



F O R G E D I N IRON

SIX IRONMAN WORLD TITLES. A RACING PEDIGREE THAT GOES RIGHT BACK TO THE EARLIEST DAYS OF TRIATHLON. COACH TO MULTIPLE CHAMPS. IF THERE'S ONE PERSON WHO KNOWS ABOUT GOING LONG, IT'S DAVE SCOTT. WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE TRI LEGEND TO TALK SWIM TECHNIQUE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING...

WORDS HELEN WEBSTER MAIN IMAGES SIMON MACKNEY GYM & POOL IMAGES DAVE TYRELL

It's 3pm in a gym in the north-west of England and a small group of 220 readers are going through a whole range of emotions. Around half of them are still in complete and utter disbelief at the fact that they're training with six-time world Ironman champ and triathlon legend Dave 'The Man' Scott. The other half? Well, they're in disbelief too, but that's starting to be overshadowed by the searing pain in their butt cheeks, as the 61-year-old coach and athlete puts them through some seemingly simple, yet effective, strength and conditioning exercises. His only weapons? A couple of small dumbbells, a stretchy bit of cord and a killer knowledge of physiology. "Just another 100 and we'll be done," he jokes, as most of the room (220's editor included) stretch back, grimace and start rubbing their cramping backsides.

So how did we come to be here? And why is one of endurance racing's most experienced names making us focus on working teeny-tiny deeply hidden muscles in our abs and glutes, instead of going out for an epic run or bike session? We'll come to that. But first, we're

going back to the day before, when we met up with Scott to talk all things long-distance...

TRAIN SMART

Arguably triathlon's biggest icon, Dave Scott took six Ironman world championship titles between 1980 and 1989, before going back to the lava fields in 1994 and 1996. Since then, he's coached some of the most successful names in tri (including Chrissie Wellington), as well as countless age-group athletes.

We were keen to talk to Scott about the advice he would offer the average age-group athlete. When he won his first title he was just 26 and had a solid sporting background. Yet the average age-group athlete at this year's Ironman UK race in Bolton will be 39 years old, with 58% taking on the distance for the first time. Similarly, at this year's Outlaw, out of 1,231 participants, the biggest single age-group will be 40-49, with 549 entrants.

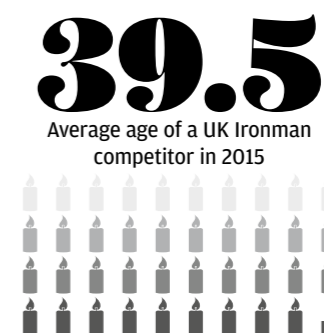
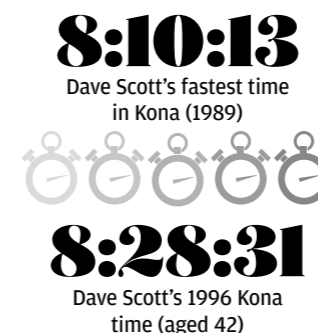
When it comes to training, it would be easy to assume Scott's ethos is all about endurance and racking up the miles. Although that might have been the case back in the earlier days of the sport - "I would have gone faster if I'd

been a little bit smarter - but we didn't have the back-up of any science or mentors. I was one of the first guys to do the sport!" he says - his approach today is somewhat different.

Nowadays Scott recommends training three times per week in each discipline and adding two strength and conditioning sessions, with 11.5 to 16 hours being the weekly training time he considers doable for athletes wanting to go long. Within this, the six-time champ focuses strongly on technique in swim, bike and run, founded on a base of core strength built through good conditioning.

Additionally, he recommends high-intensity training. "Most people need to boost their threshold pace, because when they boost that then all the ones below which they'll be racing at become faster," he says. "Doing VO2 sets in all three disciplines is key - I look at repeats of roughly 30secs to 2mins at the really high end. Occasionally you do have to do longer sessions, as for Ironman athletes that eccentric load is really key. But you want to space out your longer days."

Turn the page for more of Scott's coaching advice, starting with swim technique... ➔





ELITE
ADVICE

STRENGTHEN YOUR SWIM

FOR MANY TRIATHLETES GOING LONG, IT'S THE 3.8KM SWIM THAT HOLDS THE MOST CONCERN, SO WE ASKED SCOTT TO SHARE HIS COACHING TIPS...

