

↓ Your key run session will be long and steady with a chunk at race pace

INTERMEDIATE - IRONMAN RUN

MASTER THE TRI MARATHON

Sensible training, fuelling and pacing are key to finishing the 42km run strong, says **Nik Cook**, who here shares his tips plus a 12-week marathon training plan

Making the step up to Ironman this season? Unless you come from a strong running background, the chances are your biggest concern is going to be the 42.2km at the end of the day. A quick YouTube search for the 1997 'Crawl-Off' between Sian Welch and Wendy Ingraham at Ironman Hawaii shows even athletes at the sharp-end of the race can literally be brought to their knees. But with smart and consistent training, solid nutrition and a realistic approach to pacing on race day, the marathon need not be an exercise in suffering and survival. For a long-course triathlete, cycling is arguably the key discipline. It represents the biggest chunk of the race and has a huge impact on the run. Never neglect your cycling training and make sure you're getting in those long rides. If you're strong on the bike and can avoid the temptation

to overcook it on race day, you'll hit the run in better shape than a weaker cyclist. Time on the bike will also make you a stronger runner, and if you want to include some higher intensity work, doing it on the bike is far less likely to result in injury than faster paced runs. Do enough swim training so you can cover the 3.8km swim in a reasonable time without it taking too much out of you. But, for time invested in training versus time gained on race day, the swim yields the poorest return by far. You'll read about long-course pros doing significant amounts of running speedwork, but for the majority of age-groupers it's counterproductive and will lead to injury and unnecessary fatigue. Tempo (heart rate Zone 3) is as fast as you need go. The key run session is the long, steady distance with a chunk at race pace. You'll be running with fatigue in your legs

on race day at Ironman UK, the Outlaw or Challenge Weymouth so you might as well get used to it in training.

ZONES EXPLAINED
Here we're working with Joe Friel's HR zones for the run, measured by your lactate threshold heart rate (LTHR). To do this, warm up properly before cycling at your hardest pace for 20mins while using a heart rate monitor. Your average heart rate for this period is your lactate threshold heart rate.

- ZONE 1** Less than 85% of LTHR
- ZONE 2** 85% to 89% of LTHR
- ZONE 3** 90% to 94% of LTHR
- ZONE 4** 95% to 99% of LTHR
- ZONE 5** 100% to 106% of LTHR

ESSENTIAL KIT

Invest in this gear as they'll be your constant companions while prepping for that 42km run

ROAD SHOES
The shoes you train in should be the shoes you intend to race in. That way, you won't get any nasty surprises (read: blisters) come race day.



TRAIL SHOES
Scheduling in regular off-road long runs breaks up the monotony of pounding the pavement, gives your joints a wee break and is great for building strength.



GPS/HRM
Accurate pacing is key to conquering the marathon whether you base it on heart rate, speed or a combination of both, so you'll need a reliable GPS/HRM.



MENTAL CONDITIONING

You'll be building significant stamina on the bike, so you don't have to do the mega long runs that are the mainstay of pure running programmes. If you haven't already got a marathon under your belt, doing one during the spring before a summer Ironman is a good mental box to tick. This distance should be a one-off that you taper well for, though. Factor in enough recovery time and don't revisit that distance until your long-course tri debut.

RUN SESSION VARIATION

With your long run in the bank, doing two other run sessions during the week strikes a good balance between training enough and avoiding injury. One should be a tempo run consisting of 10mins warm-up, building through Zones 1 and 2, a solid 20-40mins at tempo (Zone 3) and 10mins jogging to cool down. The other should be a 60-90min steady run, the majority of which should be Zone 2, which can be done faster (see Sub-1 Hour Session, p82).

BIKE/RUN BRICKS

I've always been a big fan of the brick and recommend tagging a 10-15min Zone 3 micro-run onto every bike session. It gets you used to the horrible 'jelly legs' sensation but, more importantly, reassures you that it passes. Three weeks out from race day, aim to complete a 'Metric Ironman': 2.4km swim, 112km bike and 26.2km run. From then, as you begin to peak and taper down, bricks should be training staples but with a decreasing amount of running.

