

The Next Level Newsletter - August, 2025 - Volume XXII, Issue VI

Dear Athlete,

Vlog and article - Your first triathlon:
Our latest video goes over preparing for and racing in **your first triathlon**!

Preparing for and racing in your first triathlon may seem like an intimidating prospect. However, it doesn't have to be. It's just a matter of being consistent in your training and methodical on race day.
The first thing you should do, besides picking your race, is figure out a training schedule that works for you. Don't compare yourself to or try to copy Super John or Super Jane who have been at it for years and years! A simple plan that you can follow week in and week out is the way to go. If you are able to include a couple of group training sessions per week, you can make it a fun and social endeavor as well.

Generally speaking if you're able to swim, bike, and run two times each week in each sport, that will get you into pretty good shape and you should be ready to go on race day.

If your race choice includes an open water swim then you really, really need to get out to open water and practice prior to race morning. This is the point in the race that many new triathletes have a real problem because they are unprepared for the big difference between a pool swim and an open water swim. Ideally you can find a coached group or clinic so that you can quickly learn the fundamentals of open water swimming and navigation.

Additionally, if your triathlon will include an open water swim in cold water, you absolutely need to try out your wetsuit prior to race morning. Wetsuits are meant to be snug and some people find them constricting. You do not want the first time you swim in your wetsuit to be at a race!

It's also very helpful to do a few brick practices before race day. A brick means biking and then running directly off the bike. Anywhere from 8 to 10 miles on the bike followed by 10 to 20 minutes of running is a great brick workout for a new triathlete. Ideally you could do this once a week or every other week. Running off the bike is definitely an acquired skill and you don't want the first time you do it to be at the race.

On race day it's good to do everything you can to remain calm, cool and in control. Being familiar with calming techniques, visualization, and breathing control are all very helpful.

You don't want to skip breakfast. While it may not be your normal time to eat since most races start at 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. You do want an easily digestible meal of some sort an hour or two before the race begins. You should also endeavor to stay hydrated the day before and the morning of the race.

On the swim, if you are a less experienced or newer swimmer, you should start towards the side and back of your pack. That way you can let the faster, more competitive swimmers go and find your own space without people right next to you. Focus on your breathing, make sure you sight every 6 to 10 strokes, and no matter what, stay calm. A lot of people swim too hard at the beginning of a race and then find themselves gasping for breath. That is a gateway to anxiety and panic - so just skip that part :-)

You definitely need to make sure that your bike is safe and that your helmet is an undamaged, safety-rated helmet. Make sure your brakes work, your shifting is smooth, and your chin strap is fit to your head. You don't need to ride an $8,000 aerodynamic triathlon bike in your first triathlon! Any mountain, road, or cross bike will work. If the course is super hilly you probably don't want to be on a very heavy mountain bike, but that's not the end of the world as those bikes have gearing for climbs.

During the race you should have at the very least a water bottle with water or sports drink on the bike. Even the fastest athletes will take 45 minutes or more to finish a Sprint Triathlon, and normal people will be more in the hour to an hour and a half range. That is too long to go without drinking anything. It's also not a bad idea to have a gel available for the bike or the start of the run to get a little bit of a calorie and sugar boost before getting onto the run.

If you're so new to biking that you're not comfortable grabbing the water bottle during the bike leg, then you should have a sip after the swim, and another once you're done with the ride.

On the bike, use caution where needed, stay to the right side of the road unless you're actively passing another competitor or avoiding an obstacle, and control your pace. It's easy to go too hard on the bike and then be out of gas on the run, which is not the most fun experience.

The great thing about the run at your first triathlon is that you don't actually have to run! You can do a walk-jog, you can take walk breaks, and you can talk to other competitors and just have a grand old time. If you do intend to run the entire way, control your pace for the first few minutes by focusing on your turnover rate, relaxed upper body, and smooth breathing. This will establish a good solid pace that you can use to the end of the run.

It's always a great idea to wear sunscreen and use sunglasses. Sunglasses will actually help protect your eyes from bugs on the bike. If you are doing a longer race and expect to be out on the run course for a while, it may be worth reapplying sunscreen in the second transition.

Knowing your pace abilities, heart rate thresholds, or power thresholds is useful in the long term but not totally necessary for your first triathlon. Your goal at your first race should be to finish successfully, have fun, and look forward to doing another one soon. While triathlon is an individual sport, there are plenty of clubs, workout groups, and teams where you can meet like-minded people, have fun group training sessions, and help each other stay motivated.

So grab a friend or loved one, make a commitment to doing a local race, and have a great time!

You can see the full Triathlon and Endurance Training Concepts playlist here.

2025 Open Water Swim Clinics



Join Coach Marty Gaal for a 3 hour open water training clinic on the beach at Jordan Lake. The clinic includes discussions of open water situations and swim training, and in-water skills and practice swim courses. This is a great way for new open water athletes to get comfortable and confident before entering a race situation.

Our remaining clinic dates:

Saturday, September 20 - Seaforth Beach, Jordan Lake

You can read the details and **sign up here**.

OSB Athlete News

Dwayne D 1st OA at UNC Wellness Cary sprint
Coach Bri 2nd OA at UNC Wellness Cary Sprint
Greg A 1st AG at UNC Wellness Cary sprint
Coach Marty 1st AG at UNC Wellness
Nicolai T takes 1st AG, 6th OA at High Point Sprint
Kory G takes 3rd AG, 7th OA at Xterra Portland!

