

John Hellemans' 2013 Ironman Hawaii Training Plan

(Start this plan 12 weeks before race day.)

As a coach, Hellemans has a unique schedule with benefits and pitfalls—travel takes his time yet he has a flexible schedule. This plan can serve as a solid backbone for any Ironman build. Adapt it based on your own limitations. Decades of training allowed Hellemans to complete a demanding plan. Make sure your body is ready for any training schedule you take on.

Hellemans' swim training was done as he had set out in his training plan, but his cycling volume recorded in his training log was 10–20 percent less than planned. "In particular, 6–7-hour bike sessions became five-hour sessions because of time restraints," he says. "The run training was also less than planned by 10–20 percent. I would have liked to have done a few three-hour-plus runs, but that did not eventuate. I am not a distance man."

TRAINING PLAN KEY

Zone 1 Easy

(warm-up and part of long sessions)

Zone 2 Steady (Ironman pace)

Zone 3 Moderately hard, transition zone, just before lactate threshold

Zone 4 Hard, lactate threshold

(Olympic-distance race pace)

Zone 5 Very hard, VO₂ max pace

L = Long ride/run

M = Medium-length ride with race-pace component middle; medium-length run

B = Ride prior to brick run; brick run off bike

R = Recovery ride/run

Note: Included in the comments section of the training log is a record of Hellemans' travel schedule over the summer to prepare and coach his ITU athletes for their ITU World Triathlon Series events, for coaching meetings and to compete in two Olympic-distance triathlons.

THE WORKOUTS

Hellemans maintains that the most effective way for the majority of age groupers to train is to do to four sessions a week in each discipline, keeping intensity low (Zones 1–2 out of 5). Here's how he divided his sessions during his 12-week peak training for Kona.

SWIM

4 times per week, 4000 meters per pool session, including one open-water swim of 2000 to 3000 meters. Typical workouts for the week:

- 1.) 500 mixed strokes, 5x100 on 1:40, 500 pull with pull buoy, 5x100 on 1:40, 500 free, 5x100 bands only on 2 min, 500 free, 5x100 on 1:40, 500 pull with paddles, 500 mixed strokes
- 2.) 4000 meters straight swim
- 3.) 4x1000: 1. Swim, 2. Pull, 3. Swim, 4. Mixed strokes
- 4.) 1000 mixed strokes, 6x50 bands only on 1 min plus 3x(300 free), cool-down

BIKE

4 times per week, incorporating hills when possible for strength. Typical workouts for the week:

- 1.) Long ride, 4–5 hours, easy
- 2.) Semi-long ride, 2–3 hours, with moderate pace component in middle
- 3.) 1.5–2.5-hour ride prior to run
- 4.) 90-min recovery ride

RUN

4 times per week, incorporating hills when possible. Typical workouts for the week:

- 1.) Long run (120–150 min)
- 2.) Medium run (90 min)
- 3.) Run off bike (60-plus min)
- 4.) Recovery run (30–60 min)

WEEK 1

START-UP

MONDAY

BIKE: (R) 2 hours easy

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4K **RUN:** (R) 60 min Z2

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4K **BIKE:** (M) 2.5 hours Z1–2

THURSDAY

SWIM: 4K **RUN:** (M) 80 min Z1–2

FRIDAY

BIKE: (M) 2.5 hours Z1–2

SATURDAY

SWIM: Open water, 2–3K **BIKE:** (L) 3+ hours Z1–2 **RUN:** (R) 60 min Z1–2

SUNDAY

RUN: (L) 90+ min Z1–2

Approximate total distance: 15K swimming | 280K (174 miles) biking | 60K (37 miles) running

WEEK 2

HARD WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: Open water, 2K

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (R) 2.5K Z2, some Z3

WEDNESDAY

RUN: (L) 100 min

THURSDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (M) 3.5 hours Z1–2

FRIDAY

SWIM: 4.6K **BIKE:** (R) 1.5 hours Z1–2 **RUN:** (B) 40 min Z2+ off the bike

SATURDAY

BIKE: (L) 5.5–6 hours **RUN:** (R) 60 min Z1

SUNDAY

RUN: (L) 135 min

Approximate total distance: 15K | 340K (211 miles) | 64K (40 miles)

WEEK 3

EASIER WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: 4K **BIKE:** (L) 3+ hours

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4K **RUN:** (M) 60 min
COMMENTS: Travel day

WEDNESDAY

RUN: (M) 60 min

THURSDAY

BIKE: (M) 2+ hours **RUN:** (R) 20 min

FRIDAY

SWIM: 3K

SATURDAY

SWIM: 2.6K **RUN:** (L) 90 min

SUNDAY

BIKE: (R) 2 hours **COMMENTS:** Travel day

Approximate total distance: 13.6K | 160K (99 miles) | 45K (28 miles)

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WEEK 4

STEADY/MAINTENANCE WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: 4K **RUN:** (R) 45 min **COMMENTS:** Travel day

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4.6K **BIKE:** (M) 2 hours **RUN:** (M) 75 min

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (L) 3.5 hours

THURSDAY

SWIM: 4K **RUN:** (L) 2 hours
COMMENTS: Travel day

FRIDAY

BIKE: (R) 1.5 hours

SATURDAY

BIKE: (L) 6-7 hours

SUNDAY

RUN: (L) 90 min **COMMENTS:** Travel day

Approximate total distance: 16.8K | 370K (230 miles) | 60K (37 miles)

