

AT THE OFF-ROAD RACES
Turn to p90 for Jamie Freeland's Helvellyn travails

TRAINING PLAN
COACH DERMOTT HAYES



This is an interesting time for triathletes. Some will peek out a race or two before the shortened season finishes; others have hung up their rarely-used 2020 trisuit and are focusing on 2021.

Ultimately, there's no 'one rule fits all', so you should feel free to experiment with how you spend the next few months. But note this: there's significant evidence to suggest that mixing up your training environments is beneficial for both the pure physical improvements it can elicit and the variety of working out in different locations. It's liberating to train over different environs. Cue – time to hit the trails and don't be afraid to get dirty!

This eight-week training programme includes a mix of training options, including going off-road as well as your standard pool, gym and road workouts. If you can find forest trails or parks with hills, try out these locations as soon as you can. The strength benefits from training off-road can't be replicated in an indoor

environment – nature gives us such great terrain and we should use it. Lace up your trail running shoes and dust off the mountain bike for this next phase of your training. The plan still has an indoor training element, which follows a similar theme in that it's aimed at promoting greater power and strength.

It's also important to retain some swim fitness, so this plan includes one swim per week that focuses on either drills or fitness. If you're unsure about any of the swim drill terminology, check 220triathlon.com for explanations.

There's a flexibility to this plan that means it can be adapted to all levels. If you're still new to the sport, steer towards the lower end of the workout duration scale, while advanced athletes can push themselves with longer or more challenging sessions. If you're thinking about racing sprint- or Olympic-distance events in 2021, then at this time of year you don't need to be doing heavy weekly training hours, so adapt the plan.

As always, include a warm-up and cool-down. Warm-up = 5-8mins of gradually building intensity from easy to vigorous; cool-down = 3-5mins of easy cardio followed by stretches. ▶

COACH'S TIPS TRAIL PREP



RESEARCH NEW AREAS
Look for trails that offer great running and mountain-biking routes. Get muddy and enjoy the new views. Ask your training friends for their advice.



BUY THE RIGHT KIT
Make sure your mountain bike is up to the job, and you'll need a decent pair of trail-run shoes if you don't want to destroy your best trainers.



DON'T BE AFRAID
Hit the very hard interval sections on the bike and run with real force. Be prepared to get out of your comfort zone on the tough hill rep sessions. They hurt but they help.



ENTER OFF-ROAD EVENTS
If you enjoy the off-road element of training, look for events that include mountain biking or trail running. These races can really challenge triathletes in different ways.

MASTER THE TRAILS

IN 8 WEEKS!

Want to start the 2021 tri season raring to go? Then hitting the bike and run trails will deliver huge form and fitness benefits

JAMES MITCHELL

TRAINING PLAN - WEEKS 1 TO 4

MONDAY • TUESDAY • WEDNESDAY • THURSDAY • FRIDAY • SATURDAY • SUNDAY

WEEK 1 - TIME TO GET STARTED! OUR PLAN BEGINS ON A MONDAY, BUT YOU CAN START ON ANY DAY OF THE WEEK

SWIM	BIKE	RUN	BIKE	REST DAY	RUN	BIKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 200m catch-up 200m moderate 200m fingertip drag 4 x 50m vigorous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40mins easy to moderate 5 x [4mins moderate seated climb in bigger gear/4mins easy] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [2-3mins hill run vigorous/5mins recovery] Try to make the hill run quite steep, e.g. 3% incline on a treadmill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [3mins moderate seated climb/2mins recovery/2mins hard standing climb/3mins recovery] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45-60mins moderate on the trails Choose an off-road route with a variety of hills; maintain form and effort throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3hrs moderate on the road Include a variety of climbs focusing on staying efficient

WEEK 2 - ALWAYS INCLUDE A WARM-UP BEFORE EACH SESSION = 5-8MINS OF GRADUALLY BUILDING FROM EASY TO VIGOROUS

SWIM	RUN	BIKE	REST DAY	RUN	RUN	BIKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400m moderate 4 x 100m hard 400m moderate 8 x 50m very hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5km moderate to vigorous on the trails Choose an interesting route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [30secs standing sprint/90secs recovery/5mins moderate] Alternatively, try a spin class or online bike simulation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42mins easy to moderate 6 x [5mins moderate/2mins recovery] On a rolling route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40-45mins easy Run at a conversational pace, keep the route quite flat and focus on consistent pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2hrs On off-road trails using MTB, try to include climbs that challenge you; don't be afraid to get dirty

