

Thought I'd post this on here as I've tried to include loads of relevant stuff for going sub 10. If I ever get my finisherpix photos, I'll add one of me on the bike in the aero position to give an idea of what a 5:05 bike split on 230W looks like aerowise.

I signed up for IMDE last July when my tri club (Knutsford) decided on it as the venue for the annual IM pilgrimage. At the time I had hoped to qualify for Kona at IM Wales and then just have a blast at Frankfurt and see how fast I could go. Things didn't pan out as well as hoped at IM Wales and so I focussed on IMDE to try to secure my Kona slot. I did my homework and realised that 9:40 would be a reasonably safe bet for a slot. 1 hour swim, 5 hour bike, 3:30 run and 10 minutes for transitions seemed perfectly achievable based on previous races and even thought I could go faster and had 9:30 as a target. **Training went reasonably well, although I now realise that I wasted a fair bit of time doing steady 2 hours bikes over winter when more tempo would have been better. Started a regular coached swim session and made sure I went to run interval sessions on Tuesdays. From IM Wales I knew my lack of long bikes in the two months before had been my downfall,** so I planned to get these done and also to keep the running volume up. When I started to up the tempo on the bike in March I started to find myself running out of energy on rides and eventually put it down to too much steady 'get the miles in' runs, so I binned these off to concentrate on the long run and intervals with the odd tempo run/race. This seemed to work and allowed me to build the biking up. My long runs were done off road which really seemed to help motivation and stopped me from trying to run them too fast. It also introduced a fair bit of pace variety due to the terrain which may have helped build strength. I managed to get some decent long bikes in, but was hampered by a chronic back problem which meant needing to stretch at regular intervals. My open water swimming was delayed by the cold spring and general lack of enthusiasm, but I was hoping this training thing wasn't really a big issue with swimming...

Average weekly training volumes in the 12 weeks upto the 3 week taper were:

Swim 1:30

Bike 12:30

Run 4:30

I kept racing throughout the training completing Wilmslow Sprint, Skipton Sprint, Slateman Oly, Bala Middle and finally Dambuster. Bala was four weeks out and I'd heard that it was good to do a half as prep four to five weeks out, maybe for your first, but for me it didn't really help and just put a gap in the training schedule. Dambuster was two weeks out and was only done because it was a Worlds qualifier. Again, this was a mistake as after 12 weeks of hard training I just wasn't sharp enough on the day, although my poor swim should have rung alarm bells. Finished 9th in AG with an outside chance of a rolldown slot as 7 above me have qualified by right.

Logistics

These were sorted fairly late when I booked the bike with ShipMyTriBike who picked up from my hometown and then booked a flight to Frankfurt with Lufthansa and the NH Hotel just north of the main rail station. I liked the idea of not having to take my bike apart and pack it and also it saved the hassle of getting a hire car. My flight was at 06:25 and I was in the hotel by 10, registered at Romerberg and then returned to check in by 12:00. All really easy and relaxed. chilled out for a bit and then went off to registration for the race brief and to pickup the bike and ride it back to the hotel. Sorted out my race bags and then another bit of chilling out before going off to the Pasta Party to meetup with my team mates. Saturday was nicely laid back, got up around 9 and took my bike to Romerberg to catch one of the busses to T1 and checked in the bike and bags. Met some team mates and had a bit of lunch before getting a lift back to Frankfurt and walking back to the hotel. Met up for dinner in the evening and then retired for a short nights sleep.

Raceday

I woke before the alarm at 3:30 to start my Iron day. Did my prep and wandered down to the Intercontinental to catch the bus to the start. Arrived with well over an hour and a quarter to spare and

set my bike up and put some energy drink in my Speedfils and a bottle in my bike bag to slug in T1. I then went and stood in the toilet queue which took 30 minutes, really surprising given how good the rest of the organisation is. Luckily I had plenty of spare time so didn't get too stressed. About 06:25 I put on my wetsuit and wandered into the lake. I had a good look around and it was a lovely day with bright sunshine and I took a moment to think of an old team mate who had recently died unexpectedly. He'd done IMDE in 2011 and it was good to remember him in a place where he had really enjoyed himself. At the end of the day a Kona slot would be nice, but just having a good race would be enough today and I swam over to the start line.

Swim 1:06:23

<http://connect.garmin.com/activity/339665237>

I was in the 06:45 'fast wave' which was a bonus as there were only 300 people to fight with rather than 2000. The gun went off and after a minor bit of biff the fast swimmers disappeared and I tried to find a pair of feet to draft off. I managed to get a few good drafts and was soon heading back to the shore at the end of the first loop, checked my watch on exiting and it had 36:30 on it, which I knew wasn't quick, but wasn't that worried as the distances were a bit uncertain. I ploughed back in and picked up a good draft within a 100 metres, swimming just off the hip of a chap with a good rounded belly. I was starting to get fatigued now and just hung on for dear life until about 100m from the shore when the fast guys from the 7:00 wave came ploughing through. It was then out of the water and stumble up the steep bank, no chance of running that. Looked at my watch which showed a swim time of just over 1:06, a PW from my 7 IMs to date. Now that's only 5 minutes off plan, but when your gunning for sub 10 it's a lot to make up. In my last three IMs I've done within a couple of minutes of the hour and I got a bit complacent and didn't put in enough long OW sessions, probably less than a handful. I think I was lulled into a false sense of security by my improvement in the pool at 400TT. This came back and bit me on the backside despite getting a half decent draft and starting in the 'fast' wave. Looking at my Garmin stats, I swam the second loop faster than my first, probably due to the good draft I had throughout loop 2, so maybe I needed to be a bit more aggressive at the start to pick up a better draft, but it's always a balance for me against pushing too hard in the melee and getting a panic attack which could ruin the race.

T1 – 0:04:44

<http://connect.garmin.com/activity/339665238>

T1 took a lot longer than expected, but don't really see how you could go that much quicker as I only spent 1:20 in the tent getting the wetsuit off/shoes on. I did put on socks/shoes covers and slug down 250ml of energy drink, but that's only a matter of seconds. There's a fair bit of ground to cover, so unless you're really sprinting it's going to take some time.

Bike – 5:04:27

<http://connect.garmin.com/activity/339655549>

I'd done a few long rides at target power of 228W* (76% FTP) and slightly above, so thought holding this should be easy and the problem would be reining myself back. I was really relieved to be out of the swim and onto my strongest discipline, but almost immediately it didn't feel right, I didn't feel the usual surge of power at the start of the bike when you feel you can push 300W all day, but settled into a comfortable pace at almost bang on 228W. There were a few annoying cyclists who would bomb past you and then slow up, but stay on the left blocking you, but did my best to ignore them and as the roads were closed you could use the other side of the road. It was a lovely run up to Frankfurt, although the wind was in your face it wasn't that strong and I was averaging 37kph. The bit through Frankfurt was spoilt by all the manhole covers that were far from flush with the road and you need to keep an eye out. The climbs were nothing special, but gave a bit of a break from the aero position. The exception was a cobbled hill at 48Km which was just a PITA, glad I had all my stuff well attached as there must

