

Road to CapTexTri: An Austin Runner's Guide to Prepare for a First Olympic Distance Triathlon

Patrick Evoe

Austin's running season is winding down, but triathlon season is quickly approaching. With this, many runners begin to think about shifting gears to triathlon training. Whether this is an annual endeavor or a first time challenge, we are fortunate to live in a city with a wealth of triathlon training and racing resources. With last year's launch of the Texas Tri Series we now have a triathlon race series around Austin, the Danskin is one of the nation's largest women-only triathlons, we have a race of international notoriety in the Longhorn Ironman 70.3, and two premier triathlons in downtown Austin with the Austin Tri and CapTexTri.

This article is intended to help you to make that shift from running season to complete your first Olympic distance triathlon. In the training guidelines below, I outline a sample training plan for someone to prepare to participate in the CapTexTri as a first race at that distance. The Rookie Triathlon in New Braunfels is included in this plan as a preparation race to gain experience, get the feel for triathlons, and confront any fears you may have before you get to your first Olympic distance race. I advise that you sign up early for both races because they will both sell out well before race day. Many people are left out each year because they wait too long to register.

There are always challenges creating a blanket plan for a population with a wide variety of backgrounds, fitness levels, and experience in triathlon's three disciplines. Therefore, this plan has certain assumptions built into its structure:

- You have some degree of running background, whether you participated in the distance challenge, ran the AT&T Marathon, completed 3M Half-Marathon, have run a handful of local 5K and 10K races, or you run on Town Lake Trail several days each week for general fitness.
- You generally know how to swim. You do not have to be a former competitive swimmer, but you should be able to swim a handful of freestyle laps. If you are not comfortable in the water or cannot swim, I would advise that you register for one of the local beginners' swim or stroke clinics to receive instruction before you start pounding out laps. A few weeks of supervised instruction can save you a lot of time and frustration. If you can get down and back in the pool several times, you may be able to forgo stroke instruction. Only you know if you need instruction or if your comfort level in the water is where it needs to be to begin swim training. If you have a wetsuit, or can stomach colder water, feel free to do any of the prescribed swims in Barton Springs. This is an amazing resource we have here in Austin. You get an open water simulation in a controlled environment with life guards. I generally have at least one swim workout each week in Barton Springs. The more you swim in open water scenarios, the more comfortable you will be on race day.
- You have a bicycle in good working order. It does not have to be a triathlon specific bike. You can participate and complete an Olympic distance race with a road bike as well as a mountain bike. Some bikes will be faster than others

- because they're designed specifically for racing, but if your goal is to complete the race, then any of the above mentioned bikes will suffice. USA Triathlon rules do state that one cannot race on a recumbent bike. This rule also includes cruisers. It should go without saying that you must have a bicycle helmet before you start training. Don't get on your bike without a "lid on", period! If you're taking your bike out of the garage for the first time in a while, it's probably a good idea to take it by a local bike shop and have a mechanic look it over or give it a tune-up. This may help you to avoid some mechanical issues when you start your training.
- You have a full-time job and have other commitments in your life. Believe me; I can design a plan that will make even the heartiest endurance athlete nauseous. The goal here is to provide a guideline that will not be too invasive into your personal life while still giving you the opportunity to build the fitness and confidence needed to complete an Olympic distance race.
 - The topic of training and racing nutrition is not addressed in this plan. This can be an in depth and somewhat complex subject. My best advice to you is to experiment with sports drinks, water, and sports gels on your longer workouts. You will not want to enter the race planning to drink only water, so start practicing and experimenting with nutrition early and you won't have to worry about it on race day.
 - In the plan itself, I've used a few terms which may be unfamiliar to a new triathlete or endurance runner. First, the term "brick" is used in triathlon to describe a workout where the athlete incorporates multiple disciplines, most commonly a bike followed by a run. For your brick workouts, the idea is that your legs become familiar with the physiological transition from cycling to running. You are aloud to take a few minutes to put away your bike and lace up your running shoes, but the idea is that you go for your run directly after you finish cycling. Also, the term "endurance pace" is a reference to a training pace that is easier than the pace you plan on racing. It should be the pace you feel like you can hold for a very long period of time. I've also heard coaches use the rule that at that pace, your breathing should be easy enough to hold a conversation.

Now that we've established that you have a working bicycle and helmet, the ability to swim, and some degree of running fitness, you are now ready to prepare for your first Olympic distance race.

