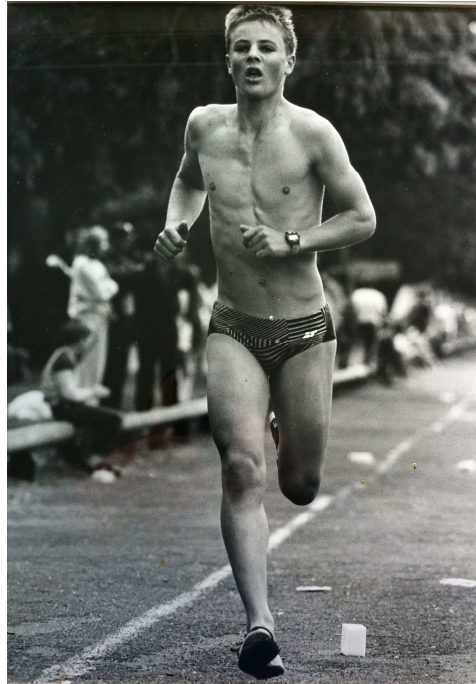


*By Krsnendu Knight*

# *Seven Secrets to Triathlon Success*



Hi. My name is Krsnendu [krish-nen-doo] Knight. I've been involved in triathlons since 1985. Back then I was a very competitive triathlete at the high school level. After leaving school I gave up triathlon until about 17 years later.

Coming back to triathlon after such a long time was tough. I couldn't perform to the same standard. I also didn't have the same time and lifestyle. Back then I would just go to school and train. Now I had a job, wife, kids and other responsibilities.

I had to adjust my expectations. But at the same time I was determined to do the best I could at triathlon despite my limited time to train. So I did a lot of research and experimenting, as well as thinking about what made me successful as a junior.

This report is a summary of some of the lesser known secrets I have learned about how to succeed at triathlon. I know that you probably have limited time so I've kept it very concise.

I will also be sending you emails over the next few days explaining how to put these strategies into action. If you somehow received this report without signing up for the email tips, make sure to go to <http://timelesstriathlon.com> and sign up.

Wishing you all success in your triathlon endeavours,

Krsnendu Knight

<http://timelesstriathlon.com>

## ***1. Consistency***

The first key to success in anything is taking action.

As it relates to triathlon it means stepping out the door and training consistently.

Exactly what you do is not so important. The main thing is to start.

I have seen many people (including myself) get so caught up in what kind of training to do or getting distracted by new triathlon technology and fads that they end up sitting in front of a computer or lost in their head without getting out and training.

CONSISTENCY is the key. Once the routine of getting out and swimming, biking or running becomes second nature, then you can start fine-tuning the workouts.

I have seen and personally experienced a cycle of getting enthusiastic, training like crazy at the expense of other areas of life, then neglecting training while catching up on those neglected priorities. This is not the way to make steady progress. Steady and steady wins the race. **The key to our success is in what we do week in week out** over a period of months and years. It doesn't have to be super long or super hard or anything sexy... just consistent.

The secret is to arrange your life so that your training happens without requiring much willpower or effort.

In the follow up emails I will share some practical strategies to help you do that. In the meantime just get out the door and start training. It might seem simplistic, but this really is the most important key to triathlon success.

## ***2. Volume and Intensity***

Many people have the idea that you should just train long and slow for a long time and then only add intensity / speedwork a few weeks out from your race. This is called standard periodization.

From my experience it is better to have a variety of training experiences / intensities to give all round strength. Especially, when you are short of time (as most of us are) it is best to put more emphasis on higher intensity to get the most benefit from our limited time.

When I was at school this is how I used to mix it up on the bike. The same principles also apply to swimming and running. I will give more examples in the follow up emails.

- I used to ride to and from school EVERY DAY. As I was usually late the INTENSITY was quite high. (Cadence about 80-85 rpm.)
- Twice a week I would do LONG RIDES (over 90 mins). These rides would generally be easy but always included HILLS which added a strength element. (There were no compact cranks in those days. 42x23 was the smallest gear.)

