

# USA TRIATHLON AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

	Active Start	FUNdamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Train to Win	Triathlon for Life
Chronological Age	0-6	6-8 Female 6-9 Male	8-11 Female 9-12 Male	11-15 Female 12-16 Male	15-18 Female 16-18 Male	19-21 Female 19-23 Male	19+ Female 19+ Male	19+ All
Biological Age	Early Childhood	Childhood	Late Childhood	Late Childhood - Young Adult	Young Adult	Young Adult	Young Adult	Young Adult - Adult
Development Stage	Pre-Beginner	Beginner	Advanced Beginner	Intermediate	Intermediate - Advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced
Phase Objective/Focus	Early development period focused on fundamental movement skill acquisition including coordination, running, jumping, kicking, as well as introduction to water safety which will lay the foundation for more complex movements to prepare children for a physically active lifestyle.	Continued development and refinement of fundamental movement skills and the beginning of basic sports skills acquisition to prepare athletes for more advanced skill development.  Athletes are encouraged to participate in multiple sports and activities to help with development of fundamental movement skills and motor development.  For optimal skill acquisition, the basic triathlon skills of swimming and cycling are introduced. FUN competitions are also introduced.	Accelerated learning of coordination and motor control along with further acquisition of swim and cycling specific skills.  Prior to the beginning of the growth spurt care should be given in training stresses. Continued encouragement for athletes to participate in multiple sports.  Athletes should be able to begin to transfer skills and concepts from practices to competition settings. Group interaction, team building and social activities should be emphasized. A balance of practices and racing will promote the continued development, mastery of skills, and practical application of skills within a race environment.	Further development of sports specific skills, begin to introduce competition, and start to emphasize support training to continue development of speed, strength and endurance.  Players should consolidate sport specific technical skills with an increased emphasis on triathlon specific skills (in the later time period of this stage).  Continued encouragement for athletes to participate in multiple sports including coordination of practice and race schedules with middle and high school sport activities.  Social and emotional considerations are addressed by placing an emphasis on team-building, group interaction and social activities.  At this stage, athletes 13+ may consider the draft-legal pathway (see alternative pathway stages).	Preparing athletes for the competitive environment, continuing to refine technical skills and ability to adapt to training and race environments.  The focus is on optimizing fitness preparation and to begin to specialize in triathlon specific training individualized to the athlete's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery.  Training volumes and intensity will increase to coincide with competitive event schedules including possible regional travel.  Social, emotion and school commitments should continue to be addressed along with mental skills that contribute to performance.	Transfer from the training environment to a competitive environment. Athletes must consolidate technical skills, and maintain ancillary skills and underlying physical capacities.  During this stage training volume remains high while intensity increases with the importance of competitions. The training season is typically extended and is disciplined and triathlon specific. Competition schedule could include some regional and national travel.  Athletes may choose to attend triathlon specific training and competition environments outside of their area of living that fit this level of athlete development. The training is individualized to the athlete's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery.	The focus of this stage is the stabilization of performance on demand characteristics and excellence within the highest level of performance at the ITU, World Championships and Olympics. This is the final phase of athletic preparation that only a very small minority will achieve.  Performance factors should be fully established to optimize performance in national or international competitions.  It is important to build a winning strategy with these athletes, and to individualize training and recovery programs to prevent over-training.	Continued experience with triathlon through group training, racing, and giving back to the sport through volunteerism and coaching.
Triathlon Skill & Development Focus	Water safety and swim skill basics including bobbing.  Bike safety including wearing helmet.	Water safety and swim skill basics including breathing and body alignment.  Bike handling including starting and stopping safely within a grass field or closed parking lot.	Swim skills and technique development across all four strokes.  Bike handling including introduction of gearing within a grass field, closed parking lot or paved cycling trail.  Introduction of hydration and nutrition basics.	Swim skills and technique refinement across all four strokes, including open water swimming abilities.  Bike skills and riding basics including hill climbing, cornering and riding in a group setting (later part of this stage) within a grass field, closed parking lot, paved cycling trail or wide low-traffic shoulder road.  Strength work using body weight, yoga, and rehabilitative exercises.  Emphasis of hydration and nutrition choices and their effects on performance.	Swim skills and technique refinement across all four strokes, including open water swimming abilities.  Bike skills and riding basics including hill climbing, cornering and riding in a group setting within a grass field, closed parking lot, paved cycling trail or wide low-traffic shoulder road.  Introduction of mental skills including visualization and self-talk.  Strength work using body weight, yoga, and rehabilitative exercises.  Continued emphasis on hydration and nutrition choices and their effects on performance.	Swim skills and technique refinement across all four strokes.  Developing and refinement of open water swimming abilities including buoy turns, sighting, and water entry/exits.  Advanced riding skills including U-turns, pace-lineing and cycling tactics within a grass field, closed parking lot, paved cycling trail or wide low-traffic shoulder road.  Practical application of mental strategies including visualization and self-talk.  Strength work using body weight, yoga, and rehabilitative exercises.  Continued emphasis on hydration and nutrition choices and their effects on performance.	Complete mastery of previous stage skills.	Complete mastery of previous stage skills.
