The plan

EIGHT-WEEK SWIM SOS
THIS EIGHT-WEEK PLAN WILL HELP YOU TAKE THE PLunge AND BETTER YOUR SWIM TIMES

Meet the expert
Phil Mosley
Coaching editor of Triathlon Plus, Mosley has coached dozens of triathletes to success at every distance

THIS PLAN IS for anyone who has adopted the 'bury your head in the sand' approach to triathlon swimming. Don’t worry, it happens a lot! People often enter a race, do the cycle and run training and conveniently ignore the swimming part. And then – normally with around two months to go, and sometimes less – they wake up in a panic and wonder how on earth they’re going to finish the race.

That’s why the training in this eight-week schedule is focused on fixing your swimming in the shortest time possible. There are still cycling and running sessions to be done, but they’re designed to be super-efficient so you can dedicate more of your time where it’s needed most: in the pool or open water.

As you may have realised by now, swimming is as much about technique as it is about fitness, so it’s not enough to simply plough mindlessly up and down the pool thinking about last night’s TV. We’ve included six drills for you to practise, and worked them into some of the swim sessions prescribed in the plan. There’s another skill you’ll need to master too – open-water swimming – so in the last four weeks of this plan we suggest you do some outdoor wetsuit swimming before your race (see feature on page 50).

Beyond these plans, you should try to get one-to-one help from a swim coach or someone who knows their stuff. Self-help is good, but you just can’t beat someone showing you how to swim properly.

As with previous training plans, there’s a Training Zones section that describes the correct bike and run training intensities. Feel free to swap the sessions around to suit your weekly routine, but try not to take shortcuts. Triathlons are far more enjoyable when you’re confident about your swimming, so make sure you put in the hard work. It’s only for eight weeks, and two of those are recovery weeks anyway.

Are these plans for you?
To start these training plans you should already be able to:
- Ride your bike steadily for 90 minutes
- Jog for 30 minutes
- Swim 100m non-stop

How it works
Get your guide ready to go

Cut out the guide following the dotted outline
Fold the guide in quarters using the fold guides
Now carry it with you for reference while training

Photos: Julian Largier, Book jacket: Phil Nicodemi
**TRAINING ZONES**

**USING THESE TRAINING Zones will help you train at the right intensity for each session. This helps develop specific aspects of your fitness, as well as making sure you don’t overdo it. You can either estimate your intensity using the Training Zone descriptions, or use a heart-rate monitor for a more precise measure. If you use a heart-rate monitor, use the percentages provided and subtract them from your maximum heart rate to calculate your zones. Tools like cycle power meters and GPS watches will also help track your training progress, but they’re not essential for these plans. These Training Zones are only a guide, so don’t worry about being overly precise with heart rates because they’ll fluctuate anyway. It’s good to be mindful of your intensity but it’s even more important that you get out there and enjoy your training.**

**ZONE 1 (Z1) Recovery**
60 to 65% of your maximum. Easy pace, feels nice and light.

**ZONE 2 (Z2) Steady**
65 to 75% of your maximum. Fairly easy pace. Easy enough so that you could breathe just through your nose if you wanted to.

**ZONE 3 (Z3) Tempo**
75% to 80% of your maximum. A fairly hard but sustainable pace.

**ZONE 4 (Z4) Race tempo**
80 to 90% of your maximum. A hard pace that requires real focus to sustain.

**KEY**
**WU** Warm up, **WD** Warm down, **MAIN** Main set, **FC** Front crawl, **KICK** Kick with a float held out in front of you, **BUILD** Gradually increase the intensity of each rep within a set, **PULL** Front crawl with a pull float between thighs

**STAY IN THE TRAINING ZONE WITH TRIATHLON PLUS**

**FOLD 1**

**HEAD-UP FRONT CRAWL**

This is another great drill for learning to keep a high elbow and for recruiting the large muscles of your back, shoulders and core as well as your smaller arm muscles, resulting in a more powerful stroke. This drill will also help reduce your injury risk by using your large muscles, instead of putting lots of pressure on your small arm muscles.

