

injury prevention for triathletes

Are you intrigued by the idea of participating in a triathlon, but concerned about injuring yourself since you're new to the sport? If so, consider these suggestions from Catherine Logan, MSPT, a physical therapist, certified personal trainer and Pilates instructor at Sports and Physical Therapy Associates in Boston.

[1] Appropriate Preparation
To ward off potential injuries, do a well-rounded strength, flexibility and cardiovascular training program to prepare for the triathlon. Design exact cardiovascular training schedules (hours per week of cycling, swimming and running) in accord with the chosen race distance and your goals. See www.trainingpeaks.com and www.trifuel.com to help develop a program or work with a certified personal trainer or triathlon coach. If you are concerned about your sports technique, work with local running, biking or swimming coaches to make valuable changes in as little as one or two sessions.

[2] The Strength Training Program
Periodization can help you avoid injuries and improve your performance. It is a method of varying your training program at specific time intervals so the body will peak at distinct times for a specific event. For instance, you want to vary the amount of resistance, the number of reps and sets, and the rest time of your training for strength workouts. Consider the following example.

Strengthening Phase. This phase may include a midrange to higher number of reps (8–15) and 2–3 sets. Use an adequate amount of resistance to fatigue the muscles within the suggested number of repetitions.

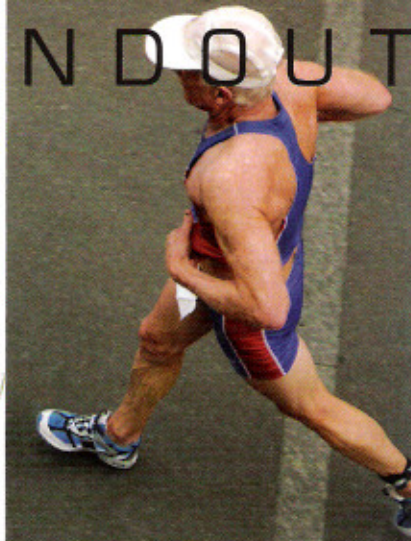
Power Phase. Once you have established a good strength base, you can focus on increasing power through a lower number of reps (5–8) and 2–4 sets. Choose a level of resistance that will exhaust the muscles within the suggested repetition range. Power strengthening sessions increase explosive power during swimming, running and cycling. They can be done in conjunction with speed sessions (i.e., at the track) or strength sessions. *It is important to implement a solid strength training program before beginning any power sessions.*

Strength Maintenance. This phase takes place during the training season. Use more reps (12–15) and 2–3 sets, again using enough resistance to fatigue the muscles within the suggested repetition range.

For strategies on developing a periodization program and learning which strength training exercises will help you prepare for a triathlon, consider working with a certified personal trainer.

[3] The Flexibility Program
Increasing flexibility will help correct postural dysfunctions as well as reduce the strain caused by abnormal muscular pull on joints and tendons. Most novice triathletes need to stretch these groups:

- gastrocnemius-soleus complex
- quadriceps
- hamstrings
- hip flexors
- iliotibial band
- lower back
- trapezius (especially upper traps)
- triceps
- forearm flexors and extensors
- latissimus dorsi
- rhomboids
- pectorals ■



tips for a running start

Follow these helpful hints to prepare for a successful race day:

- Make sure you wear suitable shoes for biking and running. If you are unsure about which shoes may be best, contact a local running-shoe store. These shops usually have dedicated, informed salespeople ready to help.
- Look ahead at the weather report and double-check race gear and attire to make sure they are suitable for lower temperatures or wet conditions if necessary.
- Perform a last-minute safety check on equipment, perhaps taking your bike to a local bike shop for a checkup.
- Speak with a physician or a nutritionist about appropriate fluid replacement for your racing level and your body; this will ensure that you are drinking enough, but not too much.
- Visit the course location in the days before the race to reduce the chances of getting lost come race day and to ease any prerace jitters.

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