Multisport Activities	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Introduction to team based sports and practice structure.  Run and lateral based sports (soccer, lacrosse, tennis).	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Continued experience with team based sports and practice structure.  Run and lateral based sports (soccer, lacrosse, tennis, skiing).	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Run and lateral based sports (soccer, lacrosse, tennis, skiing).  Layered triathlon sports (cyclocross, mountain biking, cross-country, track).	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Layered triathlon sports (cyclocross, mountain biking, cross-country, track).	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Layered triathlon sports (cyclocross, mountain biking, cross-country, track).	Outside free play including running, jumping and bounding.  Triathlon focused activities.	All sporting activities.
Recommended Equipment	Goggles Tricycle or Balance bike Helmet Shoes	Goggles Bike (fat tire) w/coaster brakes, or combination w/ handbrake Helmet Shoes	Goggles Bike (fat tire) w/coaster brakes, or combination w/ handbrake Helmet Shoes  Advanced athletes: Hybrid or road bike Cycling shoes	Goggles Bike (fat tire) Helmet Shoes  Advanced athletes: Hybrid or road bike Cycling shoes	Goggles Wetsuit Road bike Helmet Cycling shoes Indoor trainer Training and race shoes	Goggles Wetsuit Road or TT bike (depending on race format) Helmet Cycling shoes Indoor trainer Cycling computer/Heart-rate monitor Training and race shoes	Goggles Wetsuit Road or TT bike (depending on race format) Helmet Cycling shoes Cycling computer with power/Heart-rate monitor Training and race shoes	Goggles Wetsuit Road or TT bike (depending on race format) Helmet Cycling shoes Training and race shoes
Practice Guidelines	No formal practices.  Water introduction and swim safety classes.	Informal practices based on fun, games and interaction with teammates.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:8-10 (with volunteer support)  Recommended no more than once or twice a week.  Recommended no longer than 45-60 minutes.	Informal practices focused on foundational skill development in the shape of games and interaction with teammates.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:10-12 (with volunteer support)  Recommended no more than once or twice a week.  Recommended no longer than 45-60 minutes.	More formal practices based on foundational skill development and refinement.  Introduction of some speed and agility efforts.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:12-15 (with volunteer support)  Two-three practices per week depending other outside practices.  60-90 minutes depending on training focus.	Formal practices including continued skill development and refinement, incorporating speed and agility efforts.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:15  Three - four practices per week depending on other outside practices.  90-120 minutes depending on training focus.	Formal practices including continued skill development and refinement, incorporating speed and agility efforts.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:15  Three - five times per week depending on other outside practices.  90-120 minutes depending on training focus.	Formal practices including continued skill development and refinement, incorporating speed and agility efforts.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:15  Five - seven times per week.  90-120 minutes depending on training focus.	Formal practices including continued skill development and refinement, incorporating speed and agility efforts.  Coach to athlete ratio: 1:15  Five - seven times per week.  90-120 minutes depending on training focus.  Multisport club practices, and group rides.  Masters swimming programs.
Race Guidelines	No formal racing or competition.	Splash n' Dash & Youth Distance Triathlon Events.  No more than once per month during season.  7-8 Year Olds: Pool Swim ≤ 50-100m Bike ≤ 2K Run ≤ 1K	Splash n' Dash & Youth Distance Triathlon Events.  No more than once or twice per month during season.  9-10 Year Olds: Pool Swim ≤ 100m Bike ≤ 3K Run ≤ 1K	Youth Distance Duathlon & Triathlon Events.  Once or twice per month during season.  11-12 Year Olds: Swim ≤ 200m Bike ≤ 5-7K Run ≤ 2K  13-15 Year Olds: Pool Swim ≤ 200-400m Bike ≤ 8-10K Run ≤ 2-3K	Super Sprint/Sprint Distance Duathlon & Triathlon Events.  Once or twice per month during season.  16-19 Year Olds: Pool or Open Water Swim ≤ 400-750m Bike ≤ 15-20K Run ≤ 5K	Super Sprint, Sprint and Olympic Distance Duathlon & Triathlon Events. Collegiate Club (all)  Once or twice per month (depending upon length) during season.	Sprint, Olympic and Long-Course Distance Duathlon & Triathlon Events. Collegiate Club (all)  Once or twice per month (depending upon length) during season.	All distances, all multisport race formats.  Age-Group Regional, National and World Championships.



	YOUTH TO PRE-TEEN			TEEN		ADULT		
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Key Objectives for Success								
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