

Duathlon

WINNING THE DOUBLE

WITH LOTS OF DUATHLONS TO CHOOSE FROM THIS AUTUMN THERE ARE A MYRIAD OF BENEFITS TO GIVING BIKE-RUN-BIKE RACING A GO



Elite duathletes do it in socks

Meet the expert



Jez Cox

Elite duathlete and coach

What?

WITHITS run-bike-run format, duathlon has been around for as long as triathlon. The sport has been labelled as 'triathlon for non-swimmers' but it has developed into much more than that, with its own World Series and World Championships at both short and long distance.

The UK has a great number of sprint duathlons, which start at around the 3k/20k/2k distance, and then beyond this there are the 'classic' distance races, which are 10k/40k/5k. For those of you who want to try something longer, you'll be attracted to the Powerman World Series, which is effectively duathlon's answer to the Ironman brand. These races are usually around 15k/60k/7k in distance.

Duathlon has its own stars and a growing number of professionals who race exclusively in 'dus', but it is also becoming increasingly popular among triathletes. British elites Tim Don, Paul Amey, Catriona Morrison and Michelle Dillon have all won duathlon world titles. Duathlon's appeal doesn't stop there though; every year throughout his seven-year Tour de France winning streak, Lance Armstrong competed in off-road duathlons as part of his preparation.

Those who have completed a triathlon will know how hard it is at the beginning of the run section; it has even been likened to running with a bear on your back. Well, with duathlon, because you have run once already, the effect is even

greater – this time it's like the bear has his mate hanging on too.

Why?

DUATHLON CAN form a highly beneficial part of any triathlete's training. The fact that the first run is a mass start will mean that there's a greater chance of athletes being drawn on to faster times by running alongside others. This contrasts greatly with triathlon where athletes are commonly spread out and may feel like they are 'hanging on' during the final run. The fact that duathlons are run throughout the year means that they can be used as a vital racing trials in the build-up to triathlon goals, and they also help to extend a triathlete's season by allowing competitive racing in the spring and autumn when tris are scarce.

Triathletes who have been competing in spring duathlons tend to enter the tri season much better prepared. Many first-timers find the final run of a duathlon harder than in a tri and it is in overcoming this that triathletes can build their confidence in their off-the-bike running.

Of course, there are also a growing number of triathletes who try a duathlon and never look back. The sport is now at a stage in the UK where it provides a full season in its own right. Off-road duathlons with a cross-country run and a mountain bike leg are now growing faster than any other area of the sport due to their simple and safe format where they are often held in closed rural settings that are devoid of traffic and these provide an excellent cross-training benefit along with the additional bike handling skills to be gained from racing off-road.

"PRO TRIATHLETES TIM DON, PAUL AMY, CATRIONA MORRISON AND MICHELLE DILLON HAVE ALL WON WORLD DUATHLON TITLES"

When?

AS DUATHLONS tend to be organised by clubs and associations that also organise triathlons in the warmer months, it's no surprise that the majority of events are in the spring and autumn. However, over the last five years more organisers have been putting on summer races and are finding they are well-attended. That said, autumn is a particularly popular time for them, when most athletes are at their fittest after a summer of training and competing.

How?

THE KIT needed for duathlon is not that different to tri. Most events will allow any type of bike

to be used so long as it's road worthy and then of course a hard-shell helmet is essential. Clothing for duathlon can be a bit more relaxed than tri because it doesn't have to stand up to a swim, so many duathletes will go for the added comfort of a pair of padded cycling shorts and socks too.

From a training perspective, one of the most important aspects is preparing an athlete for running as strongly as possible 'off the bike' and this involves completing 'brick' or back-to-back training sessions which simulate the feeling of the second run. Like most effective training they are no fun at all – but as always, hard work before the race makes the race so much more fun.