have been a mountain of kit left there after the race. I remember shouting for them to get it tarmaced - hope they take my advice. Got to the top of the loop on target power, with HR nicely within the expected range but average speed was just under 35kph when I had been hoping for between 36-38kph, Some of that was due to the NE wind, but it was going to be hard to get that average up much on the way south. The roads were mostly rolling, not as flat as I had expected and the odd sharp bend to keep you awake. The final obstacle on lap 1 was 'Heartbreak Hill' but it's nothing special, the only issue is all the people getting in the way as you try to climb up it (I'm a miserable bugger!) Once over this the rest of the loop is all downhill into Frankfurt to play manhole cover bingo before starting out on the second loop. Average power was still bang on target and speed had climbed to 36.3kph, so in with a chance of going under 5 hours. A team mate of mine and previous Kona qualifier had just beaten me out of the swim and we had switched placed a couple of times in the first loop. Got to say I was surprised he re-took me as I thought I was stronger on the bike, but a short while into lap 2 he started to drift away and I couldn't keep up without pushing too hard so I let him go and rode my own race. Around this time my power started to drop and rather than fight to keep to a number I rode by feel in order to give myself a chance of a good run. It was a bit demoralising pushing myself back to the top of the loop and up the cobbled hill, but was looking forward to having the wind behind me as I could then sit up a bit more as my back was starting to give me grief and I was needing to stretch it out quite often. I finally turned to head home and was now looking forward to Heartbreak Hill as it was literally all downhill from there. It seemed to take an age and there was lots of sitting up, but I was soon resting on the hoods and coasting into town. **Power had subsided to 219W and average speed to 35.6kph. Average HR over the bike was 132bpm which was bang on target, so my decision to let the watts drift down seemed the right one. For nutrition I'd used 2:1 blend of Maltodextrin/Fructose with a bit of squash for flavour. I'm 74kg and I had 480g of this carb mixed in about 1.5L of water. I'd taken about 250ml in T1 and had the rest split between frame and bar mounted Speedfil bottles.** This worked perfectly and I just picked up water from the aid stations as required, but only when thirsty as I didn't want to have to stop for a pee (twice at IM Wales)

My Garmin 500 measured the course at 180.63km with 1519m of climbing, although I'm sure the website info says 1000m. The garmin 'corrected' figure is more like 1900m which seems unlikely. I also had my dependable Polar 625x on my wrist which had the climb at 1257m which I'm inclined to believe having worn and tested it for the last 6 years.

* Measured on P2Max which reads 5% low, so actually 240W if you want an idea of power/time.

T2 - 1:31

<http://connect.garmin.com/activity/339665270>

It's a fast T2 at Frankfurt, you dismount and hand your bike to an assistant, pickup your bag and run straight into the change tent. For me it's just helmet and shoes off, then run shoes on and straight out onto the run course, a total distance of only 130m. I was expecting to see a timing matt and so I started my watch about 100m into the course when I realised I'd missed it (OCD panic attack 🤔).

Run - 3:28:07

<http://connect.garmin.com/activity/339665291>

I'd been doing all my long runs off road for a bit of variety, so my average speed of 11kph wasn't that useful in pacing the IM Marathon. However, by now I had clearly in mind that the race clock stood at 6:17 and the last Kona slot went at 9:43 last year. That left 3:26 for the marathon and so I went off at about 3:20 pace to leave myself some margin for error. I was chasing down a team mate so this helped with my focus. For nutrition I just drank a cup of coke (occasionally 2) at every aid station and a cup of water. I picked up the water while running and when I got the coke I just walked until I had drunk them both as I can't run and drink at the same time. I also pickup a couple of sponges and douse my head and shoulders to keep cool, **the L/S compression top is doing it's job of soaking up the water/sweat and letting it evaporate off cooling me down**, especially into the wind heading east. I was keeping up a good pace, when at about 7km I started to get the familiar feeling of an oncoming

stitch which killed my run at Bala a month previously as I had to slow right down for 2-3km for it to go. I knew I didn't have that luxury here, but by chance the previous day I had mentioned it to a team mate who suggested breathing fully out and taking deep breaths. I'd never tried this before, but anything was worth a go. I spent the next 2km doing just that which must have sounded odd to those around me, but gradually the worrying sensation started to ease and I was able to revert back to a normal breathing style. Luckily it hadn't affected my speed and all was good. Through the first lap in 50:36 with an average HR of 133 and then passed the team mate who had given me the tip who had just started the run of his first IM and I almost ran into a lamppost as I turn around to thank him. Lap two passed without incident in 49:30 and 131HR. By lap 3 it was starting to feel really hard, but I kept pushing hoping that sheer determination would win through and knowing that I would soon be on the last lap. Great relief as I finish the 3rd lap in 52:30 with an average HR of 129 and know it's just the last lap to go. This is where it really starts to fall apart with the pace dropping to above 5min/km, but if I can just hold to that I'm still in with a chance. I manage to stop the pace dropping any further and start ticking off bits of the course. It's a long drag east along the river, so it's a relief to finally make the turn and know I'm virtually in the home straight. I'd started passing aid stations by this point as I was nearly home. Over the bridge for the last time and down a tricky descent (when your this tired) to the river bank. Before long I was turning into the finishing straight and just then a guy came past strongly looking like a younger age group so I let him go (although I doubt I could have caught him). A final check behind me and I ran through the line arms aloft. Final lap in 57 minutes, marathon in 3:28:07, race time was 9:45:12. I knew that was going to be marginal for getting a Kona slot, but I wasn't worried as I'd given it my all on that run and could barely stand up as I was led away to the recovery area to sit down. After a bit of food and drink I finally went to get my certificate printed, would it have my AG placing on? It did, 23rd with only 19 slots it was going to be very close on rolldown. My team mate came in 6 minutes later and was back in 38th position, which just goes to show the depth of the AG field. In all the obsessing about Kona I almost overlooked the fact that I've just set a new PB by 8 minutes over my Outlaw 2010 time when 9:53 on a slightly easier course got me 11th place overall. Here 9:45 got me 231th! At the Outlaw 12 people went under 10 hours, here 360 Did.

Post Race

Once I'd recovered and chatted to team mates I texted ShipMyTriBike to find out where they were and was delighted to find that they'd parked about 50 yards from the transition exit 9 I collected my bags and headed out to transition to get by bike and then hand it over along with my wetsuit before wandering back to the hotel for a well earned bath. If only every Ironman I'd done was as easy as this at the finish, rather than struggling with my kit to a car park in a galaxy far far away....

Rolldown

I went into this feeling quite confident that it would only rolldown two or three places to continue my run of near misses and bad luck. I tucked into the meal and beer and sat through the awards ceremony in awe of some of the performances, especially in my AG where the top three had all beaten the previous course record. They started with the women and then the older AG men and when they got to M50-55 it was the first AG with a decent amount of slots and an indication of how much rolldown there would be. 10 slots and only one rolldown and then they call a 5 minute break and I text my girlfriend that it wasn't looking good. When they resumed a slot rolled in the first 5 and the a couple more upto 15 (out of 19). I thought here we go again, just missing out and then some one didn't reply immediately, second call, still nothing, this is just going to be too cruel. Called a third time and my heart is in my mouth - nothing, surely I'm in, but don't want to celebrate until I'm sure, I could have been DQ'd or given a penalty. Then, they call my name and the shout I give out is massive (helped by a few beers) I'm elated, finally I've done it, and done it at one of the biggest events on the IM calendar. I walk up to pay for my slot and drop my girlfriend a text which is captured by a photographer

<http://tri-mag.de/aktuell/langstrecke/glueckliche-gesichter-wir-fahren-nach-hawaii-41199/ironman-frankfurt-2013-kon-20?page=2>

<http://tri-mag.de/aktuell/langstrecke/glueckliche-gesichter-wir-fahren-nach-hawaii-41199/ironman-frankfurt-2013-kon-22?page=2>

The guy in front of me in the queue then turns around and informs me that I am a very lucky man. Apparently this is Borut Vovk, the guy who had just sprinted past me on the finishing straight to finish one second ahead. Thank god the slots rolled four times or I imagine that this might have preyed on my mind a bit! Just as a final bit of drama I nearly forget my PIN number. It will be interesting to see how much they charged me as I would have signed anything.