WEEK 5

STEADY/MAINTENANCE WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: Open water, 3K **BIKE:** (R) 2 hours

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4.5K **RUN:** (L) 135 min

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.3K **BIKE:** (M) 3 hours

THURSDAY

RUN: (R) 60 min **COMMENTS:** Travel day

FRIDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (M) 2.5 hours
RUN: (R) 60 min

SATURDAY

RUN: (M) 90 min

SUNDAY

BIKE: (R) 2 hours **COMMENTS:** Travel day

Approximate total distance: 16K | 240K (149 miles) | 70K (43.5 miles)

WEEK 6

HARD WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: 4.5K **BIKE:** (R) 2 hours **RUN:** (M) 60 min
COMMENTS: Bike seat broke

TUESDAY

RUN: (L) 2 hours 40 min

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.3K **BIKE:** (M) 3 hours 15 min

THURSDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **RUN:** (R) 60 min

FRIDAY

BIKE: (R) 90 min **COMMENTS:** Travel day

SATURDAY

SWIM: 1.5K **BIKE:** 40K **RUN:** 10K
COMMENTS: Olympic-distance race

SUNDAY

BIKE: (L) 4 hours 15 min easy
COMMENTS: Travel day

Approximate total distance: 15K | 330K (205 miles) | 68K(42 miles)

WEEK 7

HARD WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (R) 2 hours

TUESDAY

RUN: (M) 75 min

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.5K **BIKE:** (L) 5 hours

THURSDAY

SWIM: 2K **RUN:** (L) 2 hours

FRIDAY

SWIM: 4.6K **BIKE:** (R) 1.5 hours **RUN:** (R) 60 min

SATURDAY

SWIM: Open water, 2.5K **BIKE:** (B) 2 hours
RUN: (B) 60 min off the bike

SUNDAY

BIKE: (L) 5 hours

Approximate total distance: 17.8K | 400K (249 miles) | 65K(40 miles)

WEEK 8

EASIER WEEK

MONDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (R) 1 hour 45 min **RUN:** (R) 60 min immediately after swim

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4K **BIKE:** (R) 1 hour indoor trainer
RUN: 60 min, including 6x400 at 5K race pace, off the bike

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **RUN:** (M) 75 min
COMMENTS: Travel day

THURSDAY

OFF

FRIDAY

SWIM: 2.6K **BIKE:** (R) 90 min flat

SATURDAY

RUN: (L) 90 min

SUNDAY

BIKE: (M) 2 hours hills and flat

Approximate total distance: 15K | 155K (96 miles) | 46K(29 miles)

WEEK 9

STEADY/MAINTENANCE WEEK

MONDAY

RUN: (M) 60 min **COMMENTS:** Travel day

TUESDAY

SWIM: 4.5K **BIKE:** (B) 3.5 hours
RUN: (B) 2 hours off the bike

WEDNESDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (R) 1 hour indoor trainer

THURSDAY

SWIM: 4.5K **RUN:** (M) 60 min

FRIDAY

SWIM: 4.2K **BIKE:** (B) 90 min
RUN: (B) 60 min off the bike
COMMENTS: Sauna 2x15 min

SATURDAY

BIKE: (L) 5 hours **COMMENTS:** Sauna

SUNDAY

SWIM: 1.5K **BIKE:** 40K **RUN:** 10K
COMMENTS: Sauna | Maastricht Triathlon

Approximate total distance: 19K | 370K (230 miles) | 70K(43.5 miles)

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WEEK 10
HARD WEEK
MONDAY
SWIM: 4.2K RUN: (R) 60 min COMMENTS: Sauna, travel day
TUESDAY
SWIM: 4.5K BIKE: (M) 4 hours
WEDNESDAY
BIKE: (B) 90 min spin RUN: (B) 60 min COMMENTS: Sauna
THURSDAY
SWIM: 4.5K BIKE: (M) 2.5 hours COMMENTS: Sauna
FRIDAY
SWIM: 4.2K RUN: (L) 2.5 hours COMMENTS: Sauna
SATURDAY
BIKE: (R) 2 hours RUN: (R) 40 min
SUNDAY
RUN: (M) 60 min COMMENTS: Sauna
Approximate total distance: 17.4K 270K (168 miles) 75K (47 miles)

WEEK 11
START TAPER
MONDAY
SWIM: 4.2K BIKE: (R) 5 hours COMMENTS: Sauna
TUESDAY
SWIM: 4.2K RUN: (L) 2.5 hours
WEDNESDAY
SWIM: 4.2K BIKE: (M) 2 hours COMMENTS: Sauna
THURSDAY
RUN: (R) 40 min COMMENTS: Travel day
FRIDAY
ARRIVE IN KONA
SATURDAY
SWIM: Ocean swim easy 1K BIKE: (M) Second half of bike course, 90K RUN: (R) 40 min
SUNDAY
SWIM: 2K ocean swim RUN: (M) 60
Approximate total distance: 15.9K 265K (165 miles) 60K (37 miles)

WEEK 12
TAPER AND RACE
MONDAY
SWIM: 2K ocean swim BIKE: (R) 90 min
TUESDAY
BIKE: (R) 2 hours RUN: (R) 40 min easy
WEDNESDAY
SWIM: 2K ocean swim RUN: (R) 60 min
THURSDAY
SWIM: (R) 60 min spin BIKE: (R) 30 min easy
FRIDAY
SWIM: Easy swim
SATURDAY
IRONMAN
Approximate total distance: 8K 280K (174 miles) 62K (38.5 miles)



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