Top Autumn Duathlons

Carsington Duathlon

DATE SUN 4 OCTOBER
LOCATION CARSINGTON WATER, DERBYSHIRE
DISTANCE RUN 5K / BIKE 30K / RUN 5K

Stirling Duathlon - Scottish Championships

DATE SUN 11 OCTOBER
LOCATION SCOTTISH SWIMMING ACADEMY, STIRLING UNIVERSITY
DISTANCE RUN 10K / BIKE 40K / RUN 5K

Dalby Forest MTB Duathlon

DATE SUN 11 OCTOBER
LOCATION DALBY FOREST, NORTH YORK MOORS
DISTANCE RUN OFF-ROAD 5K / BIKE OFF-ROAD 25K / RUN OFF-ROAD 5K

Tri and Run Ballbuster

DATE SAT 7 NOVEMBER
LOCATION BOX HILL, DORKING
DISTANCE RUN 8M / BIKE 24M / RUN 8M

Jez's top duathlon tips

Follow Jez Cox's pearls of wisdom to make sure you maximise your performance at your next duathlon

1 TRY TO run off-road on soft varied terrain as much as possible. This will not only go a long way to helping prevent injuries from the jarring associated with Tarmac, but it also helps to simulate the heavy-legged feeling often associated with the second run.

2 WHENEVER YOU can, after your bike rides try to pull on a pair of trainers and just run, even if it's to the end of your road and back. Eventually it will be something that your body simply expects.

3 MOST PEOPLE start a duathlon far too quickly and then fade. Pace out your effort over the whole event and try to look around you for other athletes who are following a similar sensible pace.

4 A LOT CAN happen in three legs. Duathlon is an adventure in itself and you will find yourself going through bad patches. Very often, if you stick these out and keep going, you will recover and often end up having a good race. There's a lot to be said for keeping going.

Turn over for your 4-week duathlon training programmes

YOUR 4 WEEK TRAINING PLANS

DUATHLON PROGRAMME 1 **5-7 hours per week**

Week one

YOUR KEY SESSION THIS WEEK IS THURSDAY'S BRICK SESSION. TRY NOT TO MISS IT

Mon	Run	Run 30 mins easy off-road
Tue	Bike	Bike 1 hour as (30 mins easy, 20 mins, tempo, 10 mins easy)
Wed	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Thur	Brick	Brick session. 1 hour as 4 x (10 mins bike, 5 mins run). All at easy pace
Fri	REST DAY	
Sat	Run	Run 30 mins steady off-road run
Sun	Bike	Bike 80 mins steady

Week two

TRY AND CONSUME A GEL OR ENERGY DRINK ON THE LONGER WEEKEND SESSIONS

Mon	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Tue	Run	Run 35 mins as 10 mins easy, 3 x (5 mins tempo, 2 mins rest), 10 mins easy
Wed	Bike	Bike 1 hour as 12 x (4 mins easy, 1 min hard)
Thur	Brick	Brick. Bike 45 mins as (20 mins steady, 10 mins tempo seated, 15 mins steady) STRAIGHT INTO run 10 mins steady
Fri	REST DAY	
Sat	Brick	Bike 1 hour steady STRAIGHT INTO run 30 mins steady in a hilly area
Sun	Bike	Bike 90 mins as (30 mins easy, 1 hour steady)

DUATHLON PROGRAMME 2 **8-10 hours per week**

Week one

THE KEY SESSIONS OVER THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS ARE THE HIGHER INTENSITY ONES

Mon	Run	Run 70 mins steady cross-country
Tue	Bike	Bike 90 mins steady with 4 x (5 mins tempo, 2 mins easy) in the middle
Wed	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Thur	Brick	Brick. Bike 1 hour steady STRAIGHT INTO run 30 mins tempo
Fri	Run	Run 50 mins steady
Sat	Brick	Brick. Bike 2 hours steady STRAIGHT INTO 30 mins steady run. Eat/drink well when riding
Sun	Bike	Bike 2 hours steady