WEEK 3 - ALWAYS INCLUDE A COOL-DOWN AFTER EACH SESSION = 3-5MINS OF EASY CARDIO FOLLOWED BY STRETCHES

SWIM	BIKE	RUN	BIKE	REST DAY	RUN	BIKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 200m catch-up 200m moderate 200m fingertip drag 4 x 50m vigorous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40mins easy to moderate 5 x [4mins moderate seated climb in bigger gear/4mins easy] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [2-3mins hill run vigorous/5mins recovery] Try to make the hill run quite steep, e.g. 3% incline on a treadmill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [3mins moderate seated climb/2mins recovery/2mins hard standing climb/3mins recovery] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45-60mins moderate on the trails Choose an off-road route with a variety of hills; maintain form and effort throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3hrs moderate on the road Include a variety of climbs focusing on staying efficient; at this time of year try new routes

WEEK 4 - MIXING THE TERRAIN ON THE BIKE AND RUN WILL KEEP THINGS FRESH AND CHALLENGING

SWIM	RUN	BIKE	REST DAY	RUN	RUN ROAD	BIKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400m moderate 4 x 100m hard 400m moderate 8 x 50m very hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5km moderate to vigorous on the trails Choose an interesting route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x [30secs standing sprint/90secs recovery/5mins moderate] Alternatively, try a spin class or online bike simulation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42mins easy to moderate 6 x [5mins moderate/2mins recovery] On a rolling route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60mins easy Run at a conversational pace; keep the route quite flat and focus on consistent pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2hrs On off-road trails using MTB, try to include climbs that challenge you; don't be afraid to get dirty



CAREL DU PLESSIS XTERRA

OFF-ROAD ESSENTIALS

Integral to this eight-week programme is hitting the trails, both on bike and by foot...

Mountain biking and off-road running will generate huge performance gains, while being immense fun, too. But there are some technical pointers you'll need to maximise both...

MOUNTAIN BIKING

A hardtail's sufficient to start with, though you might want a full-suspension down the line...

TAKE IT EASY

Stay relaxed. Tension in your body will transmit to the bike and result in twitchy and unpredictable handling.

LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING

Avoid looking at that rock as you're guaranteed to hit it if you do. Look well ahead down the trail and focus on the line you want to take.

DOWNHILL DEMANDS

When the trail heads south, staying relaxed and looking ahead is even more important. As it steepens, you'll need to move your weight back, but don't go too far or you'll lose control and traction on the front

wheel. A dropper seatpost can be a game changer and makes positioning far easier.

KEY TO CLIMBING

Anticipate the gear you'll need at the foot of the climb. It needs to be easy enough so that you can keep spinning your pedals and accelerate to overcome obstacles or lift the front wheel. If you're struggling to keep your front wheel down, move on to the nose of the saddle and drop your chest towards your bars.

FIND A TRAIL CENTRE

Trail centres are brilliant, yet grading can be inconsistent. A red route in North Wales, for example, is likely to be a different proposition to one in Norfolk. For an indication of what to expect, look at the local topography and ride the blue route as a sighter.

OFF-ROAD RUNNING

The best way to boost off-season strength and cut injury...

PACE FOR SUCCESS

Forget your normal run splits when running off-road, especially if your

route is hilly or the going is heavy. You're going to be covering the ground much slower than you would on the road. If you're planning long off-road runs, then the ultra-running approach of walking the climbs, jogging the flats and running the downs is efficient.

CROSS-COUNTRY GAINS

For a high-quality workout, get in touch with your local running club and try cross-country (if Covid allows). With race distances varying between 4-12km it'll provide a brilliant threshold/tempo workout.

BECOME AN ASCENDING ACE

On off-road climbs - especially if the terrain is technical - get up on your toes, drop your stride length right down and up your cadence. Think tippy-toes. Keep your head up and pump your arms. Look ahead, pick out the best line and foot placements and, if possible, avoid energy-sapping big step-ups.

