

'HOW I  
BUILD MY  
BODY'

# LUCY CHARLES-BARCLAY



## MEET THE ELITE

The former elite level swimmer Lucy Charles-Barclay took up triathlon in 2013. She recently became the 2021 Ironman 70.3 World Champion after finishing second in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

**CARDIO**

'Training for three disciplines is a real balancing act. I do between 20 and 30 hours of training a week, depending on what phase of training I'm in. I pretty much train seven days a week, with more than one session a day, although Mondays and Fridays are my lower-volume days. I do four-to-five swim sessions which vary in intensity, but a lot of intense exercise is in the pool because swimming is my background. I cycle six times a week because that's the biggest part of a triathlon – most are long and steady rides, and two of them are really hard. I also run

four-to-five times a week, with one of those being a long, steady run.'

**STRENGTH**

'I normally do three gym sessions a week. I always work on my core stability, with moves like planks, side planks and V-sits, because the core is the glue that holds everything together across all disciplines. On the strength and conditioning side, my focus is on shoulder stability for swimming, and glute strength for running and cycling. Maintaining long and strong hip flexors is also important for running, especially when they can tighten up and shorten from long hours on the bike.'



**Why try triathlon?**

'There's no one body type that does well at triathlon. You might not be the best runner, but you could be a great swimmer or cyclist, meaning you have the opportunity to excel during one part of the event.'

'There's always something you can improve upon, and your training will be packed with variety. It's very hard to get bored because you can always set new goals and keep challenging yourself.'

'Triathlon is very inclusive, and there's a huge level of respect between all athletes because it's so tough. Even on the start line, everyone is really respectful of one another because you've done a huge amount of work just to get there.'

Words: Joanna Elsworth | Photography: Getty Images for IRONMAN



**RECOVERY**

'If I'm feeling super fatigued, I'll add in a rest day every now and then. To aid recovery, it's essential that I refuel as quickly as possible after a workout, eating something like chicken and rice (I try to be super organised and prepare it before a session), and I also see my physio twice a week to keep my body in tip-top condition. When I do have a rest day, I relax using some NormaTec compression boots (hyperice.com), and I get away from triathlon by taking my dog Lola for walks – time with her provides huge mental benefits!'

including dairy, beef and whey protein – the latter of which I had after almost every workout – so I've cut them out. I feel so much better for it. My body has much less inflammation and my performance has improved.'

**VITAL KIT**

'I do most of my bike training indoors using a Wahoo KICKR Bike [a stationary bike trainer; wahoofitness.com] which is linked to Zwift. I use the Zwift platform for all my indoor rides because it makes things much more interactive, fun and sociable, and I find it easier to hit specific intervals in training – I don't need traffic lights slowing me down! Red Bull is also vital for my performance. I use it during my key workouts for an extra caffeine hit when I'm flagging.'

**NUTRITION**

'My diet has changed a lot this year. It's always been healthy, but I've previously struggled with painful stomach bloating that's annoyed me during races, so I decided to do a food intolerance test. I found out I'm intolerant to a lot of foods,

Lucy is a Red Bull athlete.  
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