





How I got my BEST BODY *EVER!*

Kirsty Gallacher's training regime has undergone a dramatic overhaul. Here she reveals the reasons why she's getting her fittest at 40

WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth



If there's one thing Kirsty Gallacher loves in order to keep herself mentally and physically fighting fit, it's a new challenge. As if juggling a busy TV presenting career with looking after her two children, Oscar, seven, and Jude, six, wasn't enough (when we chat, she's just returned from a nine-day trip covering the US Golf Masters for Sky Sports and is still a little jet-lagged), the self-professed 'single working mum' has now taken on her biggest test to date, the IRONMAN 70.3 race on June 12 in Staffordshire, consisting of a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride and a 13.1-mile run. And having never done any kind of long-distance race before, she's given herself just seven weeks to prepare for it. How on earth did she get herself into this daunting situation? Well, could you say 'no' to Gordon Ramsay?

THE LONG HAUL

'I've known Gordon for years, working with him on Soccer Aid,' explains Gallacher. 'He just called me up and asked if I fancied being a part of his and his wife Tana's GTR100 team, which is raising funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), and I said, "Absolutely!" I've been an ambassador for GOSH for years, so for me it was a no-brainer.' Fair enough, but if taking part in a long-distance race for charity was a 'no brainer', why has she never entered one before?

'I've always wanted to, but I thought my body, muscle type and physical capabilities wouldn't be suited to a marathon,' says Gallacher. 'I'm more of a sprinter, a power girl, and my training has always complemented my speed and strength. Long-distance training is a completely different beast to what I'm used to. But, while I'm nervous about it, I'm also excited to be doing something that will really push me. I've been getting back into swimming, I've always enjoyed cycling, and the run – well, let's just say that 13 miles is a lot easier to do than 26!'

Building up her endurance for the event is Gallacher's main concern and priority. In recent years, she's been working with top personal trainer Josh Salzmann



I'VE ALWAYS LOVED SWIMMING, SO IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN THE POOL

only for a short time. It's about prioritising.' With such a dramatic change to her training regime, does Gallacher envisage her body will change much? 'Yes, it will,' she replies, sounding none too pleased about the prospect. 'I have a very fast metabolic rate and can lose weight extremely quickly, especially if I'm training a lot, working and running around after the kids. But I will try to make sure this doesn't happen by eating more. I'm a healthy eater and don't cut any food groups out of my diet, but I will be taking more protein on board after training sessions to maintain my muscle, using Elite Whey Isolate Protein Powder (£25.99 for 1kg; smartprotein.co.uk) as recommended by Will – I don't want to get to the race looking like a skinny thing!'

DIVING IN

Although her time to prepare for the triathlon is short, it appears Gallacher has got everything under control. But building her endurance aside, is there any part of the event she's particularly concerned about? 'I'm not worried about the running or cycling – I'll just increase the distances I'm able to run and cycle gradually over time. But while I've been focusing on gym work for so many years, my swimming is a bit rusty,' she explains. 'I've always loved swimming, so it's been great to get back in the pool. It's a fantastic form of exercise; it's great for fitness, burning calories and toning up; it's great for rehabilitation if you've had an injury because the water supports you, but still offers resistance; it's great for fun, and even relaxation. I needed to get back into swimming for the triathlon, but I'm glad I had the incentive, as it's also been really enjoyable reintroducing swimming into my existing training and lifestyle.'

So delighted has Gallacher been to have swimming back in her life, she's even teamed up with Speedo to spearhead its new Dive In campaign (speedo.co.uk/dive-in), an initiative designed to encourage adults to get back into swimming and improve their strokes, with 10,000 free, 60-minute swim fitness

(joshsalzmann.co.uk) to sculpt her incredible physique with thrice-weekly, 60-minute training sessions combining resistance work, Pilates and short, sharp bursts of sprinting. But all that's set to change.

DOUBLING UP

'I'll continue to work with Josh, developing my cardio with circuit training, but I'll also be working with triathlon coach, Will Usher (precision-coaching.co.uk), who has devised a training plan to help build my endurance,' she says. 'It will mean doubling my training, and working out at the weekends when I normally rest and spend time with my boys, but I've just got to get on with it. It will be hard fitting it in around work – I'll still be presenting my Sky Sports News slot between 4 and 7pm, four days a week – but it's all good fun and

sessions led by swim coaches on offer. It follows research that found two-thirds of swimmers are unable to swim front crawl for more than four lengths, and one-in-three adults aren't confident in the water.

