

Contents

• Basic Instructions	4-7
• Dry Land Strength Training For Swimmers	8
• Superset Series 1	9
• Superset Series 2	10
• Ben's Body Blaster	11
• Round and Round	12
• Nifty 50	13
• Extreme Core 1	14
• Extreme Core 2	15
• Basic Strength 1	16
• Basic Strength 2	17
• Body Weight Only 1	18
• Body Weight Only 2	19

Sample file

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Basic Instructions

Warm-up

Prior to each routine, it will be necessary to raise the temperature of the muscles. This allows the muscle to produce optimal force. If you are on a "time crunch", you can simply perform a 500 meter row on a rowing machine, 100 jumping jacks or a 2 minute effort on the bike, treadmill, or elliptical. You'll be surprised at how warm you can get your body in a short period of time. If you have extra time, 5-10 minutes is a more effective warm-up. You may also perform these routines after a swim, bike, or run. If you do this, I highly encourage a carbohydrate-protein based snack of 150-300 calories if your preceding cardio session lasts for longer than 1 hour. It is better to perform cardio first, and resistance training afterwards, but sometimes what is "ideal" is not "practical", so do what works for you. The most important consideration is that you're able to perform the exercises without low blood sugar or fatigue, since that is the quickest way to injury and ineffective training.

Stretching

Stretching is slightly overrated as many research studies have discovered no decreased risk of injury following a pre-exercise stretch session. Do I stretch? Absolutely. 10 minutes in the morning when I awake, and during race season, 1 yoga session per week. I do not stretch because I'm concerned about rupturing a tendon or muscle during a resistance training session. I stretch to maintain overall joint balance and as a means of stress relief and relaxation. Joint balance simply means that if your hamstrings are excessively tight, they can "pull" your pelvic bone posteriorly and give you low back pain. Or if your anterior shoulder muscles are excessively tight, they can pull your shoulders forward and cause a "slump" in the shoulders. However, you can stretch at anytime during the day, and it is not necessary to precede your resistance training session with stretching.

Weight Selection, Circuits, Rest Periods, Sets and Repetitions

A *circuit* simply means that you proceed from one exercise to the next with little to no rest between exercises. As soon as you feel recovered, which should take 10-30 seconds, you just move on to the next exercise. You perform as many circuits as are indicated in the workout instructions.

A *superset* means that you perform the first exercise listed, then the second

exercise, then you take a 30-60 second rest. Repeat for as many times as are indicated in the instructions, then move on to the next superset.

You can't use the same weight and the same number of repetitions all year long without experiencing burnout and decreased performance. Just as you periodize your swimming, cycling, and running, you should also periodize your resistance training. So here are the simple rules (outlined in the table at the end of this discussion):

- **Off-season:** this is the time to really build strength and muscle mass by performing a high number of sets and circuits, using a low number of repetitions (the number of times you lift the actual weight or perform the actual exercise in any given circuit or set), and using a heavier amount of weight. If a range of circuits is given for a routine, say, "3-5x through", then during the off-season, you will go 5x through. You'll also use the low range of repetitions, around 8-10. Choose a weight that you consider very challenging (you should be to failure by the last rep). In my routines, I will use a moderate weight for the first 1-2 circuits, then add 5-10lbs for upper body and 10-20lbs for lower body during the last several circuits.
- **Base:** increase the number of reps and decrease the number of sets or circuits. Decrease your weight, which will naturally occur, since you'll be performing more reps. You should have an intense burn, but not be at failure by the last rep, and should really be able to do an extra 2-3 reps if you had to. This will also help you be less sore for those long swims, rides, and runs.
- **Build:** again increase your number of reps and decrease the weight. Some people think that this should be the most "intense" time of lifting, but I've found that this actually detracts from the intense swims, rides, and runs you should be doing at this time of year. The goal is to "maintain" the strength that you've already built during off-season and base. Follow the same recommendations as base training to choose your weight.
- **Peak:** here's a little twist – you're going to go back to the number of reps you performed in the off-season, but with much lighter weights and far fewer sets. Very important: make certain to lift explosively and quickly, and this should be easy to do since you be using lighter weights. Basically, you're enhancing power without doing too much muscle damage during this time. There should be very little burn in the muscles at the end of the set.
- **Race week:** can be tricky and very individualized. While it's OK to lift for up to 72 hours prior to your low priority races, try to follow these basic rules

for your mid-to-high priority races. No lifting for the entire week prior to Ironman or Half-Ironman, only one lifting session on the week of an Olympic distance race (early in the week and preferably core only), and only two lifting sessions the week of a Sprint distance race (early in the week). Remember that it takes about a week for a muscle to really respond to a strength training session, so none of the training you do during a race week is going to help you during the race, it is in fact going to detract from your race performance, and the only reason you would perform it is to maintain some amount of strength if you're racing several times over the course of a season.

Phase	Off-season	Base	Build	Peak
Sets or Circuits	High (4-6x)	Moderate (3-5x)	Moderate (3-5x)	Low (2-3x)
Reps	8-10	10-12	12-15	8-10
Weight	Heavy	Medium-Heavy	Medium	Light

Routine Selection

Your body will respond best when you keep it guessing. This means that you should use as much variation as possible and try to include as many routines as you can in your routine. Ideally, you should lift 2-3x per week, and since these routines are so short, 3 would be best. Initially, as you are learning exercises, you may want to stick with just a handful of routines that you cycle through on a weekly or bi-monthly basis. But eventually, you should include all 12 routines in your programs. The ideal scenarios are:

Routines 1-12 performed on a weekly cycle as follows: Week 1: 1-3; Week 2: 4-6; Week 3: 7-9; Week 4: 10-12, then repeat.

Routines 1-12 performed on a bi-monthly cycle as follows: Week 1: 1-3; Week 2: 1-3; Week 3: 4-6; Week 4: 4-6; Week 5: 7-9...you get the idea. This is a better way for you to "memorize routines", since you get to repeat them a couple weeks in a row.

You'll find that some routines are harder on the shoulders, some are harder on the abs, some leave your legs more sore, etc. Use common sense. If a routine absolutely bombs your shoulders, then don't do it the day before a hard swim session! Or if you know a routine asks your legs to really work, you may not want to plan it on the same day as a 3 hour bike ride.

I literally choose which routine I'm going to perform about 10 minutes before my workout. That way, I can keep my body guessing and I can account for which

of my muscles are fatigued and which are fresh. I'll even leave out certain exercises if I know I just won't be able to use good form or if I feel it would overtrain a certain muscle group.

Final Thoughts

- Try to space your resistance training sessions 48 hours apart.
- Make sure to prioritize your swimming, cycling, and running. It will ultimately give you the highest benefit.
- In the notes section for each routine, write your weights and any notes that help you remember an exercise.
- If an exercise hurts in a bad way, skip it.
- You can supplement these routines with special exercises if you have a special injury or joint condition. For example, if you have poor tracking of the kneecap (usually pain in the front of your knee), you could do cable kickforwards instead of squats or lunges. Or if you have low back pain, you can substitute more advanced core moves with simple exercises like the six inch crunch.
- If you've never performed any strength training, then ease into these routines. Just do 1-2x the first 2-4 weeks, then gradually add sets, reps and weights.
- If you don't want to wait for each high resolution video to load from thestrongtriathlete.com, every video is also available in a low resolution, smaller version at [youtube](#). You can search for the name of the actual workout or search using keyword thestrongtriathlete.
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