Finally the monkey's off my back, I'm going to Kona, the end of a long quest. If it had been easy it wouldn't feel so good now. I like to be able to say Kona will just be a great experience whatever my finish time, but my brain doesn't work that way so it time to start setting targets and getting the training in, especially on the swim.

Gear

Frame - PX Pro Carbon Stealth
Groupset - Shimano Dura Ace (mostly)
Wheels - Flo 60/disc
Chainset - Rotor 3D with 55/39
Nutrition - Speedfil 750ml bar mount/Speedfil 1.2L frame mount

Clothes

Wetsuit - Snugg Ultrafull Custom fit
Top - 2XU white L/S compression top
Trisuit - Knutsford Tri Club custom design by Champion Systems
Bike shoes - DHB Tri Shoes
Bike Helmet - Bell Meteor Aero
Run Shoes - Mizuno Wave Precision
Run Hat - Ironman white cap

Gadgets

Power Meter - Power2max crank based system
Bike comp - Garmin 500
Left wrist - Garmin 310XT in Auto multisport mode
Right wrist - Polar S625X with footpod

Write number on hand

Actually I think I should generalise my thoughts about training for next year's Ironmans a little more.

Winter -

I understand the idea of lots of biking on feel and building the aerobic engine etc and that with the aerobic backing you can then do loads of hard stuff later in the season. However triathletes build the aerobic engine through 3 sports in all so you don't have to constantly knock out big miles in all of them. **Also my feeling is that in the summer as you approach your Ironman doing two 10 mile TTs a week (effectively 2 threshold sessions) is less specific than maintaining a single threshold session and doing more race specific work.**

Over winter (to an extent assuming the weather is not great for riding) I'd aim at a lot of running. Build run volume up gradually through October/November and carry it through January into February. After you've had a good period of running in the first month throw in

hill work and look for winter races for intensity (ideally short for quick recovery and no taper). I'd not head to the track or similar at this point or if I did I'd look to focus on marathon specific sessions and a performance a little below my goals.

I'd also aim to swim a lot more as pools aren't too affected by a poor winter. Take the time to have stroke and technique looked at and make a regular habit of good swimming. With major stroke issues step back and focus on fixing them over developing swim fitness. If technique isn't a major limiter do a mix of sessions for speed, endurance and strength.

In terms of biking I'd aim to have one key threshold session a week and depending on time a second less intense (sweet spot maybe) session well spaced out. I'd then have one 'long' ride but no more than 4 hours most weeks. If weather was good and I felt like it I'd do more. My primary aims would be maintain my FTP and keep myself in good shape to run and swim well.

Spring -

Once weather is picking up and I've got a good period of running and swimming behind me my aim is to reduce their overall volume, keeping key sessions in place. With the extra time and energy I'll start to do more riding and work on reestablishing my bike endurance.

I'll keep the weekly threshold session in place as an important part of the program, but look to have more riding in place. For me that's mean two or three 4 hour plus rides a week probably as part of riding 6 times a week. I'll aim to have some decent race pace work structured in to two of those longer rides.

I would not aim to significantly increase the amount of intensity, but focus a little on riding more volume and building endurance. Perhaps an early season training camp somewhere warm to really put down some mileage too.

From mid-Feb through to mid-April I'll build up bike volume with quality race work in along with maintaining key sessions and a decent balance of swim/run too.

Summer -

Around the start of May I'll go into my peak phase. For me that'll pick up running and swimming a little more and drop overall bike time down a touch. Key sessions remain (threshold is still there), but every bike ride will have purpose and structure built around race pace work. Similarly in my running I'll include a lot more structure to my longer runs.

Come weeks will be higher volume, some higher intensity. I aim to keep pushing myself through May and to my taper in June. A mix of the two plus some decent races and events should see me in good shape by mid-June.

Then it's taper for Austria and find out if this kind of program can get you a sub-9.

I wrote a quite general [piece on periodisation on my blog](#) this morning. To be honest though, this post is more closely based on how I'll view my training. Phases like base and build tend to blur into one a little for me I look to progress over time until some final challenging weeks before a taper.

I've been through this thread and picked out some of the key messages, so a summary so far as it were.....

Some keys to performing are:

- **Consistency in training every week, month,**
- **Frequency of sessions weekly,**
- **Specificity to the distance and time goals,**
- **Recovery. 8hrs a night. Quality nutrition. Soft tissue work.**
- **Trying to raise one's LT / FTP,**

Try not to do 2 long, or hard, or long and hard days in a row as this could lead to a culmination of chronic fatigue. Very difficult to recover from running hard intervals when your running long the very next day.

Think about how long it takes to recover from such sessions.

Recovery is the key here.

In between such sessions work on technique, drills, efficiency, form, economy training.

Swim

Swim and transitions in under 1.15. Under 1.10 preferably

Bike

5.20 - got to stay aero, and have your nutrition strategy nailed on the bike.

Bike setup – Things that can make a considerable difference in efficiency include an aero helmet a rear disc and a deep front. Also paying attention to the little things all add up. Idea's include: cleaning up the excess gear and brake cabling, not carrying excess bottles (you only need two max), keeping your flat kit out of the wind (e.g. under the saddle), having a new(ish) chain, keeping your brakes from rubbing against the rim.

Always Aero on the Bike – Assuming you are correctly fit on your time trial bike, you should be spending 97% of you time in the aero position. That leaves around 10 minutes (for a 5:20 split) where you are not in the aero position. This 10 minutes could mean: stretching, standing on more difficult hills, and going through aid stations etc.

Bike pacing - too hard on the bike and you'll suffer at some point in the run. A lot of people state they went easy on the bike, but then seem to suffer on the run - this always raises the question of if they really went easy enough. Ironman bike pace is really not that hard an effort I think many over estimate their pacing.

Bike nutrition - not eating enough or eating too much on the bike is going to lead to nutritional problems on the run. Whether it's energy lows and poorer performance or stomach cramps. It's always hard to judge on the first race, but worth really examining what you need. **If you're going sub 10 forget comfort foods eat for racing and be focussed on eating what you need to keep going at race pace - no more or less.**

Run

3.30 for the run, which is 8 min miles and pretty straight forward as long as you dont go off like a mad man or run into any problems

Run pacing - I always feel great in the first few Ks off the bike and do tend to go out too fast. Reign that in and look to start conservatively. As mentioned get it right and potentially you can pick things up in the last 10km or so. Your pace may not improve, but your perceived exertion will, sometimes that just means you maintain speed.

Run nutrition - stomach issues on the run can again come down to mixing nutritions, taking on board things you wouldn't normally or not enough fluids. Keep things simple, go for what you know works and

opt for frequent, light fuelling (e.g. a gel every 20 minutes rather than stuffing yourself every 40). In part let the need for energy override some of the stomach discomfort. If you're running low on energy later in the run, you need to take on more during the bike/earlier in the run.