Week two

TAKE ENERGY DRINKS AND GELS ON ANY SESSION LONGER THAN 80 MINUTES

Mon	Run	Run 70 mins cross-country
Tue	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Wed	Brick	Brick. Run 40 mins as (20 mins steady, 20 mins tempo) STRAIGHT INTO bike 40 mins steady
Thur	Brick	Brick. Ride 1 hour as 4 x (8 mins easy/7 mins hard) STRAIGHT INTO run 10 mins tempo. Warm down
Fri	REST DAY	
Sat	Brick	Brick. Bike 70 mins steady STRAIGHT INTO run 30 mins steady
Sun	Bike	Bike 2 hours with the last 15 mins of each hour at tempo

THE PLAN DUATHLON

Exertion levels 1. Easy 2. Steady 3. Tempo 4. Hard 5. Maximal

Week three

THIS WEEK'S SIMULATED RACE IS THE TIME TO FINE TUNE YOUR TRANSITIONS

Mon	Run	Run 40 mins steady focussing on good technique
Tue	REST DAY	
Wed	Run	Run 40 mins as 10 mins easy, 20 mins of (20 secs hard, 40 secs easy), 10 mins easy
Thur	Brick	Brick. Ride 1 hour as (20 mins easy, 20 mins tempo, 20 mins steady) STRAIGHT INTO run 20 mins steady
Fri	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Sat	Sim race	Simulated Duathlon. Warm up for 10 mins . Run 20 mins tempo STRAIGHT INTO bike 45 mins tempo STRAIGHT INTO run 20 mins tempo
Sun	Bike	90 mins sociable ride with friends

Week four

THIS WEEK IS ALL ABOUT TAPERING FOR SUNDAY'S RACE. GOOD LUCK!

Mon	REST DAY	
Thur	Brick	Brick. Bike 40 mins as (15 mins steady, 10 mins hard, 15 mins steady) STRAIGHT INTO run 20 mins steady
Wed	Run	Run 35 mins easy off road
Thur	Brick	Bike 1 hour easy with 5-secs sprint accelerations out of any corners/bends
Fri	Prep	Rest. Check over all race gear
Sat	Run	Run 15 minutes easy. Include 3x 10 secs hard
Sun	RACE DAY	

Week three

THE SIMULATED RACE IS THE MAIN SESSION THIS WEEK. THINK THROUGH THE LOGISTICS FIRST

Mon	Run	50 mins run as (10 mins easy, 10 mins steady, 10 mins tempo, 5 mins hard, 5 mins tempo, 5 mins steady, 5 mins easy)
Tue	REST DAY	
Wed	Brick	Brick. Bike 90 mins in racing position as (30 mins easy, 1 hour tempo) STRAIGHT INTO run 10 mins easy
Thur	Brick	Brick. Run 40 mins steady with 6x 100m max efforts spread throughout. STRAIGHT INTO bike 15 mins easy
Fri	Gym	30 mins gym conditioning and/or core work
Sat	Sim race	Simulated duathlon. Warm up. Run 30 mins tempo STRAIGHT INTO bike 40 mins tempo STRAIGHT INTO run 20 mins tempo. Warm down
Sun	Bike	2-hour sociable ride with friends

Week four

BY DOING TOO MUCH THIS WEEK YOU'VE NOTHING TO GAIN, BUT PLENTY TO LOSE

Mon	Run	Run 25 mins easy on grass practicing perfect run form
Tue	Brick	Bike 40 mins as 10 mins easy, 10 x (1 min hard/1 min easy), 10 mins easy STRAIGHT INTO run 20 mins steady
Wed	Run	Run 35 mins easy off road
Thur	Bike	Bike 1 hour easy with 5-secs sprint accelerations out of any corners/bends
Fri	REST DAY	
Sat	Run	Run 20 mins easy with 3x 15 secs hard bursts spread throughout
Sun	RACE DAY	