'It's all about helping people fall in love with swimming again,' says Gallacher. 'Most of us learn the basics at a young age, but lose our abilities and confidence as we get older. I really identify with that, and hope I can encourage people to take advantage of the Speedo training sessions, so they can enjoy swimming again.'

NEW SKILLS

Gallacher had a swim session with Dive In coach Keeley Bullock, and picked up lots of tips that helped towards her triathlon training, making changes to her breast stroke (she was apparently going too wide and is now practising shorter, smaller, rounder strokes) and front crawl (due to an old rotator cuff injury in her right shoulder, Gallacher was breathing to her left rather than alternating breaths) to make her more efficient and faster. 'My breathing wasn't something I was expecting to work on, but you know, I'm 40, so I'd forgotten some of the techniques I learned as a child,' she justifies. 'Keeley says it's not the end of the world if I don't master it, but I'd like to improve on it so I can have more balance and speed in the water.'

It's clear Gallacher is relishing the opportunity to use her fitness regime to learn new skills, rather than simply working out to feel great and look good – which, of course, is no bad thing given the amazing shape she's in. 'I feel in the best shape of my life,' she agrees. 'I've worked hard in the past year and it's taken regular training and eating well and, yes, I think at this age, I feel better than I've ever felt about my body.' Given the condition her fantastic figure is in right now, it's easy to imagine Gallacher never has to worry about pulling on her bathing suit and flashing the flesh around the pool. So does she have any advice for women who might not have her level of body confidence when getting in the water?

'I think the most important thing to remember, is that whether you're overweight or healthy, we're all in the same boat,' she says. 'We can all feel self-conscious and

FOCUS ON YOUR GOALS AND KNOW THAT YOU'RE DOING YOUR BODY GOOD

dash from the changing room to the pool. But, instead, you should focus on your goals, knowing that you're doing something good for your body. The more you swim, the more you look

and feel better for it. That's what fitness and sport is all about. If you put the effort in, you get the rewards out.'

GO FOR IT

Having a good swimsuit that supports you and gives your body structure can also help confidence, she adds. 'I bought a new costume the other day and I feel great in it. It sucks me right in! No, I'm joking... actually, I'm not!' she says, bursting into laughter. And what about those women who avoid swimming for fear it might damage their hair or dry their skin? 'At the end of the day, sport and exercise are quite gritty, so you have to be gritty,' she says. 'I mean, my feet are disgusting from training and running and my stint on *Strictly*

Come Dancing, but that won't stop me working out. I'm more interested in feeling great and having the energy to do all the things I want in life. You can't worry about getting sweaty or messing up your hair or you'd never do anything. As long as I wash my hair and moisturise afterwards, I'm not worried.'

You can't knock Gallacher's determination not to let distractions get in the way of what she wants to achieve. Which brings us to our final question before she heads off for a training session with Usher: given the fact she strikes us as a competitive soul, will she be setting any time goals

for the IRONMAN 70.3? 'Absolutely not! I just want to complete it!' she says with hearty enthusiasm. 'This is a big thing for me. I want to do it for lots of people, and for charity. It's not a selfish thing. As long as I finish it, that will be the greatest achievement for me.'

'MY MUST-HAVES'

Benefit Hoola Ultra Plush, £14.50 for 15ml; benefitcostmetics.com



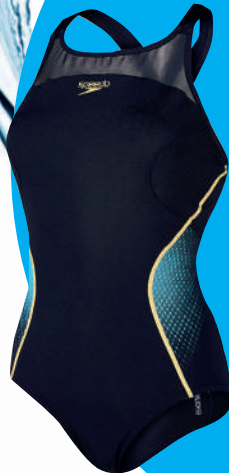
Aurelia Cell Repair Night Oil, £55 for 50ml; aureliaskincare.com



Rescue Remedy Spray, £10.29 for 20ml; boots.com



Speedo Pinnacle swimsuit, £52; speedostore.co.uk



KIRSTY'S TRAINING PLAN

Want to build your swimming endurance like Kirsty? Try this beginner's plan devised by head coach at Precision Training and Speedo Dive in coach, Will Usher