**INSTRUCTIONS**
This drill is exactly as described; you need to swim front crawl with your head up. Keep in mind that this drill is not just about being able to sight, but also about your catch. Concentrate on leaving your fingers behind your wrist, keeping your wrist under your elbow, and pushing towards your hip. You can use hand paddles to make the drill harder if you need to.

**SIDE KICK**

This drill will help you learn to rotate your body and stay balanced in the water. You might find it easier with fins on.

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Pro triathlete Leanda Cave says: “A good way to visualise what body roll feels like is to imagine you’re holding onto a rope tied to a bridge with one arm, as the current moves you. Your body will naturally adjust to that.” Kick down the pool on one side with your lower arm stretched out in front (and pointing slightly downwards as it would during a stroke, to avoid drag), turning your head to breathe when you need to. You can also try ‘kick and glide’ drills, where you swim for three strokes then pause on one side for five seconds, kicking, then repeat and pause on the other side.

**FRONT SCULL**

Sculling is often one of the first skills taught to new swimmers, because it’s a great way to think about your body position and get a feel for the water.

**INSTRUCTIONS**
The front scull helps you get a strong ‘catch’ – the start of your stroke after your hand enters the water. Extend your arms out in front of you with a slight bend at the elbows. Your fingertips should be pointing forwards and down – make sure your wrists don’t drop. Move your hands in a figure-of-eight movement as if mixing hot and cold water in the bath. Your knees keep sinking, use a pull buoy. You’ll only move through the water slowly, but you should move – and if you start going backwards, check that your forearms are below your elbows and your fingers below your wrists, pointing slightly downwards.

**FIST DRILL**

This drill helps you feel the water with your forearms and improves your catch.

**INSTRUCTIONS**
In this drill, you’ll swim front crawl with your fists clenched. Because you can’t rely on your hands to catch the water, you’ll be forced to keep your elbows high and use your forearm to pull through. You may find you need to adapt a higher stroke rate than usual, and you’ll need to kick strongly from the hip. Arm to keep your hips high in the water so you’re not dragging your legs, which could slow you down. If you alternate laps of fist drill with normal front crawl, you should notice a immediate improvement in your arm position. Punching the water usually helps you get the lane to yourself when the pool is crowded, too.
### WEEK 01
- **Swim 1,500m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick Hour**
  - Bike 60mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 180mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 30mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 40mins in Z2**

### WEEK 02
- **Swim 1,500m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick Hour**
  - Bike 60mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 180mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 30mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 40mins in Z2**

### WEEK 03
- **Swim 1,500m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick Hour**
  - Bike 60mins in Z2
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  - Run 30mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 40mins in Z2**

### WEEK 04
- **Swim 1,000m Easy session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick 40mins**
  - Bike 60mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 4x1min in Z2 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Easy session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **AM Run 40mins in Z2**

### WEEK 05
- **Swim 1,700m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick 7mins**
  - Bike 4x4mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 10mins +1min RI
  - Run 12mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 5mins in Z2**

### WEEK 06
- **Swim 1,800m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick 7mins**
  - Bike 4x4mins in Z2
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- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 5mins in Z2**

### WEEK 07
- **Swim 2,000m Endurance session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick 7mins**
  - Bike 4x4mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 10mins +1min RI
  - Run 12mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Threshold session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 10mins in Z2

- **AM Run 5mins in Z2**

### WEEK 08
- **Swim 2,000m Easy session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
  - MAIN Bike 60mins at upper end of Z3 +5mins RI
  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Brick 40mins**
  - Bike 60mins in Z2
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  - Run 18mins in Z2

- **Swim 1,000m Easy session**
  - WU Bike 15mins in Z2
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- **AM Run 40mins in Z2**

**REST DAY**

**RACE DAY**

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**EIGHT WEEK SWIM GUIDE**

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