



Triathlon rookie (and our humble editor) Bobby Hart is gearing up for the Maple Grove Triathlon at Spine and Sports Institute, where he takes a weekly spin class led by fitness coach jonnyj.

Dared to Tri

A rookie's guide to triathlon training.



To see more training tips and read about Bobby Hart's journey towards his first triathlon, read his Dared to Tri blog on maplegrovemag.com. Find more info about Dared to Tri at maplegrovetriathlon.com.

TRIATHLONS SCARE ME. Not the type of “there’s a crazy clown in the closet” scared, but more of a “your body is failing you in front of hundreds of people and all you can do is watch yourself collapse” scared. The very thought of 200 people flailing around in a lake like a school of salmon makes me hyperventilate. Then the nightmare gets worse. After somehow making it out of the water alive, I still have to force my cramped legs to bike and run a combined 17-plus miles. Yikes.

It’s time to put that bad dream to rest. I’m not the only one intimidated by triathlons, and there’s an entire subculture of people that attest to this type of thing as actually being fun. Since *Maple Grove Magazine* editorial advisory board member Lindsey Kurhajetz is organizing Maple Grove’s first triathlon, Dare to Tri,

I figured I’d take that dare for the benefit of our tri-curious readers, the community event and—if I make it out alive—myself.

Dare to Tri is scheduled for August 28 at Weaver Lake Park. I officially took the dare in my January editorial note and started training in April for the shorter of the two courses—Dare to Sprint—which is a 0.4-mile swim, 14.35-mile cycle and 3.3-mile run.

Knowing it would be foolish as a triathlon rookie to tackle this first race alone, I enlisted the help of professional fitness coach jonnyj, who teaches classes at Maple Grove’s Spine and Sports Institute, and Richard Kurhajetz (Lindsey’s husband), who tried his first triathlon last year and has been hooked ever since. I’ll share with you the wisdom they shared with me.

Top 5 Training Tips

Be around triathletes: I joined Twin Cities Multisports club (tcmultisports.club.com) for only \$35 a year. This way, I can network with experienced triathletes, utilize free clinics and get discounts on equipment. "Get around people who know what's going on so you can ask questions," jonnyj says. "Find any and all resources that you can to just start learning."

Watch and learn: Go watch a triathlon and pay attention to what triathletes are doing, such as how they prepare and how they go through their transitions from the water to bikes. Renting videos on all three sports can also be a big help.

Get professional help: The first time around, it's easy to develop a series of bad habits that lead to injuries. A coach can keep an eye on you and teach you the correct form, the best training routines and push you. If you can't afford a coach, train with a friend and/or buy triathlon books.

Know the course: When you've set your sights on a particular race, go study that course and, at least, bike it. Knowing where you're going helps alleviate the anxiety on race day, and hills won't sneak up on you. "Biking on home turf is an advantage," Kurhajetz says. "Riding the course in advance really gives you an advantage of helping you understand what you need to have left in the gas tank."

Swim with people: Since this is the most intimidating part of the race for most people, it's important to build swimming endurance, and do it with others, if you can. This will help you get used to keeping pace in the water while being surrounded by other swimmers splashing around you. I joined U.S. Masters Swimming (\$40 annual fee), open to adult swimmers of all skill levels, and attend two practices a week.

We tend to fear the unknown. Each tidbit I learn about triathlons and the more I train, the less anxiety lingers before the big day. And I always force myself to remember one thing: This is supposed to be fun. //



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