It's no surprise that with his strong early background in water polo and swim coaching, Dave Scott is passionate about the improvements that can be made in the swim - especially in age-groupers who haven't swum much previously or who return to swimming purely to compete in triathlon. Firstly, he advocates introducing variety into your training sessions.

"I always see triathletes doing freestyle. The trouble is, freestyle has a tendency to internally-rotate your shoulders - something that's made worse if you're sat at your laptop all day. You end up looking like a banana! The best swimmers are the ones who also do backstroke, so my suggestion is to add a great backstroke and breaststroke into your training. In my group we do harder backstroke too, we're not just stretching out."

Scott also recommends using fins and doing dolphin kick on your back to open up the hip flexors and work the quads and pelvic muscles. "Do flutter kick on your back or your stomach too - that will also open up that hip and help your back muscles." Finally, he recommends using pool tools to improve kinesthetic awareness and feel for the water. He advises swapping paddles with your team-mates (rather than using the same pair all the time) to create new sensations in the water and, rather than swimming with your hands in fists to improve your feel for water on the catch, Scott suggests you hold tennis balls. "The fuzzy texture wakes up your nerve endings. Plus, as you're losing a lot of surface area, it forces your elbows up high."



DAVE SCOTT ON... SWIM TECHNIQUE

HERE ARE DAVE SCOTT'S FIVE TIPS FOR SWIMMERS LOOKING TO IMPROVE THEIR STROKE. "ONLY FOCUS ON TWO OF THESE AT A TIME THOUGH," HE SAYS. "IF YOU TRY TO THINK ABOUT THEM ALL AT ONCE, YOUR MIND'S GOING TO TURN INTO PUTTY! SO JUST SEE IF YOU CAN THINK ABOUT TWO AT A TIME - FOR EXAMPLE, 'HEAD DOWN, HANDS WIDER'."

1 Most people that have trouble in the swim are holding their head too high, so bring it down. In a shallow pool you can see about 2m ahead and that's by keeping your head in a neutral position. But imagine talking to someone who's a little bit shorter than you - that's actually a better position and will bring your legs up. If you want to go to the extreme in a drill, try swimming 8-10 strokes with a tennis ball under your chin (obviously if you turn to breathe it will fall out). It will feel low, but you'll see that peripheral vision is good.

2 Many triathletes, especially the ones in their 30s and 40s, don't have the shoulder mobility that the world's best swimmers do. They've lost some of the flexibility in their tendons and muscles, so when they put their arms out front and overhead suddenly everything is pulling down - not just through their arms, but through their shoulders, their backs, their lats - all the way down to their hip flexors. And if their hip flexors are tight, that will affect the length at the front of the stroke. So most people will benefit by taking a little wider hand entry. Put your arms straight up from your shoulders, without any crossover on the front, then take them a little wider. This will help avoid elbow drop too.

3 To keep your elbow high, imagine it has an eyeball on it, that has to be looking out towards the side wall. If you allow your elbow to collapse, it will drop and the eyeball will be looking down at the bottom of the pool. I advise a lot of people to stop at 170° extension of their arm too - because when they go to 180° the elbow drops. The joint line of the wrist should always be lower than the joint line of the elbow when your hand enters the water.

4 Keep your wrist neutral, so your hand and forearm are in the same alignment. When people put on paddles and drop their elbows they get away with a crappy stroke, because they have more surface area. So sometimes I use a

tongue depressor and tape people's wrists, so they're held in a little cast. Keep the wrist in a neutral position and feel like the lower arm is almost like a pendulum, again with the elbow kept high, trying to get the forearm vertical.

5 You should only have about half as much rotation at the hips as at the shoulders. Contrary to a lot of teaching, you want to generate more torque out of your core by actually stabilising your hips a little bit. So imagine

you've got a hot cup of coffee on your tailbone poured right to the brim that you can't spill. Initially you're going to feel like you're on a surfboard, but that's fine because it's going to force that elbow up high. Your navel should never be looking to the side wall. ☛

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ON... BIKE TRAINING

Within bike sessions, Scott advises standing up to activate the glutes and increase your strength profile, but also to think about variable gearing. "I like to do 15-25% of a session in a lower gear, with fast legs," he says.