Cramping on the run - can be an electrolyte issue certainly, but also can simply be a muscle fatigue issue. Both have been known to cause cramps. It's worth ensuring you take something in with electrolytes during the race (how much depends on how you sweat - I need very little) I just sip energy drink at some aid stations on the run. Muscle fatigue issues will come from insufficient fitness to support your pacing strategy - i.e. you've been going too fast at some point at least.

Transitions

You can bleed time in transitions if you are not prepared. **Keep your bag contents to a minimum. I had one energy bar in my T1 bag, the rest was on the bike, although thinking about it now I could have put on my helmet while running to the bike. For your T2 change you only need to stop to put your shoes and socks on, the rest can be put on while running (hat, sunscreen, fuel belt, garmin). Consider putting your race number belt and arm warmers on under your wetsuit – you won't feel them.**

Lists/planning

This amount of planning can make the lead up to race day stress-free and straightforward. Even planning your meals etc can prevent making poor decisions in race week. Having a race day equipment list as a minimum can make setting your bike and transition bags very simple (and you can use it again and again and refine your approach). Less stress = less wasted energy. Lists for the supporters too, so they know what you're doing and when, where to see you on the course, etc.

Scattered throughout the year were a **couple of big training weekends. Where I went away and did much higher bike volume usually.** Running remained on the back foot and with swimming outside of the squad I just ensured frequency. I think these small blocks of over reaching were significant in helping my Ironman bike performance.

I had a big advantage being able to suffer to a 3:26 Ironman marathon on an average of 2.5 hours running per week. This freed time to focus on improving bike and swim so I worked harder in both those areas. Being very focussed in most of my bike sessions helped and this is something I'm working to improve in my current training. Clearly swimming lots with a squad paid dividends too that sort of short, intense work built the speed I needed.

If I take anything away from this it's just how important those last two points are – squad swimming (at the least quality pool work at high intensity) and focussed bike work

TC on Bolton

ok folks, i've been two (or ten 🍌) timing on other threads, but its IMUK week so here I am FFS.

Yes my signature is for this year, so thats 6IMs and 1 Double IM so far this silly season FFS i.e. all of them to date. IMUK will be No.42 single IM. I'm currently recovering from a 10h21 3rd place finish at the rather spiffing Anglian IM last Saturday at Cromer in North Norfolk. It was a Saturday so yaay, I get one extra day's recovery FFS. That will really help actually. Cleveland Steelman IM the week before etc.

Usual weekly IM routine is to be fecked for first day or two, then get back into it gradually, with an increasingly pacier decent ride of 2-4 hours 3 and 2 days out from the event, to get myself back into it. Probably wont run in between events but I mite do this time. Massage tomorrow, see what my calfs are like on Thurs or Fri for a run. Taper is travelling to the race.

I'll be racing in blue EnduroMan jersey, hopefully with the well used 🍌 Denim Shorts 🍌, so easy spot, please don't be shy to say Hi or shout me some abuse n banter etc 🍌

So there's a lot of worried newbies and numpTs attracted to the lure of the M Dot full sugared branded Coke ironman 🍌 so here's some rambling tips I've learnt in a nutshell 🍌 Blah 🍌 :-

Don't stress about Bolton logistics. Reebok Stadium is your friend. If you haven't got a car, don't worry. Just flash your eyelashes at all the other fellow competitors and team up. There's over a thousand of us and we're all nice, and ready to help: You're not on your own. After you've registered if you couldn't cadge a lift with a bike, at worst case you could always cycle to Pennington Flash to drop bike and T1 bag off, and then get a lift with someone, who's next destination will no doubt be Horwich school for T2 bag, and then back to Reebok for the briefing. Simple.

Ditto don't fart about going straight to Pennington Flash on race morning, the buses are efficient and plentiful and good fun. Worst case just turn up and get on, it's not officious, you won't be turned away if you're too late or early than the time you plumped for. IMUK want to get you all there nice n happy. The bus is a good IMUK race ritual n atmos anyway, and give you time to digest your breakfast, eat a banana whatever.

Food: Keep it simple. Don't think, more food = more energy. Don't stuff yourself 'carb loading' the day or two before. Just keep a normal sensible diet that you're used to, no shocks to the system. **Eat simple** and early on Sat. You literally don't want to be too full of sh1t on race day!! Chicken and plain pasta for me, late afternoon. Then that's it til race morning, save some energy drinks and/or Nuun/Zero salt tabs etc water.

Race breakfast: Porridge or muesli, and a banana, and energy drinks / Nuun/Zero etc water. Whatever you're used to basically. No fry up FFS, even if it's free in the hotel.

Don't be late into the queue for the swim, as there's 400m or so to swim to the race line. They will start on time whether you're in the water or made it to the line or not. DIY get in at the 'Australian' exit to your left if the queue is backed up and time is ticking.

Swim - If we all don't punch or kick anyone, then no-one can do it to you. Simple. It really saddens me to hear of biff in swim. It is NOT what IM is all about FFS, we're all in this together. Why potentially ruin someone's race or at least upset someone just to save 2 seconds 🍌

Your swim form will go out the window. You'll be too busy sighting and avoiding biff n bumping. This is normal. Wear your tri suit or tri-shorts under the wetsuit. Or go for full change in T1 if you want. Apply plenty of vaseline / body glide round neck, armpits etc. Flash is very murky to swim in, following bubbles is difficult if you want to draft someone. Let's hope the daft warm weather hasn't brought out too much blue green algae...

I always use a nose clip. I don't need to. But why get all that duck sh1t up your sinuses etc. You can get ones with a neck cord, as they are so easy to lose, and stupidly expensive for what they are.

T1: Practise your exact race change procedure in the next few evenings. It's grass and might be bit muddy, I'd put your bike shoes on in T1 and run to the bike in them. Cleats will be fine on grass too. I put vaseline on my feet and then put run socks on. Vas on crotch too.

Bike: Easy. Lazy.

That's it, as simple as that. Forget your exact speed or pace, just go on feel (or HR). **You need to be cycling within yourself.** Whatever that may be, on the day. **Don't push it or force it.** You want 75% of the speed for 50% of the energy. Not 85% of the speed for 70% of the energy, you geddit? Use your gears, **whatever feels comfy.** If in doubt, go down a gear. **Don't push the pedals, caress them, roll them around. Lazy. Miserly. Soft pedalling. No acceleration, all just steady steady effort.** Take any free speed you can get. Don't over eat and screw your guts up. Personally I avoid the race energy drink. I haven't had a screwed up stomach since I've adopted this. Start off with your preferred

energy mix (e.g. High5 4to1 for me) in one bottle and Nuun/Zero etc water in the other. You could always buy a couple of sachets of 4:1 etc and add these on the fly to the plain water. ditto I add salt tabs too.

Get a top tub 'bento' box/bag to put nutrition in. Personally I eat stuff on the bike that you will never not want to eat: Mars, Boost, Cruchie bars owt like that. The regular energy bars are good too. Flapjack, cereal bars, cake bars, owt like that. Lighter stuff like cake bars nearer the end. Plus odd gel and wine gums. No reason not to use caffeinated stuff on bike either, I use caffeinated Cliff Shot Bloks, basically posh wine gums with salts in too.

