



Letchworth Garden City Duck'N'Dash Aquathlon 2010

Getting Through Your First Aquathlon

The Duck'N'Dash Aquathlon is the perfect way to enjoy your first taste of a local, friendly Multisport event.

We would be pleased to help anyone that has any training-related queries during preparation for the Aquathlon so feel free to email us on: coaching@FreedomTri.co.uk

Meanwhile; ten basic tips for those that can already swim & run but want to go a bit faster or longer...

The Swim:

- Any front-facing stroke is permitted (back-stroke is not) but to move most quickly through the water you should learn the basic techniques of front-crawl swimming.
- Do not just try to increase the volume of your front-crawl without the correct technical approach; you will only succeed in reinforcing bad habits!
- Try to swim at least 2-3 times per week to make the necessary improvements, once you have the basic technique covered. You need to train the brain as much as the body through repetition of the correct movements of pull, glide, kick and recovery.
- One of the typical problem areas for most average swimmers is breathing while moving through the water and though there is no 'right or wrong' approach, most experienced swim-coaches encourage athletes to learn to breathe bilaterally, in order to stabilise and streamline the body position, thus improving hydrodynamics. Many people can actually swim faster breathing unilaterally but there are still advantages in the early days, to being able to take in oxygen at will on either side of the stroke.
- Invest in a pull-buoy. This piece of swim-kit is an invaluable aid in teaching you to maintain the correct position in the water, staying relatively high and not allowing the legs to drop. It also helps you work on the entry and pull phases of the stroke from which much of your movement is generated.
- Swimmers need to be able to maintain a streamlined position, for which good core strength is essential. Get some advice from a qualified coach +/- physiotherapist before including a routine of stretches and core workouts in your training programme.
- You should increase the volume/distance of swim training gradually (say by 10% per week) rather than in big leaps that can leave you injured or disillusioned.
- Try some shorter, harder efforts with a recovery as well as 'just swimming' incremental distances, this will build your confidence in the water and help overall swim-fitness.
- Anyone can benefit from expert advice; if you would like to invest a relatively small amount in 1-2 private lessons, we can refer you to our own ex GB Squad swim-coach who would be pleased to help.
- Finally, maintain the variety in your swim training sessions and above all: Enjoy It!



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The Run:

- Shoes are the most important piece of kit you will ever buy, so invest wisely and go to at least one sports shop that specialises in Running where they have expert advice available and usually, a video-camera and running machine to examine your run and walk-style in some detail before suggesting a range of suitable shoes. There are many factors involved ie. weight, height, pronation, past injuries, mileage objectives etc so do not simply buy the same brand as last time, the most expensive pair available or the shoes to match the rest of your kit!
- 'Less is often more' and shorter, quality sessions with repetitions of a set effort, followed by a short recovery interval can reap great dividends after only a few weeks.
- Avoid 'pounding the streets' for hours, the more off-road running you can manage, the better – to prevent too much high-impact activity.
- Like Swimming, increase Run volume gradually – by approximately 10% per week.
- Start at a realistic level and build; don't worry if you can't already run 5k in one continuous effort. Try 2- 3k x 2-3 weekly sessions for 2 weeks – you will be surprised how quickly you feel the improvement.
- Vary your route and terrain – include a hill or two for good measure!
- Run with a friend or a small group; one of the biggest reasons that many training plans fail is that we all have so many distractions and 'other stuff' to be doing. To miss a planned session is so much harder when you are committed to a 20-30 minute run with a training partner.
- Rest. This is when your body recovers and gains the benefit from all your training. Set aside at least one day per week when you do not run or swim; other softer or alternative activities can be complimentary but Rest, along with the right amount of Sleep and a Balanced Diet are all crucial factors for anyone serious about getting even a little bit fitter.
- Drink. Hydration is vital to any performance in endurance sports so take on water gradually and in advance of your run session. Continue to drink water & non-alcoholic fluids after training.
- Keep a simple diary. Plan your training week in advance, write down what you actually did – include times if you wish together with a few simple comments about how you felt, conditions etc. You will be surprised how setting and achieving simple goals can provide ongoing motivation to keep you training through the summer. Most of all - Enjoy It!