"As for a bigger gear, if you go to a gym you see people turning at 48rpm and they get a lot of internal rotation with their knees, they're torquing their back and they're loading their knees up - so don't do that until you have about 10 weeks of training, then you can gradually bring up the percentage of your big gear.

"My preference is to have 20% in a low gear, 10% in a big gear, then about 70% in your chosen gear, your time-trial gear. And make sure you stand up in every single workout!"



STRENGTH & CONDITIONING FOR TRIATHLETES

WANT TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE, ESPECIALLY IN THE RUN? THEN IT'S ESSENTIAL TO FIND TIME FOR A SIMPLE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROGRAMME...

"If you look at data," says Scott, "one of the first things that's lost as we age in our 30s is lean muscle mass. And if you lose muscle mass, you lose the ability to be mechanically efficient. So if you start thinking about doing an Ironman race in your late 30s, or in your 40s, you don't want to sacrifice your strength, stretching and injury-prevention programme. That is a prerequisite. So for people who are first starting, they should weave that in at least twice a week.

"We can look at strength training as doing a number of different things. One, it enhances symmetry. So once we feel that both sides are symmetrical, we have better balance. And once we have better balance, then you start to generate more strength. Thirdly, flexibility is enhanced too." That triumvirate of symmetry, balance and flexibility will help your

performance in all three disciplines (and we've already covered how this will help in the swim) – but it's perhaps in the run where it really becomes apparent what a difference a focus on core strength can make.

Around 60% of 220 readers come to triathlon from a running background, so this is the part of the race in which many of you should be most comfortable. That said, it's also the sport in which bad habits are likely to be deeply ingrained and – as you'll most likely be tired by the time you get to the run – there's the potential for run form to fall apart further.

For Scott though, it's never too late to improve your run technique, by approaching it with a focus on posture and core strength. "The world's best runners are darned efficient and that comes from looking at what the core area is doing," says Scott. "The core is a set

"The world's best runners are darned efficient – and that comes from looking at what the core is doing"



Simple but effective: Dave Scott demos some of the exercises you'll find on the next page

of 29 muscles, extending from the base of your ribs all the way through your pelvis to your quads and, if you flip yourself over, includes your hamstrings, your glutes and your low to mid back. All those muscles help stabilise your spine.

"A lot of running form is really bad because people's core is very weak and so consequently they get hip drop, for example, or a foot that everts out to the side, or a winged arm that pulls back. A lot of the time it's because the core and the next big muscle, the hamstring or quads are having some trouble and it's affecting their knees. So I like working on strength training of course, but I also like working on running biomechanics so that both sides are more symmetrical."

This talk of core strength brings us nicely back full circle to our gym room in Total Fitness in Wilmslow, where our group of 220 readers are still discovering muscles they never even knew existed. When we organised these reader training days, many of the people who signed up admitted that the strength and conditioning side of their training was the most neglected – yet for Dave Scott these weekly sessions are among the most important things you can do. "People tell me they don't have time. Well, I'll tell you how to have time. In the evening while you're home and chatting, get down on the floor and do some stretching. Or if you have to be at the laptop, put it on the floor and stretch. For triathletes, it's paramount for their ageing process and it's paramount so they can race well."

TURN THE PAGE TO DISCOVER SOME OF SCOTT'S KEY EXERCISES... ➔





DAVE SCOTT'S STRENGTH & CONDITIONING PLAN

You can find plenty more information, training plans and instructional videos at www.davescottinc.com, but below are a quick series of movements that will get you started. These will teach you to engage your transverse abdominus and fire your glutes - two of the key things that Dave Scott recommends to help your performance in all three disciplines.

He advises working on strength and conditioning at least twice a week, for 20-24mins per session. All of the exercises described here can be done at home, with minimal equipment making them easy to fit around a busy schedule.