You can only absorb 300 cals ish an hour. Eat much more and you will screw your guts up and feel nauseous. then your done for.

T2: Ditto practise this. Get out of your bike shoes 2-300m before you turn up a steepish short hill to the T2 Horwich School. Leave the shoes on your bike, it will be taken from you by a marshall. Just run into school. Bogs are en route if your bursting.

Run: Same as bike but the mantra is even more so. **Run easy, within yourself. No bounce or push, run lazy. Your sole objective is not to screw your guts up, or be dying on an IM Shuffle death march in the last third of the run.**

You MUST take some periodic power walk breaks, 30secs-1 minute, or 10 deep breaths etc. These will be repayed WITH INTEREST later on. It stops you from dying, and keeps it **sustainable**. You only have so much energy and mojo, use it wisely. On the walk breaks, you can walk for as long as you need until your HR is down a bit, your head stops throbbing, youve cooled down a tad, or till you've burped out your wind etc. Then set off steady again, no sudden acceleration. There's one decent hill from the canal. WALK THIS FFS!!!! When I say walk I mean **fast POWERWALK**. Swing your arms. it works. Take on fuel and drink when you walk. Walk to and thru and out of the aid stations are the other obvious places to do it. The final place on all three laps is the hill out of the town centre.

Forget a target pace. Some bits will be faster, some slower. Wind with / against, mojo up or down, up or down hill. Your after **even effort not even pace!!!**

Remember you can only absorb 300 cals ish an hour. Eat much more and you will screw your stomach up and feel nauseous. then your done for. If you do feel sick, run faster and get it forced to puke out!! You'll feel better! Then rehydrate and refuel steadily.

I'd go for half a gel and 2 cups of plain water each aid station. Again no energy drink. I also take a v small drinks bottle with me on run, with a zero tab already in it, and a few more ready to add. You can top up and carry then as required if you want. Mines small enough that when its half full, it will stay in my rear cycle pocket and not bounce around no problem. I hitch my denims/tri short up over my bottom back to keep stuff from bouncing around in the rear pockets. And the number belt used as a top belt to keep stuff pressed to me. This way I carry some extra caffeinated gels and shot blocks and jelly babies etc no problem.

And/or change into shorts with lots of zipped side and back pockets in T1. Then put a pair of light tri (or denim 🍑) shorts over the top to stop the contents of the pockets jangling around. Or try a small bum/waist bag, only make sure you try this in training (now!), to ensure its not a PITA bouncing around.

I take ibuprofen and paracetamol with me. You could also take immodium, salt tabs and anti histamine pills too. I dont tend to use any of mine, maybe one ibuprofen if I get shinsplints early on in the run. But they are there to use if you need them. Or to offer to others in distress. Beware taking too many painkillers, as you may want to be able to actually feel the e.g. knee pain you have to monitor it, before you destroy the knee!! Its the reason we have pain FFS. Geddit.

David Rowe Qualification report from Bolton

I'd read that there's often a big queue to get into the water at IMUK so I got there early and when they allowed us into the lake it wasn't long before I was in. I got a good few minutes warm-up and then found a position over to the right hand side of the start line. This would allow me to hopefully not get punched and kicked too much, but also give me the chance to move in and find fast feet to follow in my own time. It worked at Lanzarote so I decided to give it another go today.

*Techy data alert.... During the first 14 miles to the main 'loops' of the course my heart rate averaged 145bpm and my normalised power was 254 watts. This was certainly more than at Ironman Lanzarote, but that was my plan. In Lanzarote my NP was 231. I was working 9 percent harder than at Lanzarote. Game on! But for how long. For those interested (and I know some of you are), **this was 74% of my FTP.***

For those wondering about nutrition on the bike – I had a gel (PowerBar Strawberry/Banana) every 20 minutes without fail along with sports drink and some water, but mostly sports drink.

Back to the techy geek talk... for the overall 112 miles I rode at approximately 74% of my FTP (wattage wise this was just under 9 percent more effort than in Lanzarote). My VI was 1.03 (that's good) and I rode at 3.04 watts/kg. Heart rate averaged 145bpm. Cadence was 88

I'm not expert (so salt, pinch, take, etc) but..

If you can get your swim under 70mins and still feel relatively fresh you'll make the task MUCH easier.

Your bike isn't far off, but it's the key discipline really. Work on your strength through the winter aiming to increase your threshold. **I got my biggest improvements through burying myself in the last hour or so of my long rides (3-4hrs is really enough) and doing hard threshold efforts on the turbo. It needs to hurt 🍌**

For the run, you don't need to be a quick runner. I figured 3h30 would do me (My 10k pb at the time was 43mins). So, I did all of my long runs at 5min/km pace and shorter runs a little quicker. After pounding enough of these out, your IM pace becomes second nature it should feel like you could run at this pace all day long.

How did this I address this equation for my training for Outlaw (remember this worked for me, and may not work for anyone else)? Note: when I say 'up to' I mean that I built up to this over my training block.

Run: I had three main run sessions:

1. Tuesday double run day: The first session in the morning was for 1.5-2 hours at around HR 135 *with no HR drift at a steady pace*. This is a HR that still allows me to take on and digest as many calories as I want. Earlier on in my training block this HR would give me around 4:40/km, getting down to 4:30/km closer to the event (for the same HR). This was just a little faster than my projected ironman pace. The second evening run was up to 40 minutes at around the same HR, however the perceived effort to get to this HR was always higher.
2. Thursday long brick (after a 2.5 – 3 hour ride – see below): run for up to 2 hours at HR 140 which would equate to around 4:24/km. Again this run was aiming for a constant HR/pace equation. This was faster than my projected ironman pace.

3. Saturday (or Sunday) brick: (after my long ride – see below): run for up to 60 minutes at Thursday long brick HR/pace. Again this run was aiming for a constant HR/pace equation (especially important after the long ride).

Cycle: I approached this a little differently. I had two main rides:

1. Thursday long brick: Ride for up to three hours at projected ironman watts. This was again a constant HR/watts aim. Projected ironman watts equated to HR 130 by the end of my training block. My race HR was around 10 BPM higher than this for the same output. Run after as above.

2. Saturday (or Sunday) long ride: Ride for up to 4.5 hours. This is where my approach differs from most advice here. I don't like cycling enough to cycle for 6-7 hours at a time (and for relationship reasons too!). Therefore I made this ride harder than my projected Ironman ride. Even though this ride was only up to 4.5 hours this still meant a TSS of 320+ (for those using this metric). My TSS for the Outlaw ride was 285. To make this ride hard I did up to 6 x 20-22 minutes at half-ironman watts with 7-8m rest interval after an hour of projected ironman watts. The intervals were done in a high gear (53/12 or so) with RPM of around 70. My HR for this due to the low gearing would top out at 140 or so. Again the idea for this ride was to have a reasonably steady HR with no drift. This HR and watts still allowed me to eat and digest solid food during the ride. Run after as above.

My reasoning behind my approach was to nail down what I could *legitimately achieve pacing-wise* on race day and still be able to eat and absorb. I got the bike exactly right (in terms of my Thursday long brick watts) but I just ran too fast for the first half of the run. Next time I will stick to my double run day pacing per km for a (hopefully) more even run split. One weakness I see in my approach is that I could never tell what would happen after 7 hours of training. However, the approach above allowed me to do this for 4 weeks solid without breaking down up to 2 weeks before the event – consistency makes a big difference.

