



GIVE IT A

TRI

An activity once reserved for elite athletes, the triathlon is now moving mainstream. Prepare to make #swimbikerun your latest mantra

importantly it's worth noting that signing up to a tri today doesn't mean you need to commit to the traditional distances.

'There is now considerable variety in terms of events and distances that cater to all abilities and tastes,' says Nike ambassador Joslyn Thompson Rule. 'Try starting with the Super Sprint (400m swim/10km bike ride/2.5km run) and either stick with it and work on your times, or begin to up your distances.'

But why should we aspire to splash, spin and stride our way to fitness? 'Working across three disciplines is a great way to cross-train because you're putting different demands on your body for each sport,' says Joslyn. 'This makes it an excellent way to burn fat and boost your metabolism, too.' All of which means you can achieve the pert bottom of a cyclist, the toned legs of a runner and the sculpted shoulders of a swimmer – winning! Plus, as Brian Walpole, head trainer at The Workshop Gymnasium, points out, 'Many of the biggest changes ▶

THERE ARE PROBABLY very few of us who have considered taking on a triathlon. But surprisingly, the sport once dubbed 'the ultimate test of human endurance' (stick with us) is no longer reserved for people prepared to swim 4k, cycle 180k and then run a casual marathon – in under 12 hours. And you need only turn to Instagram for evidence – #triathlon now boasts a not-so-casual 1.5 million tags, while official figures prove that event participation has risen from 12k to almost 20k in the last five years, with J-Lo, Kate Hudson and Pippa Middleton cited as fans. 'Triathlon is the new marathon,' explains British Olympic triathlete Vicky Holland. In other words, tri got cool. Intrigued? We were...

The reasons for the triathlon's popularity surge are varied, but perhaps most

WORDS GEORGINA LUCAS

in physique occur when you are training for a sporting event.'

And the not-so-humble triathlon is truly great for your mind as well. 'The endorphin boost gained from exercising aside, triathlon takes you outside, which is brilliant for your mental state,' says Alison Smith, a triathlon and running coach – the cocktail of fresh air, horizon views and cardio creates a potent mood-lifter that the gym just can't match. Plus, the nature of the sport – with its mix of disciplines and the addition of the transition (switching from one activity to the next at speed) 'forces you to focus, so you have to switch off', says Alison, making it a great stress-buster. We're sold!

Ready to tri? Alison recommends observing a local event first. 'Seeing that the triathlon is achievable will help dispel any fears you have,' she advises. 'For example, many people express a nervousness about swimming, but watch an event and you will notice that many people do breaststroke.' Website gotri.org lists events all over the country and is a great resource for beginners, too. Then, says Brian, 'Give yourself time and a proper plan – seek expertise from a qualified trainer or coach if you can, otherwise team up with a friend.' And while the only real competition is with yourself, it's worth remembering – if at first you don't succeed, tri, tri, tri again...

A WEEKEND WORKOUT

If you fancy the idea of a triathlon but you're not down with the competitive element, check out discovercarmarthenshire.com's Travellers Triathlons – three routes that can be taken at your own pace (over a weekend mini-break, for example) and include options to swap the swim for kayaking, and walk instead of run. All while you enjoy Wales's beautiful coastline.



CHECK OUT OUR 'IT' KIT

Get the gear and be inspired



1. Speedo Fastskin Elite Goggles Mirror, £45. 2. Orca Speed Laces, £8.50. 3. Zone3 Aspire Wetsuit, £299. 4. Trigger Point GRID Foam Roller, £30.07. 5. Speedo Hydrasuit, £32. 6. Lucas Hugh Lazer Stripe Tri-suit, £210. 7. Giro Synthe MIPS Helmet, £194.46. 8. Garmin Forerunner 920XT, £389.99. 9. Victoria's Secret Knockout High-neck Sports Bra, £47.43, Victoria's Secret. 10. Nike Free RN Flyknit trainers, £105. 11. Dawes Giro 500 2016 Women's Road Bike, £549.99

TOP TIPS FROM BRITISH OLYMPIC TRIATHLETE VICKY HOLLAND

- 1 Start with a shorter distance, like a super sprint, so it seems less daunting and more like a fun challenge.
- 2 Join your local club or train with friends.
- 3 More flexibility means more speed – incorporate regular stretching sessions, gym work and yoga.
- 4 Eat a balanced diet, include all the major food groups and important nutrients like calcium – no banned foods.
- 5 Anyone can have a go – enjoy the process and the outcome will take care of itself.

TRI THESE APPS

- Safety first**
Road ID allows your friends and family to track your training route, alerting an emergency contact if you stay stationary for longer than five minutes.
- Swim success**
Scared of the swim? Tri Swim Coach is the answer, providing training programmes, useful tips on technique and video swim drills.
- Best for beginners**
First Time Triathlon guides you through your first tri, with a 12-week day-by-day plan compiled by a triathlon trainer and former professional triathlete.
- The ultimate tracker**
Training Peaks syncs all your training data from apps and devices to easily analyse your progress and plot your path to tri-umph (soznotsoz).

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