SHOE SELECTION

Off-road, you can ditch some cushioning and support to improve stability and, as foot strike constantly varies, this shouldn't be an issue even if you normally need motion-control shoes. Waterproof shoes can seem like a good idea but tend to become mobile paddling pools when water inevitably comes in over the top. Opt for lightweight and fast drying uppers instead. ▶

TRAINING PLAN - WEEKS 5 TO 8

MONDAY ● TUESDAY ● WEDNESDAY ● THURSDAY ● FRIDAY ● SATURDAY ● SUNDAY

WEEK 5 - MODERATE SESSIONS MIXED WITH HILLS AND HIGH-INTENSITY BURSTS PROVIDE THIS WEEK'S MIX

SWIM

2 x
250m
head taps
•
250m
moderate
•
250m
kickboard
•
4 x 50m
vigorous

BIKE

50mins
easy to
moderate
•
5 x [5mins
moderate
seated climb in
bigger
gear/2mins
moderate, high
cadence/3mins
easy]

RUN

6-7 x [5mins
hill run
moderate/
2mins
recovery]
•
Try to make
the hill run
steady, e.g. 2%
incline on a
treadmill

BIKE

8 x [1min
moderate
seated
climb/1min
vigorous high
cadence/1min
vigorous
standing
climb/2mins
recovery]

REST DAY

RUN

45-60mins
moderate on
the trails
•
Within the run,
include 4-5 hill
reps that last
1-3mins and
really attack
them hard

BIKE

2-3hrs
moderate on
the road
•
The route can
be fairly flat; at
this time of
year try new
routes

WEEK 6 - AGAIN, AIM FOR NEW AND INTERESTING ROUTES TO HELP MAINTAIN YOUR OFF-SEASON MOTIVATION

SWIM

4 x
200m
easy
•
150m
moderate
•
100m
hard
•
50m
sprint

RUN

5km
moderate to
vigorous on
the trails
•
Choose an
interesting
route

BIKE

6 x [30secs
standing
sprint/
30secs
recovery
/4mins
moderate]
•
Alternatively,
try a spin class

REST DAY

RUN

45-50mins
easy to
moderate
•
6 x [2mins
moderate
/2mins
vigorous/1min
sprint/3mins
recovery]
•
Rolling route

RUN

50-60mins
easy
•
Run at a
conversational
pace, keep the
route quite flat
and focus on
consistent
pacing

BIKE

2:30hrs
•
On off-road
trails using
MTB, ride
some new
trails and focus
on bike
handling skills

WEEK 7 - THE LONG WEEKEND RIDE IS STILL AN IMPORTANT TRAINING ADDITION AT THIS TIME OF YEAR

SWIM

250m
head taps
•
250m
moderate
•
250m
kickboard
•
4 x 50m
vigorous

BIKE

50mins
easy to
moderate
•
5 x [5mins
moderate
seated climb in
bigger
gear/2mins
moderate, high
cadence/3mins
easy]

RUN

6-7 x [5mins
hill run
moderate
/2mins
recovery]
•
Try to make
the hill run
steady, e.g. 2%
incline on a
treadmill

BIKE

8 x [1min
moderate
seated
climb/1min
vigorous high
cadence/1min
vigorous
standing
climb/2mins
recovery]

REST DAY

RUN

60mins
moderate on
the trails
•
Within the run,
include 5-6 hill
reps that last
1-3mins and
really attack
them hard

BIKE

3hrs
moderate on
the road
•
The route can
be fairly flat; at
this time of
year, try new
routes

WEEK 8 - AGAIN THERE'S A WIDE AMOUNT OF VARIETY THIS WEEK THAT YOU CAN REPLICATE IN THE REST OF THE OFF-SEASON

SWIM

4 x
200m
easy
•
150m
moderate
•
100m
hard
•
50m
sprint

RUN

5km
moderate to
vigorous on
the trails
•
Choose an
interesting
route

BIKE

6 x [30secs
standing sprint,
30secs
recovery/
4mins
moderate]
•
Alternatively,
try a spin class
or online bike
simulation

REST DAY

RUN

45-50mins
easy to
moderate
•
6 x [2mins
moderate
/2mins
vigorous/1min
sprint/3mins
recovery]
•
Rolling route

RUN

45mins
easy
•
Run at a
conversational
pace, keep the
route quite flat
and focus on
consistent
pacing

BIKE

2:30hrs
•
On off-road
trails using
MTB, ride
some new
trails and focus
on bike-
handling skills