So based on this I suggest that you practice in training running/cycling at a 'low' HR at a constant pace/watts for your long runs/cycles. If you can't maintain the HR or pace then you need to slow down. For those aiming for sub-10 figure out what those paces need to be and work towards them.

Also based off jrd226's training sessions at 320 TSS 4.5 hours is plenty of training! Earlier this year at Epic Camp NZ **Gordo discussed an idea with me of aiming to bike around the right number of KJ for your Ironman race. Not training to time or distance, but simply determining how many KJ you'd need for the Ironman ride and then making sure you've done that in training whether via intensity or distance/time.**

Personally I like a mix of longer rides and the more manageable 4 hours rides. To be honest in my own training I only occasionally go much beyond 5-5.5 hours. Throwing in intervals of some form relating to your race pace (again as jrd226 says) is also useful to improve the quality of the long ride.

The Paleo Diet for Athletes book has a good selection of recipes to make things less boring, though being lazy, most of my meals tend to be fairly similar...

In terms of cravings, yes you do get them for a while but they soon disappear. I just tend to hold off til big training sessions so I can gorge on rubbish 🍌 much cheaper than proper energy bars and gels. Though obviously you need to do a few key sessions with the real things to make sure everything is ok

In addition to this; *eat more real food!* The energy bars and recovery drinks can easily be replaced by real food. Real food is normally cheaper too. I agree that unless you are a few hours before being able to eat properly, there is little value in the sports 'recovery' products out there.

My recovery food after my big sessions was always a blended fruit smoothie (bananas, strawberries, banana's, and juice) with ground flaxseed and walnuts (this doubled as breakfast/lunch etc - like Russ C said - finishing sessions before a meal). I just aimed to get as much nutritional dense foods in straight after my session. Then returned to eating normally.

Some random thoughts on attention to detail for going quicker/being more efficient before and during your race (you've probably heard them all before):

Transitions – You can bleed time in transitions if you are not prepared. Keep your bag contents to a minimum. I had one energy bar in my T1 bag, the rest was on the bike, although thinking about it now I could have put on my helmet while running to the bike. For your T2 change you only need to stop to put your shoes and socks on, the rest can be put on while running (hat, sunscreen, fuel belt, garmin). Consider putting your race number belt and arm warmers on under your wetsuit – you won't feel them.

Bike setup – Things that can make a considerable difference in efficiency include an aero helmet a rear disc and a deep front. If you can't afford or don't want to spend money on a disc (like me) get a wheel cover. Also paying attention to the little things all add up. Idea's include: cleaning up the excess gear and brake cabling, not carrying excess bottles (seriously, you only need two max), keeping your flat kit out of the wind (e.g. under the saddle), having a new(ish) chain, keeping your brakes from rubbing against the rim (I made this mistake once and won't ever do it again).

Putting your wetsuit on correctly – Surprisingly this can make a big difference to how you feel swimming in a wetsuit. Until this year I never paid any attention to this, other than getting the wetsuit on and zipping it up as quickly as possible. After seeing the video on the Swimsmooth site: http://www.swimsmooth.com/triathlon_adv.html this changed. I now feel much freer and comfortable in the wetsuit, and I think I am swimming better because of it.

Always Aero on the Bike – Assuming you are correctly fit on your time trial bike, you should be spending 97% of you time in the aero position. That leaves around 10 minutes (for a 5:20 split) where you are not in the aero position. This 10 minutes could mean: stretching, standing on more difficult hills, and going through aid stations etc.

Lists/planning – check out some of Poet's posts (on the Outlaw thread) and blog entries for excellent examples of how to plan and make lists for racing (he inspired me to do the same at Outlaw). This amount of planning can make the lead up to race day stress-free and straightforward. Even planning your meals etc can prevent making poor decisions in race week. Having a race day equipment list as a minimum can make setting your bike and transition bags very simple (and you can use it again and again and refine your approach). Less stress = less wasted energy.

So course and conditions can have a pretty massive impact on the time, but assuming you don't go for one of the tougher courses those with power meters are probably looking to be able to ride in the 2.4-2.7W/kg area I'd suspect. That should get you a good time in most races. There's aerodynamics on top of that of course, but I thought it might be a useful metric.

You could take this further by considering that if you race an Ironman at 75% of FTP then you're probably going to need to develop an FTP in region of 3.2-3.6W/Kg. Incidentally I've heard it said that an age group winner needs to hold 3.5W/kg for an Ironman (so assuming pacing at 75% have an FTP of 3.7W/kg).

Reply:

3.5W/kg for me (at race weight) would mean an average of around 270 watts. I am positive that this would be way to difficult to achieve, and that's without thinking about a run

afterwards.

For Outlaw I managed 3.1W/kg (3.2W/kg normalised power) for a sub-5 bike, so I guess as long as your equipment and aero position are we thought out you can do it on a lot less than this.

When you say FTP, what do you mean by this? 20m, 30m, 60m power?

FTP - Functional Threshold Power is the maximum power you can average for an all out 1 hour effort. From Training and Racing with a Powermeter - worth checking that book out if you haven't.

<http://chuckiev.blogspot.com/2007/08/hadds-approach-to-distance-running-part.html>

In the mean time a smarter coach than me posted a couple of good articles around Ironman training weeks - <http://chuckiev.blogspot.com/2010/05/work-week.html> and <http://chuckiev.blogspot.com/2010/06/work-week-part-two-captain-plan-it.html>. I like a lot of what he says there, though note that the mid-week run and double big rides at weekends is often an issue for those working/with other commitments.

It's not strictly sub-10 Ironman focussed, but based off the training I did in 2007 and what I think now I've written up some thoughts on a [simple Ironman training week](#).

Based on Normalised power or Average power?

NP, but if they're particularly different on a "normal" course (ie not France) then you'll likely have to drop the overall intensity anyway as you'll need to recover more from the surges. Going over threshold, and even over a high %age of FTP (say ~85% for a large male, ~90% for a smaller female *) will eat too much into your glycogen stores that you're trying to parcel out evenly throughout the race.

I think that's a big point that's missed when people assess their bike. Whilst average power or average heart rate might suggest that you were well within the right zones the impact of periods above an appropriate intensity can be quite big. When you're tapered and in good form chances are that that intensity won't feel too bad either.

Okay - this is where it gets geeky:

If my FTP is 335, and you aim to hit 75% (ie 250 watts) for all but hills chances are when you finish a ride AP will be 220 or so because of all coasting etc (though NP will be higher)

Is that okay, or should you aim to push at c 75-80% and then aim to get AP for the full ride at 75% of FTP?

PS this is not hypothetical - happened to me at Copenhagen where I "thought" I was doing 250 or so all the time but post ride analysis shows AP of 225 and NP of 240

-

I'd aim within a range and generally find that on all but exceptionally hilly course my AP and NP are pretty close these days. I don't spend much time coasting during a race. In training I can see that big difference where based on power I've been watching I think my AP will be high, but actually whilst NP is where I expected, AP is lowered.

I'd say practice this. Either in races or otherwise aim to produce some rides with very narrow VI. Also remember it's not a precise science so it's ok for targets to be a little bit off. **75% is a pretty solid effort for IM so I'd say aim for that and focus on not coasting much if at all. If terrain dictates that there's not much choice (steep enough you gain little from pedalling) take advantage of the extra rest!**

75% is a pretty solid effort for IM

I think 75% is too high for most people, you need to be a fast runner, and it needs to be a fast overall course I think to go that high - or you need to be slightly underestimating your FTP or have very good experience of how you go over 5 hours as not everyone does drop off the same, but it's a very narrow band) It may be worth picking a higher percentage once you've got lots of IM's under the belt, but by then you can probably pace it on feel anyway.

