

## WHY TRI

We know that elite golfers take their physical preparation seriously. These days they train hard, and they make sure they have all their bases covered. That doesn't mean just doing the latest "golf-specific" stability ball exercise. There is without doubt a place for this, and it will be part of my own training programmes, but you gotta get the tough stuff done as well. It's better to become an athlete before you try and become a golf athlete.



So part of the picture will be build a foundation of generalised fitness, with one target being improving your cardio-vascular endurance. Top golfers know this... take this quote from world number one and marathon runner Lorena Ochoa:



"Ecothons and marathons are all mental. It's all about pushing yourself as far as you can. You learn to be tough, even though you are having a hard time, and you try and do your best".  
Lorena Ochoa

Other sportsmen are on this as well, with one of the most well known being F1 World Champion Jenson Button. Here's a quote from Jenson I found in a Daily Mail interview after the London Tri: *'Triathlon has massively helped me improve my fitness – which in turn has helped my driving.'* Jenson completed the 1500m swim, 40km bike ride and a 10km run in just over 2 hours, which is a genuine top class time.





Celebrity mother Jennifer Lopez is at it.  
Anna Kournikova is at it...  
wearing the Number One of course.



So why should you be doing a triathlon this year?

I'm going to keep this simple... I figure you don't need to go too deep into the physiological sports science and psych, you just need to hear it straight.

- **Motivation:** You absolutely know that a high level of fitness is going to be beneficial to your golf performance, but getting it done can be hard. Goal-specific training is much easier. You set yourself a practical target, sign up for the race and now you have a goal that you have to achieve. Your training now has focus... and that is the key.
- **Planning:** Effective planning is a huge part of elite sports prep. Taking on a Tri means that you are going to have to put together a plan that will help you develop your skills and performance in 3 simple disciplines. It doesn't have to be complicated at all, but it will provide the basis on which you will be using your training time effectively.
- **Targets:** We love them. Golfers absolutely eat them! You know your lowest scores round most of the tracks you've played... better than you know your families birthdays. You now have 3 activities to set new targets. New PB's, shaving seconds off runs, making 20 lengths without a break... then putting it all together, after all it's about posting scores in minutes and seconds.
- **Fitness:** It's basically a great physiological choice. Research suggests that a high level of cardio-vascular fitness supports a higher level of concentration and fine motor control whilst under sustained physical duress... and that is golf. A Tri gives you a good timescale as well. Take on a "mini" and you're looking at maybe an hour as a time... not quite a four hour round but it's still pushing you, and learning how to deal with physical duress for an extended timescale is a good thing.
- **Movement:** Golf... hours in front of the PC blagging sponsors, entering comps, hours of travel to far-flung courses, hours of hanging about, hours of practice and then high intensity hours of competition play. It's a postural mess. I like the physical profile of quality swimming as it helps to untangle the chronic spinal and upper girdle posture of golfers, it also strengthens their upper body and core. I like the running because it loads the body how it is designed to be loaded, and opens out the hips. I like the cycling because:
- **Cycling:** Golfers love shiny stuff... simple as. You start your first Tri with a hooky racer out of the local paper, it will be perfect, at that stage it's not about the bike. Then you'll borrow some ones shiny ride and start saving up. Modern bikes are sexy... they have carbon fibre on them, and even titanium, you know, the stuff golfers like to lick. Then there are gear sets, aerodynamic aids and water bottle cages that shave 10 grams from your curb weight... all these things are like adding a degree to your lie angle, or buying a glove that adds 20 yards to your drive... probably completely unnecessary but who cares, it's shiny stuff . So performance cycling is a no-brainer, you are going to love it.



You don't need one of these bad boys when you start out. Check out the free-ads, local paper and ebay, and for under 100 quid you'll find a perfectly adequate racer. Strip the guards and racks off and you are away. These are nicer to stroke though!

- **Resilience:** For me this is the big one. As an athlete development specialist I want my athletes to be **resilient**. It's a tough one to quantify, but what I mean is I want you to be able to resist, overcome and relish the technical, physical and mental challenges that come with your sport, a long season, and hopefully a successful and long career. Staying injury free, focussed and forever pushing your performance levels forward. To put it in basics, I don't care what sport I am preparing you for, but when you turn up at the event and get out your car, I need you to look around and know that you are the hardest \*\*\*\*\* in the car park. That ways you are ahead already. Successfully preparing and competing in a Triathlon is a great tool to help develop and sustain resilience... do it.

So the evidence is there to see. You need to do a Triathlon. I'm not going to claim that it's going to instantly add yards and shave shots, but it can become part of the plan and package that helps you to become a true golf athlete. Here's a starting plan.

- You will have a local Triathlon club, it's one of the fastest growing participation sports, google them a ring.
- Buy a few Tri mags, and hit a few Tri sites. [www.220triathlon.com](http://www.220triathlon.com) [www.triathletes-world-magazine.co.uk](http://www.triathletes-world-magazine.co.uk) [www.triforlife.co.uk](http://www.triforlife.co.uk) [www.tri247.com](http://www.tri247.com)  
There is loads of information out there.
- Pick a realistic starter event and maybe something local. The shorter distance Tri's vary, but you are only looking at a 400-500 metre swim (20 lengths), a 10-15k cycle and a 4-6k run. Very doable and a nice benchmark to build on, and nobody will be wearing a cut off vest and have abdominals like a toast rack.
- Don't go bonkers on it, start chilled. Cycle down the local pool, take in a few lengths and cycle back, leave your watch at home. Do a short distance run/cycle this weekend... if you've never done it before get the feel for it.
- Send off a small cheque, fix the date for later this year, and make a bit of a plan.

You have absolutely nothing to lose....

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