PACING IS KEY

For long runs, include a significant chunk (about 80%) at your marathon race pace. If you haven't run a standalone marathon, there are online calculators that allow you to extrapolate training paces from your shorter-distance times (I recommend Daniel's Running Formula at www.runbayou.com/jackdPrint.htm). Longer brick sessions such as your 'Metric Ironman' should be run at your M-Dot race



▲ A total of three runs a week strikes a good balance between training enough and avoiding injury

■ Pushed for time? Turn the page for a sub-1hr early-morning run

pace. A good rule of thumb is to take your standalone marathon race pace and add 20%. If you're using heart rate, aim for low to mid-Zone 2, but it's best to refer to pace as well because muscular fatigue and cardiac drift flatten heart rate relative to effort on long runs and bricks.

EXPERIMENT WITH NUTRITION

Mirinda Carrae has said that training to increase her calorie intake on the bike has allowed her to race, rather than survive, the run. Work on your bike leg nutrition; no matter how good race day goes, you're unlikely to be able to stomach solids on the run and will rely on those bike-banked calories. On your long runs, experiment with different gels and energy drink mixes to find the ones you

tolerate best. Aim to consume a gel or its equivalent every 20-30mins and try downing flat cola during the last hour of sessions - it can often be a stomach-settling race-day lifesaver.

STRETCH TO SIDESTEP INJURY

With at least three bike workouts and a couple of swims a week to fit around your running, you're far less likely to pick up injuries than a pure runner. Nonetheless, keep on stretching, especially if you work at a desk. Including simple exercises such as single leg squats and lunges in your warm-up can also help undo the damage of sitting. Also, vary your running surfaces. Get out onto the trails and hills every 3-5 weeks for your long run - forget pacing, run on feel and just enjoy it. Your mind and body will thank you for it. ■ 220

RUN TRAINING PLAN

Here Nik prescribes a 12-week training plan to help you nail that long-course run

This plan includes the key running and brick workouts for the typical Olympic or half-Ironman triathlete who's looking to advance to a full Ironman. Don't forget you'll also need to fit in three bike sessions (with 10-15min runs off the bike when possible) and two-to-three swim sessions a week. Once you get to the bricks by week nine, you'll only have the swims to slot in. You can also use this plan to train for a standalone marathon.

WEEK	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3
1	45mins Zone 1/2	Tempo: 20mins Zone 3 (after 10min warm-up and followed by 10min cool-down)	90mins (60mins race pace)
2	50mins Zone 1/2	Tempo: 25mins Zone 3	100mins (70mins race pace)
3	55mins Zone 1/2	Tempo: 30mins Zone 3	110mins (80mins race pace)
4	60mins Zone 1/2	Tempo: 35mins Zone 3	120mins (90mins race pace)
5	45mins Zone 1/2	Tempo: 20mins Zone 3	60-90mins off-road
6	70mins Zone 1/2 (50% Zone 2)	Tempo: 35mins Zone 3	130mins (100mins race pace)
7	80mins Zone 1/2 (50% Zone 2)	Tempo: 40mins Zone 3	140mins (110mins race pace)
8	90mins Zone 1/2 (50% Zone 2)	Tempo: 40mins Zone 3	150mins (120mins race pace)
9	60mins Zone 1/2 (50% Zone 2)	30mins Zone 1/2	'Metric Ironman' brick
10	2-3hr bike and 30min run at Zone 2 (last 10mins at Zone 3)	60mins Zone 1/2	2.5-3.5hr bike and 45-60min run at race pace
11	2-3hr bike and 30min run (whole session at race pace)	45mins Zone 1/2	60-90min bike and 30min run at race pace (use full race set-up)
12	(Race Week) 30-45mins Zone 2 on Tuesday	45-60min bike (IM race pace with 4 x 90sec Zone 4 effort) and 10-15min run at Zone 3 on Thursday	45-60min easy bike to run (no more than 10min run) on day before race

IMAGES BEN WINSTON