

If you haven't competed in a triathlon before, the Fitness First Corporate Triathlon 2014 National Series is the ideal way to start. **Tony Krasicki** reports.

**I**f you've always wanted to compete in a triathlon but were intimidated by the apparent intensity of the multiple-stage event, the Fitness First Corporate Triathlon 2014 National Series is the best way to familiarise yourself with this challenging sport. That's because the Corporate Series triathlons – now in their 27th year – are designed specially for newcomers. Entrants compete together with their colleagues as part of corporate teams of at least three people.

The course distances are shorter than those of ordinary triathlons and competitors also have the option of doing just one of the three triathlon segments – swimming, running or cycling – passing the timing belt to each other just like a relay.

Normally a triathlon of Olympic distance has a 1.5km swimming leg, 40km bike ride and a 10km run. By contrast the Corporate Triathlon Series events have a swim course of 300m or 400m, a cycle ride of 8km or 10km and a run course of 3km or 4km. But in every other respect, these are genuine triathlons and you get to experience that backslapping, doesn't-matter-where-you-finish camaraderie that's peculiar to the sport.

David Hansen, the director of SuperSprint, the Corporate Triathlon organisers, says: "Because the distances are short and it's a corporate event, we get many people doing their first triathlon, so it's not like you're coming to an event where there's a lot of well-trained athletes that are perhaps intimidating."

So is there enough time left for a triathlon newbie get ready for one of triathlons, which start in March?

"If you've got a basic level of fitness you only need probably a month if that, and a lot of that is probably just making sure your technique and skills are right and you're used to the transitions from cycling to running etc," says Hansen, who was a former top-level triathlete himself. "Newbies or those who have had a long break should start training now."

Hansen recommends starting by building a base fitness, progressing from walking to running and gradually increasing your distances. With cycling you

could start with indoor cycling in a gym then take it out on to the road.

Hansen suggests you get some swim coaching or stroke correction to develop good swim technique.

"Probably the main barrier to entering a tri is the swimming, but once you've done some stroke corrections then it's quite easy to swim the 300m or 400m," he says, adding you should combine pool sessions with a few open water swims.

At your gym also try to do a lightweight high repetition training program, whether in the weights room or by attending a BODYPUMP® class. Hansen says you'll need to have good upper and lower body strength for the triathlon so when you start training you should aim for a good base strength to prevent potential injuries.

"Don't let a lack of equipment be a barrier, beg, steal or borrow a bike if you must," Hansen adds. In terms of equipment, Hansen points out that you'll need a pair of goggles and bathers, a roadworthy bike and a pair of running shoes. "We get a lot of people riding mountain bikes, commuter bikes and road bikes – it doesn't require a \$10,000 bike to do the event."

"Start off nice and slowly, and try not to do things too quickly. Once you get started, triathlons are really not just a sport but a healthy lifestyle." And don't forget to have fun! **Q**

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[www.supersprint.com.au/events/fitness-first-corporate-triathlon-national-series.aspx](http://www.supersprint.com.au/events/fitness-first-corporate-triathlon-national-series.aspx) or for help with training programs visit [www.tri-alliance.com.au](http://www.tri-alliance.com.au)



## Triathlon For Newbies

