

# **Championship Triathlon Training**

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**George M. Dallam, PhD**

**Steven Jonas, MD**



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Web site: [www.HumanKinetics.com](http://www.HumanKinetics.com)

*United States:* Human Kinetics  
P.O. Box 5076  
Champaign, IL 61825-5076  
800-747-4457  
e-mail: [humank@hkusa.com](mailto:humank@hkusa.com)

*Canada:* Human Kinetics  
475 Devonshire Road Unit 100  
Windsor, ON N8Y 2L5  
800-465-7301 (in Canada only)  
e-mail: [info@hkcanada.com](mailto:info@hkcanada.com)

*Europe:* Human Kinetics  
107 Bradford Road  
Stanningley  
Leeds LS28 6AT, United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 113 255 5665  
e-mail: [hk@hkeurope.com](mailto:hk@hkeurope.com)

*Australia:* Human Kinetics  
57A Price Avenue  
Lower Mitcham, South Australia 5062  
08 8372 0999  
e-mail: [info@hkaustralia.com](mailto:info@hkaustralia.com)

*New Zealand:* Human Kinetics  
Division of Sports Distributors NZ Ltd.  
P.O. Box 300 226 Albany  
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e-mail: [info@humankinetics.co.nz](mailto:info@humankinetics.co.nz)

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# Foreword

I first met George Dallam in the summer of 1996 when he was coaching the USA Triathlon national resident team in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The first thing that I noticed about George was his passion for engaging with and supporting his athletes. He was coaching many of the triathletes who had already been selected as the best in the country. During my summer in Colorado Springs, I saw how closely George worked with his athletes, treating each as an individual. He tailored his recommended program for each one of them, taking into consideration both their strengths and their weaknesses. When I left Colorado Springs that summer for my junior year at Wake Forest University, I realized that I wanted to be coached by George Dallam. I was hoping that he would have some time in his busy schedule for me. And he did. After my graduation in 1998 I started working with George full-time. He has been the only triathlon coach I've had since then.

George and I have been through a lot together. He was my coach when I competed at the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games as well as for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China. I admire George in so many ways. What I admire most is his ability, as a professor of exercise physiology at Colorado State University at Pueblo, to take his scientific understanding of how the human body works and translate it into his approach to coaching. Using his knowledge base in science, he knows how to help athletes perform at their best, time and again. He has been able to help me reach all of my goals in triathlon—many of which I did not believe I could attain.

Not only is George an exercise scientist, but he is also accredited at the highest level as a triathlon coach. He has helped to write and teach many of the triathlon coaching certification courses that USAT offers. He has traveled around the country and the world speaking about coaching athletes at the highest level in our sport. He is also an amazing athlete. He raced at or near the front of many regional triathlons in the sport's early days. To this day he competes in age-group races in Colorado and around the country. I wouldn't want to be at a race and see George Dallam toe the start line beside me!

George has a wonderful family, with whom I've become very close. Susan Dallam is an amazing woman, teacher, wife, and mother. As George is passionate in his coaching and teaching, so is Susan in her own work as a teacher of children. Together they have raised a wonderful boy in George Jr. I am grateful to Susan for allowing me to spend so much time with her husband over all these years.

George has made me the athlete I am today. He always offered words of encouragement, and he knew what to say to me after a bad race as well as after a good one. He is a man who never seeks the limelight, but he deserves so much credit from me and so many other athletes. I thank George from the bottom of my heart.

**Hunter Kemper**

2000 and 2004 Olympian

Six-time U.S. elite national champion ('98, '99, '01, '03, '05, '06)

2005 USOC Male Sportsman of the Year

2005 Jim Thorpe All-Around Award winner

2005 ITU World Ranked No. 1

2003 Pan American Games gold medalist

# Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people who were significant to the completion of this book. My wife, Susan, and son, George E., are the center of my universe and supported me through the long hours. My parents, Ann and Bud, raised me to be an independent thinker, athlete, and coach. My coauthor, Steve Jonas, provided wisdom, editorial talent, good humor, and the viewpoint of the “ordinary mortal.”

