

Flt Lt Andy Reardon, a Navigator on a ground tour at RAF Cranwell, has set himself an ultimate sporting objective: to obtain a top five place within his 30-34 age group at the Ironman 70.3 World Championships due to be held at Clearwater, Florida in November 2009.

The Ironman 70.3 is a triathlon comprised of a gruelling 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike ride and a 13.1 mile run. In order to race at the event, Andy must first qualify; California on April 4th is the first competition and he now takes on the story of his training.

In September 2008 I hung up the trainers, washed the wetsuit and cleaned the bike for the last time that season. It was a time that conjures up the fond memory of lie-ins, chocolate cake and the odd football match. However the relaxation was shattered just three weeks later when the trainers were back pounding the road, the wetsuit drying in the shower stall and the bike hooked up to the indoor trainer. My preparation for the World Championships had begun!

18 hours of training a week. Doing the maths back then in October, three hours of training a day, six days out of seven seemed a massive task. Now it is nearly routine... nearly. The preparation for a top five place has been immense, with 8x800m track reps, brick sessions (training sessions that cover 2 of the 3 triathlon disciplines) and 18 hours of training a week.

My training programmes attempt to take in all aspects of my life including diet, sleep and work. Mostly, they factor in every possible eventuality. No one wants to be cycling for 4.5 hours on Christmas day, for instance, so I rescheduled my training and ran off my festive turkey dinner with a swift 45 minutes round the block. However, even the best plans could not have ever accounted for encountering rutting deer during a recent 5km time trial. The possibility of getting chased by angry animals really does have an added inspirational effect to produce your personal best!

Notwithstanding the continuous chafing, the deer and my Christmas day running I'm now at a stage of building towards the race. These training weeks have been very intensive. It's not been easy, but through it all it's also been important to me to be involved in the lives of my loved ones and so I've learnt to incorporate my training plans into my everyday life. Now, the two work

A man wearing a white cycling helmet with 'MEI' on it, a red and grey cycling jersey with 'ROYAL AIR FORCE triathlon' and 'SPORTS LOTTERY' logos, and black cycling shorts, is riding a black road bike. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Part 1



in harmony rather than competing separately for my time. This is a good thing as I am now focusing totally on the end game and had to escalate my training to 21 hrs a week - 3hrs of strength & core, just over 3hrs of swimming, 11hrs of biking and nearly 5hrs of running. Hopefully it will be enough.

The Event strategy is to fly out to the sunny west coast of the USA a couple of weeks before the race to allow myself time to acclimatise to the temperature, humidity and to practise the course. Although I'm lucky to have software that allows me to train on my indoor trainer at the same gradients as the California Ironman 70.3 bike course, I still have two other disciplines to prepare for and jetlag to contend with. I am glad with my decision to head out early and give myself the best possible chance. I may even get time to work on a sun tan! However, even with all this preparation and training sometimes it's just down to luck on the day. I admit that the harder I've worked in training, the luckier I seem to get, but just in case please keep your fingers crossed for me on 4 April!

Flt Lt Andrew Reardon will update on his progress in the next edition of RAF Active. You can read more information about his week-to-week training on www.andyreardon.com.

Edited by Flt Lt Dave Hanson and Sgt 'Frank' Wittle.

