

# USA TRIATHLON AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

## STAGE SUMMARY



### STAGE 1 ACTIVE START Ages 0-6

Early development period focused on fundamental movement through informal experiences and play. Skill acquisition and coordination acquired through running, jumping, kicking, and the introduction to water safety all lay the foundation for more complex movements to prepare children for a physically active lifestyle.

### STAGE 2 FUNdamentals Ages 6-8 Female | 6-9 Male

Continued development and refinement of fundamental movement skills and the beginning of basic sports skills to prepare athletes for more advanced skill development in future stages. Athletes are encouraged to participate in multiple sports and activities to help with development of fundamental movement skills, motor development, and love of sports. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic triathlon skills of swimming and cycling are introduced. Fun participation can also be introduced.

### STAGE 3 LEARN TO TRAIN Ages 8-11 Female | 9-12 Male

This is an important stage of learning and skill development. It includes more accelerated learning of coordination and motor control along with further acquisition of swim and cycling specific skills. Continued encouragement for athletes to participate in multiple sports. Group interaction, team building, and social activities should be emphasized. A balance of practices and racing will promote continued development, mastery of skills, and practical application of skills within a race environment.

### STAGE 4 TRAIN TO TRAIN Ages 11-15 Female | 12-16 Male

This stage builds on the foundation for sport participation. This includes further development of sports specific skills, introduction to competition, and beginning to emphasize support training to continue development of speed, strength and endurance. Athletes should consolidate sport specific technical skills with an increased emphasis on triathlon specific skills (in the later time-period of this stage). 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).

### STAGE 5 LEARN TO COMPETE Ages 15-18 Female | 16-18 Male

This stage prepares athletes for the competitive environment, continues to refine technical skills and the 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. Social, emotion and school commitments should continue to be addressed along with mental skills that contribute to performance.

### STAGE 6 TRAIN TO COMPETE Ages 19-21 Female | 19-23 Male

Transfer from the training environment to a competitive environment is the core focus of this stage. 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.

### STAGE 7 TRAIN TO WIN Ages 19+ Female | 19+ Male

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.

### STAGE 8 TRIATHLON FOR LIFE Ages 19+

The final stage focused on making the transition from physically literate and confident triathlete to lifelong participant in the sport. Continued experience with triathlon through group training, racing, and giving back to the sport through volunteerism and coaching. When a positive experience in triathlon has been established in other stages of development, athletes will continue participating and staying involved.