\*Twice a week I would also ride with the school cycling team. We would team time trial in restricted gears, so it was HIGH INTENSITY at a HIGH CADENCE (110+ RPM).

- \*OCCASIONALLY I would also do epic rides of over 200km usually alone on the way to family vacations.

To summarise, CONSISTENCY is most important. Then add in VARIETY - including some HIGH INTENSITY, HILLS/RESISTANCE, and LONG DISTANCE.

As the great triathlon coach Brett Sutton quotes "It is not just Long Slow Distance. It has to be LONG and it has to be FAST."

For most of us busy age groupers it is better to focus on the FAST part most of the time while including longer rides when our lifestyle allows.

### ***3 . Swimming Drills***

Most improvements in swimming are made through improved technique, especially with less experienced swimmers. Therefore there should always be a strong focus on technique especially early on.

The best way to improve your technique is to get a qualified coach to have a look at your stroke. It can be helpful if they video you swimming, because then you can see exactly what you are doing and where you need to improve. With modern technology you can even get someone to video you and send it to an expert over the internet.

In the beginning, **strokes per length** is the best measuring stick for improvement. Some swimmers may start out taking as many as 30 strokes per 25m then as they improve they should be able to get it well below 20. Ian Thorpe easily does 9!

**Fist Swimming:** The best drill I know for improving strokes per length is fist swimming. As it sounds just make your hand into a fist and swim. This forces you to use the rest of your arm most efficiently and when you start using your hands again you really feel you are getting a "good grip" on the water.

**Using Fins:** Using fins can be very helpful for beginners as it exaggerates the resistance of the water and let's you feel how streamlined and effective your stroke is. If you combine this with small flat paddles, any weakness in your stroke is magnified, showing you where you need to focus your attention.

**Paddles and Pull Buoys:** The pull buoys keep your body in the same kind of position you will be in with a wetsuit, so you are practising what you will be doing on race day. The paddles help you build strength. The paddles don't have to be huge, even small paddles help your muscular endurance and also help your technique.

Above all I want to recommend enlisting a coach to help with your technique. It will save you a lot of time and effort.

#### ***4 . Cycling Cadence in Races***

Conventional wisdom says that we should maintain a cadence of around 90 revolutions per minute (rpms). However, this not necessarily best for all athletes and all distances.

The general rule of thumb is:

Shorter distances = higher cadence (95-100 rpm)

Longer distances = lower cadence (70-85 rpm)

Studies have shown that after cycling at a high cadence triathletes naturally run with a faster cadence regardless of the stride length. This is just what you want in sprint or olympic distance races.

In longer races however the biggest mistake most triathletes make is that they start the run too fast. Cycling with a low cadence helps to reduce the risk of going out too fast.

Other studies also show that cycling with a low cadence allows you to run for longer before reaching the point of exhaustion. Again a benefit for Ironman racers.

Ironman World Champion, Chrissie Wellington typically cycles about 70 rpms and runs very fast off the bike.

Exactly what is a the best cadence for you may vary. You will need to test and practice in training so that you maximize your results on race day.

## ***5 . Run/Walk Strategy***

This tip is especially for long distance triathletes. If you are planning to do Ironman or 70.3 races seriously consider the run-walk strategy. Rather than trying to keep running for the whole race, you take short walking breaks at a regular intervals.

The concept is simple:

Run 10-15 mins

Walk 30secs - 1 min

The idea is that having regular mini rests allows you to maintain a higher average pace. The walking breaks give your cardio-vascular system a rest, and also give your muscles and nervous system a change of movement.

So instead of slowing down due to fatigue at the end of long runs, your rests along the way allow you to maintain a more consistent pace, which is the key to long distance performance.

Run / Walk is also a good strategy for long training runs. We can get the benefit of the distance without needing so much recovery time and without as much muscle soreness.