You can't look at the run and bike differently, at an extreme a biker who can only do a 5 hour standalone marathon will probably have to ride the IM nearer 60% to be able to still run the marathon. The course also makes a difference as the intensity has to be related to the total duration you expect to be out there - different between Roth and Lanzarote.

Unearthed this gem when surfing around on slowbitch <http://chris-lakerfan.blogspot.com/2010/04/im-bike-execution-using-rpe-power-and.html> 🍌

Not meaning to slightly derail this, but what is so special about the magic 20 miles? Hear lots about how you must never run over 20 miles in preparation for a race otherwise you will burnout/injure yourself, but surely there must be more than that, and it based on time and relative fitness and intensity anyway?

There's no magic number, but as runtillyoudrop mentions everyone has a point when the impact on the long run in recovery terms hinders later training. You may gain greater run fitness benefits if you do go longer, but you have to balance it off against the cost to other training.

I know a 3 hour run will impact the next day of training, but a 2.5 hour one seems to be much less significant. The change over is probably due to the fact I rarely eat or drink on my long runs so somewhere over 2.5 hours I'm getting pretty depleted. I'd guess chances are for a lot of people the point they reach 20 miles equates to a low point in energy reserves.

I don't think the extra half hour of running gives me anything more and isn't worth the cost. I'd rather run more total during a week. I did try 3 hours a few times earlier this year, basically left me very tired over a period of weeks. Having also done a 3x10km run day and a 1x30km run day the latter is far more fatiguing and damaging to the legs.

The exact distance doesn't matter so much your run long needs to be long enough to make your body work under an increasing state of fatigue and depletion, but not so long you spend days recovering.

Another idea is to do a few double run days in your build-up. If, like Russ C says, your long run will negatively impact your training and your ability to recover for the next sessions a double run day might be the answer.

A double run day could be structured as 1.5-2 hours in the morning and another 30-45 minutes in the evening. The break between will allow some recovery and refuelling, but not enough that the evening run feels fresh - it won't - it will seem like the end of a long run.

I like this training method far more than the 2.5 hour straight runs. I recover better and the total distance is similar without the potential negative impact on the rest of my training. While I might get *slightly* more benefit out of a straight run, I am not willing to compromise the rest of the weeks sessions for that benefit. I think you are far better building running mileage through frequency and the odd double run day rather than running more than 2 hours in your build up.

when I taper for an event I cut the run load much sooner than the bike load.

...I don't do any squad swimming. I went once, 5 minutes after a hilly 10TT. It wasn't pretty. I'll probably do some more in the summer, it just depends how it works out.

I started off doing 100 repeats, about 3 years ago, looking at 1:35. This was the key session (I think) to get the speed in there. There were other sets in the weeks in between these, with longer reps such as 250s, 300s and 500s. I don't often do standard distances, to avoid Tting the 200s, 400s etc. The longer sets improved endurance, with the speed carrying forward from the 100s.

Once I could do 15*100s under 1:36 off 2:00, it was time to move on. I think this took about 6 months. It was then 5*100 under 1:35, 5*100 under 1:33 and 5*100 under 1:30. All off 2:00. Or, something like that. It was about another 6 months of this until I was regularly going under 1:30 for the whole lot. The fact that the descending sets were written on my laminated cards made it easier to hit the pace and keep descending throughout. This also taught me how to meter my effort over intervals. The first 100M is always easy to knock out 1:24, but then the 15th is always a struggle to hit 1:26. If I do the first in 1:27, then the last is easier to hit 1:25.

As I said, there were endurance sessions around these, but nothing complex.

Most Monday mornings are technique work, about 1,800m of easy swimming in about 45 minutes. All of this is concentrating on form. Toys are used sparingly. I manage to get in the pool 3-5 times per week; 2 longer sessions (endurance and technique), 1 medium session (tempo) and up to 2 shorter sessions (speed and technique). The 2 shorter sessions are post-gym, after weights/treadmill/turbo and are up to 1KM/20minutes in length and the other one is 1,300M/25minutes, whilst my son is having his swim tuition. The 1KM one will be used as a cool down after the gym and be mainly 3*250M pull, with a cool down. The 1,300M session will be a warm up, a few drills (or 25M sprints), followed by a TT of varying lengths, then a cool down.

Key workouts? Hitting the pool with alarming frequency. Being there at 0555, waiting for it to open, having cycled there in -14.4 degrees and 4" of snow and ice. If you can make it in weather like that, you can do the set! I honestly don't think there was a "key workout" as such. Each session complemented the next and all were matched with upper body weights - such as chest press, shoulder press, seated fly, pectoral raises, lat pull down, tricep press etc. Anything that'd build my muscular endurance. These weren't hard, just lots and little, enough so it ached, but not enough that it was ever a struggle.

The 100 time to target is <1:30, the 400 time (which will come!) is <6:00. Speed sets, mixed with endurance ensure this can be achieved. I'm not quite sure how I did it, specifically, sorry 😊

Taper

Yeah - I favour two weeks, I know it works for me and if I'm honest I'm tending more to a single week now. But it's personal, depending on training history, recovery rate and fitness. Potentially I'd have someone tapering properly three weeks out - I'd certainly have their last genuinely long run in this week.

Intensity is mostly Ironman level - which isn't really that hard - and I usually include a little bit above that 2 weeks out too. Less so on the run, as I find I recover faster from harder sessions on the bike.

My advice is stop doing weights sounds like you are probably well built
Cycle at least 3 x 4 hr rides a mnth through jan- mar
Run 6 x 30 mins a week through dec at easy or any other pace.
Build to 2 hr run once a week by end of feb and keep it going.
Swim at least twice a week including at least one 4 K + session a week from April.

My athletes who use power do not limit themselves by it. When they are doing harder shorter sessions they have target wattage ranges, some days it feels fine, some days they struggle to hit the numbers. These are efforts above Ironman pace, they're there to develop threshold and raise the power they can sustain. They're hard, not comfortable, I've had athletes (myself included) fail to complete sets occasionally - the watts aren't limiting them.

Riding longer power targets are lower, but then to an extent so is the direction and intent of the workout. Different things being trained. For a 6 hour ride if 220W-240W feels comfortable, riding at 250W isn't going to make huge benefits for them if they're hitting the other sessions well. **Having athletes who push harder, overly attack the longer ride then struggle with the shorter sessions isn't as productive in the long term. I always advise that long rides shouldn't feel easy, but they equally shouldn't be so hard to trash your week;** using power you still work with feel, you need to know what those numbers mean for you and the training ahead.

