**Triathlon Training Plan Workshop**

Chris Sweet  
[christopherasweet@hotmail.com](mailto:christopherasweet@hotmail.com)  
[www.goalisthejourney.com](http://www.goalisthejourney.com)

This workshop will teach you how to create your own custom, periodized, annual training plan using the Sweet method!

1. Always start with clearly defined goals. These should include:
   1. 3-5 year long-term goals
   2. Yearly goals (3 or 4 specific goals for this year)
   3. Monthly goals (these goals help you to reach yearly goals)
   4. Weekly goals (do these later on)
2. Put all known family commitments, work travel, etc. onto your ATP. Decide if these will be no-training times, or maybe just a run focus (because you don’t have your bike or pool access for example).
3. Identify your A/B and some C priority events for the year.
   1. “A” races: Generally you should have 2-3 “A” races per season. If your focus is sprint/Olympic maybe 4. Your season is built around “A” priority races. You do a full taper for these and take time off afterwards.
   2. “B” races: These are stepping stones to your “A” races. No more than 1-2 per month. You do a short taper (2-4 days) for these races and a short recovery (2-3 days).
   3. “C” races. These are just part of your weekly training load. Tuesday night time trials are an example for me. You do not schedule a taper or extra recovery for “C” races. Do not expect to perform at your best for these events. It is not critical to have all your “C” events planned out for the year.
4. Build in taper and recovery time around your “A” races
   1. Taper: 3 weeks IM, 2 weeks 1/2 IM or Oly, 10 days for a sprint.
   2. Recovery: 2 weeks IM, 10 days ½ IM, week for Oly/Sprint
5. Create defined periods for the entire season. If you train pretty much year round you should have 2 complete training cycles, plus a couple months of off-season training. When structuring your training plan start with your “A” races and work backwards. Here are simplified guidelines for traditional endurance periodization:
   1. Pre-Season / Off-Season (4-12 weeks long)
      1. Either complete rest or significantly lower volume
      2. Low intensity-workouts
      3. Often includes strength training and cross-training activities
      4. No racing
   2. Base (8-12 weeks)
      1. Build into higher volume during this period
      2. Primarily low-intensity workouts
      3. OK to have a few “B” or “C” races in this period
   3. Build (6-8 weeks)
      1. Fairly high volume (can be less than base)
      2. This period must include some high intensity / interval-type of workouts 2-4 times per week
      3. Some of your “B” and “C” events should be in this period
   4. Peak (3-4 weeks)
      1. Somewhat less overall volume than Base/Build
      2. Workouts during this period must mimic goal race pace/intensity.
      3. A “B” or “C” race during the first half of the Peak period is ok. Be careful racing any later than that as it could negatively affect your “A” race.
   5. Taper/Race (1-3) weeks
      1. If you followed the step #4 above this period should already be on your training plan. Tapering involves first reducing volume then reducing intensity prior to an important race
6. Create discrete training blocks within periods: I recommend 3 weeks focused, hard training then one step-back week at 50% volume.
7. Add-in some blocks of complete rest / no training.
   1. These rest blocks should be 5-10 days in length.
   2. Aim for one roughly every 3 months.
   3. Good times for rest blocks are right after an “A” or “B” event, during family vacations or work travel, or instead of one of the step-back weeks discussed above.
8. Add-in some sport-specific blocks to address weaknesses. These should be a minimum of 1 week long and can be as long as 2-3 months if done in the pre-season period.

PRESTO! That’s it! You now have a custom, periodized annual training plan. Now you just need to know how to structure a week and add in specific, period-appropriate workouts.

**Designing a period-appropriate week**

1. Begin by reviewing total available time for that week.
2. Next look at what training period the week falls in. For example, the majority of workouts in the base period should be longer and low-intensity. During your peak period, workouts will mimic race intensity (and sometimes duration).
3. One day of complete rest is a usually a good rule of thumb to follow.
4. Weekends are key for most triathletes. This is usually the best time to get a long ride in.
5. Long runs are also essential, but I recommend doing them every other week. I also recommend mid-week long runs. Even for IM most long runs should stay at, or under, 2 hours.
6. Doubles (two workouts a day) are great if you can fit them in.
7. Try to space out key workouts. If you have 3 key workouts for the week every other day is a great pattern (part of the reason why I recommend a mid-week long run).

**Resources for filling in the specific workouts:**

**Websites**[http://www.beginnertriathlete.com](http://www.beginnertriathlete.com/) Workouts for all disciplines

<http://triathlon.competitor.com/category/training> Workouts for all disciplines

<http://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/workout/> Swim workouts by ability

<http://www.runnersworld.com/training/workouts> Runners World Workouts

**Books**

Swim Workouts for Triathletes by Gale Bernhardt and Eric Hansen

Workouts in a binder for swimmers, triathletes and coaches by Gale Bernhardt and Eric Hansen

One-Hour Workouts: 50 Swim, Bike, and Run Workouts for Busy Athletes by Amy White and Scott Molina

Run Workouts for Runners and Triathletes by Bobby McGee

For Swimmers 365 Main Sets by Andrew Starykowicz  
Time Crunched Cyclist by Chris Carmichael