WU WARM UP; **SCD** SWIMMING COOL DOWN;
CHOICE CHOICE OF STROKE; **FC** FRONT CRAWL; **H** HARD EFFORT;
TT TIME TRIAL – TEST YOURSELF OVER A GIVEN TIME OR DISTANCE;
ACTIVE REST KEEP MOVING GENTLY TO AID RECOVERY

WEEK	SWIM ONE	SWIM TWO
WEEK 1	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 400M FC AS 16 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 4 X 100M CHOICE /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,300M	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 400M FC AS 16 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 4 X 100M CHOICE /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,300M
WEEK 2	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 400M FC AS 16 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 2 X 200M CHOICE /REST 60 SECS; 4 X 100M FC /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,700M	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 400M FC AS 16 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 2 X 200M CHOICE /REST 60 SECS; 4 X 100M FC /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,700M
WEEK 3	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 400M FC AS 16 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 2 X 200M CHOICE /REST 60 SECS; 4 X 100M FC /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,700M	WU 200M CHOICE; 2 X MAX DISTANCE 15 MINS FC /REST 5 MINS – AIM TO STAY RELAXED, YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO BREAK ANY RECORDS. SWIM AS CONSISTENTLY AS POSSIBLE. RECORD YOUR DISTANCES; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE UNSPECIFIED
WEEK 4	WU 200M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 500M FC AS 20 X 25M/REST 5 SECS; 3 X 200M CHOICE /REST 60 SECS; 4 X 100M FC /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 2,000M	WU 300M CHOICE; 2 X MAX DISTANCE 15-MIN FC SWIM/REST 5 MINS – THIS WEEK AIM TO SWIM FURTHER ON THE SECOND SET. RECORD YOUR DISTANCES; 100M SCD . TOTAL DISTANCE UNSPECIFIED
WEEK 5	WU 400M CHOICE; 4 X 50M H FC /REST 20 SECS; 1,500M TT – TAKE YOUR SPLIT TIMES AT 400M AND 800M. THIS WILL HELP IN FUTURE TESTS TO DETERMINE PACING AND PROGRESS; 200M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 2,300M	WU 400M CHOICE; 4 X 50M H FC /REST 20 SECS; 750M TT – TAKE YOUR SPLIT TIMES AT 200M AND 400M; 350M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 1,700M
WEEK 6	WU 300M CHOICE; 4 X 50M FC /REST 20 SECS; 600M FC AS 12 X 50M/REST 5 SECS; 2 MINS REST; 3 X 300M CHOICE /REST 90 SECS; 4 X 100M FC /REST 45 SECS; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE 2,500M	WU 300M CHOICE; 1 X MAX DISTANCE 20 MINS CONSTANT SWIMMING – MAKE A MENTAL NOTE OF YOUR DISTANCE AT 10 MINS; 4 MINS REST ACTIVE; 2 X MAX DISTANCE 10-MIN SWIM/REST 5 MINS – AIM TO BEAT YOUR HALFWAY 10-MIN TIME FROM YOUR 20 MINS CONSTANT SWIMMING; 4 MINS ACTIVE REST ; 100M SCD TOTAL DISTANCE UNSPECIFIED

SWIM TIPS

Boost your front crawl stroke in and out of the water with these top tips from Speedo Dive In Coach Will Usher.



Do Russian twists

'Holding a resistance band tied to a door handle in both hands, stand sideways to it and pull through to 180° before returning to the start. Do two sets of 12-15 controlled reps, before repeating on the other side.

This works your rotational core muscles which are key for swimming the front crawl – on average you'll do one stroke per metre, so over 1,900m, you'll do 950 strokes per side (950 rotations).'



Focus on breathing

'Your natural reaction is to hold your breath under water, but during the front crawl, you should be inhaling when your head is out of the water and exhaling when it's under, so you swim efficiently, in a straight line and avoid struggling for air. First, face the water in the shower and breathe in and out. Progress to floating face-down in the water, lifting your head to alternate sides to inhale, then breathing out under water. Then apply this to your swims.'



Use a pull-buoy

'While swimmers have extremely flexible ankles that act as flippers to propel them forwards, runners and gym bunnies can often have fixed ankles – which can not only cause a drag so you swim slowly, but can even send you backwards! If you do have fixed ankles, you'll often find your legs sink in the water. Combat this by placing a pull buoy training aid between your thighs to increase buoyancy, take the pressure off your legs and let you use your arms properly without having to think about the rest of your body.' ■

For more on how to improve your front crawl, sign up at speedo.co.uk/dive-in for a free swim session.