I base my taper on the theory that it takes 7-10 days for training to be converted into improved performance. **Don't know where I read this, but it works for me. With that in mind I'll train normally until my final long run of 36Km about 10 days out. As cycling takes less out of me I'll probably do a 4-5 hour bike the weekend before as well as a 25TT to test my FTP. I'll then have a couple of days rest for the body to go into full recovery mode (generally feeling rubbish and fatigued), before filling in the remaining time with shorter faster stuff to keep the body ticking over, plus a fair bit of swimming to keep a feel for the water.**

I too was thinking about sub 10, but my last recce of the bike course convinced me that it's not on, so I won't push it. Look forward to seeing you out on the course 🏊

My approach is similar to Nobbie's - I tend to taper over 10 days, with the last few being pretty light. Last long run is at least 10 days out and I usually go for no more than 90 minutes at that point. Weekend before has a long bike with at least half spent holding race intensity and practicing nutrition. **I also usually throw in some threshold work about 5 days out as a final hard effort on the bike.**

Tapering swim, bike and run separately in effect. Running takes me the longest to recover from so volume drops most rapidly there, cycling I recover much more quickly so don't drop load so much until last 5 days and swimming I recover quickest from so tend to taper off only a few days before. Worth noting that what matters is how long it takes to recover from a hard session, at peak run fitness last year I could do a long run (2.5 hours) 7 days out from a race and still run well, but I was in unusually good run fitness. Similarly on the bike when I've been at a peak of fitness there I can push myself closer to race day.

To be honest in the final week my main aim is to ensure I keep training, take some time off, but have a bit of intensity in there. I don't stress about missing sessions if it happens, better to have rested too much than done too much. You don't, generally, need a huge taper, but personally backing off a lot in the week of the race works best for me.

Long run (personally I wouldn't say you need to run 2.5 hours every week, how about keeping it around 2 hours so your a bit fresher for the other sessions and then when you start your ironman specific build look to increase the duration

I'd bear a couple of things in mind when considering Ironman running, the pace isn't really that hard, I think most people will end up at a very similar pace to a lot of their training runs, also it's one element of the race and heavily dependent on the effort on the bike. For me this means I focus on 2 hour runs as the main duration, and don't try to run further because I feel the fatigue that builds up doesn't sit well with the rest of the training week.

My take would be to stick to 2 hour runs and work on your pacing, practice race pacing, but also work a little harder in your long runs, race pacing should feel very comfortable in training, if it doesn't then it's going to be a challenge to hold that pace 7+ hours in to a race. So **I usually have people stick around the 2 hour mark, and work on their pace in those sessions, building up efforts at or above race pace. This is more than sufficient with the rest of the training to deliver the endurance for the run**, chances are if you're suffering later in the day, it'll be for reasons other than insufficient long runs.

when doing those 20 x 100m sessions, take at least 20 seconds (and as much as 30 seconds) rest to make sure you don't just thrash them out but feel rested enough to maintain as good as technique as possible. Sav does not do a 47 min swim by thrashing.

Bike specific training– it is not all about the length of time on the bike although total volume still counts. It is about the QUALITY and number of repetitions. JimboP (multiple Kona Qualifier) taught me that when we were at Hobbo's training camp in Lanza this year. **Plenty of 1.5 to 4 hours of threshold stuff, often riding by yourself if your mates are at a different speed.**

Run specific training– in the final 4 to 6 weeks before tapering, run long twice (mine was a 1 x 1hr 15 and a 1 x 1hr 75). If your body can handle running frequently, add some other shorter sessions in there at low intensity (thanks Russ...this was out of your book). Personally, like Nobbie states, I never run over 25k in training...it simply takes too much out of me to train effectively the next day. I did these long runs faster than my anticipated IM splits but I think this may be duff advice (see my 'legends of our sport' point below).

Transitions – course dependent of course, you should be aiming for 5 mins total for both. If it is higher, then really question why that is the case (I was fairly close but over this target and on reflection it comes down to the fact I spent a minute faffing with a towel and then applying suntan lotion when there are products out there that last longer than the swim).

I managed to bag my sub-10 at the Outlaw with a 9:26 yay. I wasn't sure I would get it the day before the race when I felt the full force of the wind along the lake when I took my bike out for a test loop of the lake. Anyway, **the key things I did was one long run per week with maxing at nearly 3 hours split (1:30 in the am and 1:30 in the pm). My longest single run was 2:30 then I started to wind down the time and increase the speed with portions of at or below target run pace. My 3 key run sessions were a 2:30 with the final hour at target race pace 4 weeks out, a 2 hour run at race pace 3 weeks out and a 1:30 run with half hour steady, half hour at race**

pace then half hour faster to average out at race pace 2 weeks out. Then I mistake racing a half marathon a week before which tired me out for the week as it was after 2 tough bike sessions. As for the bike I didn't do as much as I normally do thanks to the weather. Think I did about 3 five hour rides with a decent half hour run off. Other than that, just random rides. Outlaw bike felt controlled and easy and came off the bike feeling fresh... Just that wind slowly sapped all my strength and I missed my run target time by 11 minutes.

My sentence on the subject is work on speed through the winter and increasing your threshold and then as the season gets closer about 8-12 weeks before your race do the following:

1. Increase your long ride to eventually 4.5-5 hours and include 30- 60 minute efforts at ironman pace (actual ironman intensity no pootling around) This is a key session and I would aim for around 2.5- 3 hours of ironman intensity during the ride.

2. Some threshold intervals on the turbo either 4*12m with 8 minutes recovery (for the last rep I used to do 30 seconds at 110% 1m30 @ 90%.

Through the winter I would do some longer intervals though start off at doing say 3*15m then build up to doing 3*25s these will be done under threshold still bloody hard though and will build strength and even though they are below threshold I found that they still raised mine.

3. For running I think a long tempo run for me it was 10 miles at a hard pace. This won't necessarily make you faster but it makes you bloody strong and I think it's a key ingredient to running well. It's a grim session and is one which a lot of people won't do but then again a lot of people don't run well either in an ironman.

All of this is my own opinion and I might not know much but what I do know is it took me to a 4.28 bike and a 2.58 run and I had never ever ran over 19 miles until the ironman. Also my longest bike ride in the 8 weeks before the race was 4 hours.

With regards to the nutrition mate I just ate the same as I do for a half but over a longer time period. I think it worked out at around 350-400Kcal an hour so pretty standard with what a lot of people do. For an ironman I had mostly bars and shot blocks, I think I only had 1 maybe 2 gels the whole race. I found that in an ironman because the intensity is lower it is much easier to get solids in and this left me feeling like I got a big hit of energy that stayed for a long time. The shot blocks I find are in between a gel and bar and are very very good I highly recommend them.

A good session I find for Ironman is a 4 hour ride with some 30 minute tempo efforts in and then a hard last 30 minutes, then a quick transition and a 7-8 mile run above ironman pace. If I can do this well and do a fast run at the end of this session I know I'm in good shape. In the race I normally run a bit slower than what I have done in this session but I know I can keep it up. I think confidence is the big key, if you are confident you can hold the pace you start off at and have ran faster in training in the race you should definitely be able to hold it.

The strength routine I've been doing consists of some of the exercises in this video such as:

<http://www.flotrack.org/coverage/249744-Workout-Wednesday-Season-7/video/684139-Rupp-with-Alberto-in-the-Weightroom>

lunges with the medicine ball above your head and rotating

Squats, going up on one leg

Lunges with weights

holding a kettlebell with a big weight, keep arms straight and use your back and hamstrings.

Also lots of Swiss ball work like you see in the video, and squats with the swiss ball against the wall holding a small kettlebell in each arm.

And some standard abdominal work. I don't do all the exercises each session as there's too many. I normally spend about 45 minutes doing the exercises 2-3 times a week. A lot of the weights exercises are really good for technique and I definitely think it's worth doing them.