Mentors, colleagues, and friends have guided me in the coaching and scientific process: Nicholas Romanov, Randy Wilber, Jay Kearney, Graham Fletcher, Dave Morris, Robert Robergs, Vivian Heyward, and Tim Yount. A legion of other coaches, physicians, and sport scientists provided theories, insights, rebuttal, and support. Many elite athletes were willing to try new ideas and training methods and give me feedback on their results over the years, including Hunter Kemper, Amanda Stevens, Ryan Bickerstaff, Michael Smedley, Marcel Vivian, Lisa Rainesberger, and Callahan Hatfield. The original Olympic Training Center resident team and Collegiate Camp athletes were willing to begin the great experiment: Nick Radkewich, Jill Newman (Chalmers), Susan Bartholomew (Williams), Michelle Blessing, Andy Kelsey, Cameron King (Randolph), Doug Friman, Keith Casserly, Laura Reback (Bennett), Becky Gibbs (Lavelle), Rick Duda, and Josh Dapice. I’d also like to thank Colorado State University at Pueblo, the United States Olympic Committee, and USA Triathlon for their continued support over the years. Finally, special thanks are in order for Steve Vaughan for helping with the photography and Ryan Bickerstaff for providing the natural log equations.

**George Dallam**



# Introduction

*Championship Triathlon Training* is about achieving your peak performance in triathlon and duathlon. The peak that *you* can achieve depends on who you are—your age, your natural athletic abilities, your genetically determined potential and limitations, your athletic experience, and your availability of time.

Do you want to become an Olympian, be a top elite triathlete, have a productive pro career, compete for a medal in a large age group, or compete for a medal in a small one? Do you want to achieve a top age-group USA Triathlon national ranking, take part in as many races as you can manage in a season at whatever speeds you can manage over a long period, or simply compete in a few races a year and finish happily and healthily in whatever races you do for however long you race? This book will help you achieve any of those goals and more. You might be fast, middling-fast, or slow. You might be young, middle-aged, or older. You might do 3 races a year or 13. Regardless, in this book you will find advice that will help you to reach your peak as you define it for yourself. That is, peak performance is something to be individualized, just as training for it is.

Multisport athletic events have become one of the fastest-growing categories of sport on the planet. Competitors are drawn to the opportunity to challenge themselves physically and mentally and to do something different with their lives. They revel in the physicality of training. They jump at the chance to do endurance races that provide for variety instead of sameness. And they get satisfaction and enhanced self-esteem from achieving their racing goals.

Several training elements are necessary for success in multisport racing at any level: training your mental skill set, training for technique (your physical skill set), and training for strength, speed, and endurance. Throughout *Championship Triathlon Training*, all of these elements are addressed. You'll discover a set of principles to guide your multisport training process; the primary set of psychological skills for success in training and racing; the elements of technique in swimming, cycling, and running that you can master to improve performance and reduce injury; the rationale and methods for developing sport-specific strength and peak power; a specific system to extend sport-specific power into a complex endurance training program; specific examples of multisport training programs using the concepts presented in this book; triathlon-specific training methods and skills for racing; the basic nutritional concepts that support successful training; and the specific means to address health issues relating to participation in triathlon. Many of the ideas presented are well established and

widely held; others are on the cutting edge of training methodology and not yet widely known or used. Enjoy them all on your way to a lifetime of healthy and successful participation in endurance sports.

Throughout the book you'll notice a mixture of metric and English measurements (such as miles, kilometers, yards, meters, pounds, kilograms). The choice of metric or English in each example reflects the more common usage of the two measurement systems used in the United States for athletic facilities and events. Most of the shorter and intermediate running distances are expressed in metric (for example, 400 meters, 5K, 10K); half-marathon and marathon distances are expressed in miles. Most swimming distances in this book are expressed in yards, because the majority of public training facilities available to triathletes are short-course 25-yard pools. To use the English-distance formulas we present at a metric pool, recognize that the metric distance of the stated numeric amount exceeds its English counterpart by approximately 10 percent and adjust accordingly. For the purposes of identifying appropriate training intensities as discussed in chapter 5, the effect of this difference in distance will be marginal. Most cycling distances are expressed in English measurements, but a few examples appear in metric because they reflect common race distances. There are a few metric conversions included in the book, but for the sake of saving space and maintaining readability, most English measurements appear without metric conversions. If you need to convert English measurements to metric, several conversion sites are available on the Internet for that purpose.