Patrick Evoe is a professional triathlete who lives and trains in Austin. You can learn more about Patrick, his training and racing at www.patrickevoe.com.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6	Run: 30 min - Endurance pace	Bike: 30 min - Endurance pace	Swim: 15 min – Continuous @ endurance pace	Bike: 40 min - Endurance pace	Swim: 25 min – Continuous @ endurance pace	Brick Bike: 1 hour - Endurance pace Run: 10 min off bike	Swim: 15 min – Continuous @ endurance pace Long Run: 45 min - Endurance pace
5	Off day	Bike: 40 min - Endurance pace	Run: 40 min, After 15 min warm up, include farleks (10x1 min @ race pace, 1 min easy), jog easy for remainder of time	Bike: 45 min, Endurance pace	Swim: 30 min – 10 min WU, 10x (50M, 30 sec rest), easy swim for remainder of time	Brick Bike: 1:15 - Endurance pace Run: 10 min off bike	Swim: 20 min – Continuous @ endurance pace. If you have a wetsuit or can take the cold water, swim in Barton Springs Long Run: 1:00 Endurance pace
4	Off day	Bike: 45 min – Endurance pace	Swim: 30 min – continuous @ endurance pace Run: 45 min – After 15 min warm up, include farleks (8x2 min @ race pace, 1 min easy), jog easy for remainder of time	Bike: 1 hour - After 20 min WU, 5x (4 min @ race pace, 2 min easy spin), 10 min easy spin	Swim: 40 min - 10 min WU, 10x (75M, 20 sec rest), easy swim for remainder of time	Brick Bike: 1:20 – Endurance pace Run: 15 min off bike	Swim: 25 min - Continuous @ endurance pace Long Run: 1:10 Endurance pace
3	Off day	Bike: 1 hour - Endurance pace	Swim: 40 min – continuous @ endurance pace. If you have a wetsuit or can take the cold water, swim in Barton Springs Run: 1 hour – After 15 min WU, include descending ladder: (race pace, easy jog) 6 min, 2 min 5 min, 2 min 4 min, 1.5 min 3 min, 1 min	Bike: 1:15 – After 20 min WU, 6x (5 min @ race pace, 2 min easy spin), 13 min easy spin cool-down	Swim: 45 min - 10 min WU, 10x (100 M, 15 sec rest), easy swim for remainder of time	Brick Bike: 1:30 Run: 20 min off the bike	Swim: 30 min – Continuous @ endurance pace Long Run: 1:15 - Endurance pace

			2 min, 1 min 1 min jog easy for remainder of time				
2	Bike: 40 min – recovery easy spin. You should not push it at all. Just keep your legs moving very easy. You should feel better at the end of the spin.	Run: 40 min - endurance pace	Swim: 45 min - 10 min WU, 8x (150 M, 15 sec rest), easy swim for remainder of time Bike: 1:20 - After 20 min WU, 6x (6 min @ race pace, 2.5 min easy spin), easy spin remainder of time	Run: 1 hour – After 15 min warm-up, include farleks (10x1 min @ race pace, 1 min easy), jog easy for remainder of time	Warmup workouts (all very easy; you may incorporate a few sets of strides) Swim: 10 min Bike: 15 min Run: 10 min REST!!!	Race: The Rookie Triathlon – Have fun and enjoy the event	Off day – Rest and recover from race
1	Swim: 50 min – 10 min WU, 10x (150 M, 10 sec rest), easy swim for remainder of time	Bike: 1 hour endurance pace	Longest Run: 1:20 Endurance pace	Bike: 1:20 After 20 min WU, 5x (8 min @ race pace, 2.5 min easy spin), easy spin remainder of time	Swim: 1 hour - continuous @ endurance pace. If you have a wetsuit or can take the cold water, swim in Barton Springs	Longest Brick! Bike: 2 hours Run: 3 miles off the bike	Swim: 30 min – continuous @ endurance pace Run: 50 min – Endurance pace
0	Off day	Bike: 30 min easy spin	Swim: 20 min, get into the water and warm up for 10 min. After you seem to get the “feel” for the water; get out, you are ready. Run: 25 min - run very easy. Incorporate farleks - 4x30 seconds @ race pace, 1:30 easy.	Bike: 20 min easy spin	Complete off day, DO NOTHING. DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT ANY EXERCISE!!	Warmup workouts (all very easy; you may incorporate a few sets of strides) Swim: 10 min Bike: 15 min Run: 10 min REST!!!	Race day: Have fun, enjoy the day, and celebrate your accomplishments!