	EXERCISE/MOVEMENT	SETS	REPS
1	<p>ACTIVATE YOUR TA</p> <p>The transverse abdominus (or TA) is a slow-acting deep corset-like muscle that lies underneath your internal obliques. To find it, stand up tall and draw your belly in, like you've got tight pants on. Find your navel and move 4-5 cm off to each side, where it hollows out and that's where you'll find it. The TA helps stabilise your pelvis and fire your glutes, so you can generate more power out of your glutes as opposed to your lateral quads. Keep the gap between your ribs and hip bones open too, don't close it.</p>	2	90secs to 3mins
2	<p>SINGLE-LEG SOARING SEQUENCE</p> <p>a. Pull in your TA and stand on your left leg. Shift all your weight to that leg, tighten your glutes and then shift your right leg back. Then lift it off the ground and soar, like a bird and move your arms out to the side. Once you are holding your body weight out in front, you'll feel that TA activate. Repeat on the other leg.</p> <p>b. Repeat the above exercise, but holding 2-5kg dumbbells. Stand on one leg, contracting your glute and quad. Swing the other leg back and raise it off the ground, keeping your ankle dorsi-flexed. Hips are square. With thumbs pointing forward, initiate the row by squeezing your shoulder blades tight and rowing up as high as possible. Lower the weight and repeat.</p> <p>c. Repeat exercise (b) again, but this time hold the soaring position for three seconds, then swing the soaring leg forward simulating a bent-knee running position while standing tall. Add arm movement simulating an exaggerated running movement. Repeat on the other leg, remembering to keep the TA, stance leg, quad and glute very tight.</p>	3 2 2	12 - pause on even reps for 3secs 12 - pause on even reps for 3secs 12 - pause on even reps for 3secs
3	<p>BENT-OVER ROW WITH DUMBBELLS</p> <p>Stand up tall and get two dumbbells (or bags of beans). Lightly retract your shoulder blades, keep your elbows in nice and tight and bend over about 45°, keeping your TA nice and tight, and do a rowing motion with both arms. This is a really good exercise not only for your TA but also for your back, as it works your mid to low traps and those are generally weak. Don't tuck your shoulders up to your ears - you want to keep those soft and work your mid to upper back.</p>	3	12 - pause on even reps for 3secs
4	<p>GLUTE EXERCISE SEQUENCE</p> <p>a. Start on all fours, with your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. First exercise is a lateral dog lift - so externally rotate one knee out to the highest possible contraction, keeping hips level. Bring it back down and repeat.</p> <p>b. From the same start position, next perform a lateral straight leg swing. Again engaging the glutes, swing your straight leg out to the side at 30°, keeping your pelvis tucked underneath. Bring it alongside you to the side, tap the floor with your instep then bring the leg back and repeat. Follow this with a series of lateral up and down movements, where you bring the straight leg to 30° again, before bringing it further up behind you to 60°.</p> <p>c. Next up are mule kicks. From your same start position, pelvis level, draw one knee up under your chest and then kick the leg straight back, tightening the glute throughout. Next flex the knee and kick it up behind you, before taking it back to neutral.</p> <p>d. Finally, are glute circles. In this exercise we extend the leg back behind and rotate it, making circles that focus on the up and outward motion. Squeeze the glute throughout and repeat in the opposite direction.</p>	2 2 2 2	8-12, holding for 2-3secs every third rep 8-12 8-12, holding for 2-3secs every third rep 8-12
4	<p>PLANK AND PUSH-UP SEQUENCE</p> <p>a. Start in a plank position, with your legs straight and with your weight supported on toes and forearms, with 90° flexion at shoulder and elbow. Support your body alignment by contracting your TA, glutes and quads. Allow your chest to drop downwards, releasing the tension between your scapulas. Then contract all the muscles noted above and come back to a rigid plank position.</p> <p>b. In a push-up position (hands and toes), support your body alignment by contracting your TA, glutes and quads. Maintain a straight arm position, contract your rectus abdominus and come up to a high hip V position ('downward dog'). Lower yourself back down to push-up position and repeat.</p> <p>c. Start in the same push-up position, TA, glutes and quads contracted. Drop your left forearm to the ground, then your right forearm (so you're now in plank). Push up with your left arm back to push-up position, then with your right.</p>	2 2 2	10 - pause on plank position for 3secs 12 12

WITH THANKS TO HUIJIB, ROYLES AND TOTAL FITNESS WILMSLOW