Important tip:

Maintain running rhythm when walking. The walking breaks are not an excuse to slack off. It is important to maintain the same cadence as when running, otherwise it becomes difficult to resume running after the walking break. Move your arms as if you are still running and walk with short steps if necessary.

## ***6 . Recovery Hormones***

Training hard is not enough to become successful in triathlon. The process of training is systematically stressing the body and wearing it down and as we recover our body overcompensates and becomes stronger than when we started. The better we recover, the stronger we get, and the sooner we can get back to training to continue the cycle.

Many of recovery techniques take very little time and effort but they can make a big difference in how well we recover between training sessions. In many ways, recovery is even more important for age-group athletes considering the extra stress we face in our everyday life outside of training.

Our hormones are the driver of our recovery. Almost everything we do affects our hormones. In particular, the kinds of workouts we do and the way we combine them together can make a big difference in our recovery.

**High resistance intervals:** We want to combine workouts that wear us down with workouts that build us up.

E.g. If we go for a long ride on Sunday, it is not so helpful to go for an easy spin on Monday it continues to stress the same aerobic system that wears us down. If however we do some high resistance intervals, it stimulates the hormones that build us up and helps us recover, while also giving our aerobic system a bit of a break.

An example of such a work out is:

1 min HIGH resistance low cadence

1 min low resistance moderate cadence

(Repeated up to 25 times)

This workout is best done on a stationary bike trainer, but it can also be done on a hill.

**Naps:** Getting enough sleep is very important for recovery. If we can't get enough sleep at night, (I have small children so I know all about that!) power naps can be helpful. 15-35 min nap can make a big difference for our concentration and energy levels.

**Ice baths:** Another recovery tool, especially after long runs is ice baths. Just fill up a bath or big rubbish bin with cold water and sit or stand in it for about 15 mins.

Long runs do a lot of damage to our legs (muscles and tendons). The ice baths reduce inflammation and again stimulate hormonal recovery responses. Paula Radcliffe the world marathon record holder uses ice baths after every long run.

So there you have a few examples of how we can deliberately work with our hormones to recover faster.



## **7 . Nutrition**

There is much to say about nutrition but I will just point out some strategies that may be less well known.

**Reduce carbs:** Triathletes use up a lot of energy in their workouts and the natural response is to eat a lot of carbohydrates to replace that energy. However if we eat a lot of refined carbohydrates (like white flour) and sugar, it inhibits our fat burning abilities. As endurance athletes, (Even sprint triathlon is an endurance sport!) our ability to burn fat is one of our most important performance indicators.

Another trouble with carbs is that they don't satisfy our appetite and we want to keep eating. Not good for those trying to get down to racing weight.

Instead eat foods rich in micronutrients higher in protein and healthy fat. (Avoid fried food.)

**Fast:** Training on an empty stomach can be very helpful for training the body to burn fat. You don't need to do this every workout, but it can be a good strategy before carefully chosen longer workouts.

**Protein powder:**One way we can work with our hormones is to **avoid eating at night**, then drink a **protein drink** (without sugar) 30 mins before sleeping. This stimulates human growth hormone (HGH)legally aiding our recovery.

**The window:** There is a lot of hype about the 45 minute "window of opportunity" after exercise. The idea is that if you eat a combination of easily assimilated carbohydrate and protein during this time it is more rapidly absorbed than at other times.

The danger is that athletes feel that they have to pig out immediately after each workout or they will lose the benefit of the session. This is not the case.

If you plan another training session soon afterwards, drinking a carbohydrate / protein shake can be helpful, otherwise if you are not going to work out again until the next day, just eating normally will give you all you need for your next workout.

## ***Whats Next?***

Make sure you check your email for further tips and practical examples of how to train for triathlon even when you are short of time and have a busy lifestyle.

You can also learn more at

<http://timelesstriathlon.com>

If you have not signed up for the email tips, make sure you enter your name and email address into the form on the website.

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Talk again soon,

Krsnendu Knight

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