK as (alternating 25m easy, 25m hard) + 30sec rests **WD** 4 x 50m BREAST

Sun

**Brick**  
Ride 50mins at a steady pace, straight into run 10mins alternating 90secs run/30secs walk  
**Notes**  
Buy a saddle bag for your bike. Always carry two spare innertubes, tyre levers and patches. Keep a mini pump in your back pocket

## WEEK 04

Mon

**Run**  
30mins as run 90secs, walk 30secs

Tue

**Swim**  
**WU** 4 x 100m alternating FC, BREAST + 30sec rests **MAIN** 4 x 100m FC as (alternating 25m hard, 25m easy) + 45sec rests 4 x 50m hard KICK + 30sec rests **WD** 4 x 100m BREAST

Wed

### Rest day

Thur

**Bike**  
Ride 1 hour 15mins at a steady pace  
**Notes**  
Make time to practise changing your inner tube, in the event of the inevitable puncture

Fri

### Rest day

Sat

**Swim**  
**WU** 8 x 50m alternating FC, BREAST + 20sec rests **MAIN** 200m PULL + 45sec rest. 8 x 25m sprint KICK + 30sec rests 4 x 100m FC as (alternating 25m easy, 25m hard) + 30sec rests **WD** 4 x 50m BREAST  
**Notes**  
We're up to 200m non-stop today (with a pull buoy)

Sun

**Brick**  
Ride 1 hour at a steady pace, straight into run 15mins alternating 90secs run/30secs walk  
**Notes**  
Take an easier week after this week, to allow your body to recover and adapt

**KEY**  
**WU** Warm up **WD** Warm down **MAIN** Main set **FC** Front crawl **BREAST** Breaststroke **KICK** Kicking with a kick float held at arms length **PULL** Front crawl with a pull buoy between your legs