



Training For the "Triple-jump"

Article by Sonni Dyer

Most of us have, at one time or another, jumped into a sport that was a crossover from our normal training and racing routines.

Whether it was a triathlete trying out adventure racing, a cyclist who's entered a local 5k, or a runner who's entered a master's swim meet.....we quickly have found that while some principles are the same while other aspects varied greatly.

In this column, we, the coaches @ TRImyCoach.com, will be examining how athletes in one specialty dive in head-first to other sports successfully.

So in doing so I wanted to give *my* first-hand account of "transitioning" from one sport (that I'd jumped into whole-heartedly) to another.....and then another.

Hence, the "Triple-jump".

As a 7th grader, wanting very much to hang w/ the "jocks" of Jr-high-school, I JUMPED into distance running. I learned that by simply running alot, you didn't have to be tall, fast, or even coordinated to play. It hurt alot.....but not as much as riding the bench. So the first jump was made.

As a high school and collegiate runner I was good enough to recognize that, as pure runners go, I'd never be naturally talented enough to compete at the levels that I wanted to. Sure, I was competitive at the State level in high school. But in college, I found that I was just another of many solid scorers on the cross-country team. And even there, it took me 70-90mile weeks of running to race at that level. Running "alot" had gotten me this far.....but it'd also gotten me hurt often.

While running at Brevard College and East Tennessee State University I found myself 'injured' more than 'in-training' and it became increasingly more frustrating to see guys I'd trained with all year to make the trips to championship races.....while I stayed on campus.

Finally, one day, I found myself in the training room @ ETSU on a stationary bike. I watched, one-by-one, as football player after football player.....then the volleyball team, came in to get 'taped-up' for practice.

I thought to myself, "*The minute that I have to come to a training room to begin practice, is the minute that I'm DONE with a sport!*"and, yet, there I was.....spinning away.

A day later, I put up the running shoes and JUMPED into cycling.

In cycling, the training theme was consistent with running. Alot can be accomplished by sheer training Volume. And unlike with running, you didn't seem to 'break' as much by logging miles on a bike. Sweet!

So I rode..... and rodeand rode the bike.

I went on to race USCF-categorized races as a 4, 3, 2 and eventually as a cat-1. Finally, I got the opportunity to race on a U.S.-developmental team based in Belgium. With cycling, there was a whole different attitude towards competing compared to running.

Runners always knew where they stood in the grand scheme of things. A runner's "pr" might as well be tattoo'd on his forehead. And when a runner lowered his pr, it was announced like the birth of a new child, and congratulated likewise by others. After all, ALOT of work went into those "pr's".

With cyclist, however, I quickly learned that it was VERY likely that you could be in the lead break of the day.....clearly be the strongest rider.....& get beat like a bear rug in the closing meters by one who was backed by a bigger team, "*sat-on*" the break and refused to work, or simply have better luck w/ mechanical machinery.

Cycling did, however, couple the art of technical skills with the sheer neccessity for endurance. And cycling required a *variety* of skills within ONE sport. As a cyclist, you had to be able to:
-climb well,



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- sprint well,
- Time-trial well,
- handle the bike well,
- and then.....be tactically sound as the race came to a finish.

But cycling could also be pretty "dog-eat-dog" and some races could've as easily been decided by a coin-toss as by racing. This is why I always enjoyed events like the Assault on Mt. Mitchell, the Bridge-to-Bridge, and many Time-trials. With these, you knew where you stood. The strongest man won. Period.

In 1991, I made my third JUMP.....multisport.

It began innocently enough. I entered some local Biathlons to regain race-shape and have some fun. But multisport had something unique about it. Now it seemed that one who was a "jack of all trades" could compete with those who were a "master of one".

Multisport required diversity in one's training. Training "ALOT" no longer was enough. Now, you had to train *smart*. After all, training for 3 sports could take ALOT of time! And training smart meant PLANNING the training in *cycles*.

I had some success at biathlons, (which became to be known as *DU*-athlons) but there was still one game that eluded me.....triathlon.

You see, my childhood swimming had it's roots in games like "marco-polo". For the life of me, I couldn't grasp why 12-year old girls could outswim me (*a former pro-cyclist and high-school All-American runner?!?!*) like I was standing still.

Poor form in running and cycling could be gotten away with to some extent. "No dice" in swimming, though.

Sean Kelley, one of cycling's greats, was said to ride with his saddle WAY too low. *Frank Shorter* flung an arm about on his way to an Olympic marathon gold. Yet both of these guys were, at one time, the best in the world in their sports.

You'll see no world-champion swimmers with flaws in their form. WHY? Their medium (h₂o) is 1000 times more dense than air. So if there is a technical flaw.....it'll be magnified by 1000. If Ian Thorpe made one single adverse change in his technique, he'd risk going from an Olympian & world-record holder to a guy who'd struggle to make his country's team.

I swam laps for a year without realizing this.

One day....(after another humiliating thrashing by another teenage girl), curiosity killed the cat and I began to study the SCIENCE of movement in the water. As I came to learn the art of swimming more and more, I realized that yet another element of endurance sports, efficiency of perfect movement, had it's place in the training mix.

So what began as: "Train ALOT"has progressed over the years into:

- "Train smart.....
- with a technical eye towards each aspect of the game,
- perfecting the efficiency of sports-specific movements,
- in cyclical periods of stress & recovery. And then do it ALOT."

Good luck on your own "triple-jump" training.

Coach Sonni Dyer

****For more information on the [Studio7MultiSport](http://www.Studio7MultiSport.com) training programs, you can visit our website at www.Studio7MultiSport.com or email Sonni at Sonni@Studio7multisport.com .