Circle City Veterinary Surgery
Triangle Open Water Swim Series

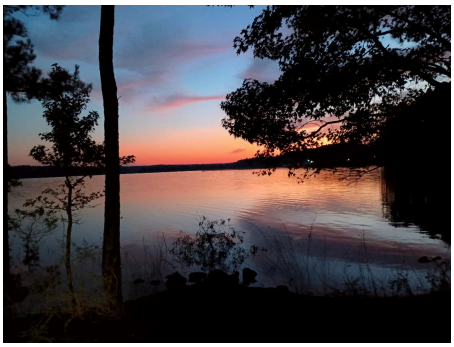
TRIANGLE OPEN WATER MILE SWIM SERIES

We're back for 2025 with spring and fall events:

April 27 - Jordan Lake OW Challenge - .6m, 1.2m and 2.4m options

October 05 - Hurricane Championship Swim -.5m, 1m and 2m options

Registration is now available.



A couple other non-affiliated NC open water swims you might be interested in:

Sep 06 10AM - Wave Carolina Cup 2k - Seven Lakes
Sep 06 4PM - White Lake Fall 1.8m challenge - White Lake
Sep 21 730AM - Swim the Loop 3.5m or 1.3m Wrightsville Beach

OSB coaching programs

One Step Beyond offers customized individual endurance training programs to triathletes, runners, and swimmers throughout the year. Our most popular ongoing program is called Basic Steps coaching.

If you want a great schedule but don't feel the need for extensive personal training during the program cycle, this is the plan for you. Our coaches will create a professional training plan designed around your specific goals and constraints, with adjustments along the way as needed. We use heart rate, power, and perceived exertion targets as appropriate.

Your coach will be available to you via email, text, and phone, which we check and respond to Monday thru Friday.

The initial interview is conducted by phone, and all ongoing coaching is accomplished through Training Peaks software, email and phone support. You will receive:

- Annual Training Plan
- A weekly schedule with specific daily workouts
- Weekly group training sessions
- Ongoing email support for all questions (client initiated)
- Ongoing phone support (<15 minute type conversations)
- Race day pacing and nutrition advice
- Necessary adjustments of your schedule
- Regular feedback from your coach
- 20% discount on additional personal training and consulting sessions
- A premium Trainingpeaks training account

Our local group training schedule

Please RSVP if you plan to show up to a training session. Our typical week looks mostly like this. New athletes are welcome!

Bri - brianne@osbmultisport.com
Daniel - daniel@osbmultisport.com
Marty - marty@osbmultisport.com

Day/Time | Location | Workout | Coach

Monday or Tuesday | Online | Core strength training
500 PM

Wednesday | Various gravel locations | 1.5hr ride | Marty (summertime)
930 or 945 AM

Thursday | Old Reedy Creek entrance to Umstead | Interval run | Bri / Daniel
630 AM

Saturday | Soft surface somewhere | Long run | Bri or Marty
Varies

Sunday | Varies | greenway rides | Bri or Marty
Varies

Come join us!

OSB pre-made training plans

If you're not quite ready for full time coaching, but need some structured guidance, check out the OSB premade plans below:

Intermediate 16 week Half-Ironman 70.3 Triathlon Training Plan - $79.99
Intermediate 16 week olympic distance triathlon training plan - $69.95
Intermediate 10 week olympic distance triathlon training plan - $59.95
Intermediate 10 week sprint triathlon training plan - $59.95

Beginner Level 2 16 week Half-Ironman 70.3 Triathlon Training Plan - $79.99
Beginner 16 week sprint triathlon triathlon training plan - $69.95
Beginner 16 week olympic distance triathlon training plan - $69.95
Beginner 10 week olympic distance triathlon training plan - 49.95

Beginner 10k run in 10 weeks training program - $44.99

All the programs are hosted on TrainingPeaks. Each program comes with a free basic account. You can check out the details here.

OSB Sponsors

Frank Rexford



Whether you are purchasing a new home, refinancing your mortgage, or simply considering a home improvement project, I have the experience to help you find a loan that is right for you. And I will take the time to provide clear explanations along the way, so that you will be confident as you make choices about the many financing options available.

www.frankrexford.com

Swivel Bottle



The patented Swivel Bottle is a dual-beverage container with 360 degrees of rotation. Each bottle reservoir holds 8 ounces of fluid.
To use, simply rotate the bottle by spinning the bottle in the palm of your hand to select your drink of choice. Grab a drink by squeezing the bottle, and the liquid squirts out of a leak-proof one-way nozzle.

With a flick of the wrist, you can then rotate the Swivel Bottle 180°, allowing you to drink from the other bottle reservoir. The different color reservoirs makes it easy to remember the different fluids you are carrying.

www.swivelbottle.com

Boone/Beach Mountain area rental from Coach Daniel

We can offer the OSB crew/people a friends and family discount. Contact Coach Daniel through the VRBO link below.

Here is the **VRBO link** if you are interested!

Quote of the month:

Sometimes it helps to just take a deep breath, not forgetting to let out the deep breath you already took.
~Robert Brault

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