

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

TRI CLINIC

THIS MONTH: TT vs road » Bike cleaning » Quad pain » Fat vs carbs » Tri clubs

MEET OUR EXPERTS HERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

BIKE CHOICE



MARK KLEANTHOUS is an athlete and coach who has completed more than 460 triathlons, including 38 Ironman events, plus many other races including the Marathon des Sables.

BIKE CARE



Freelance writer **NIK COOK** is an experienced competitive multisporter who has run the Marathon des Sables, won the 2010 6633 Arctic Ultra and competed for Team GB in duathlon.

INJURY



Involved in triathlon for 25 years, qualified remedial massage and anatomy specialist **KEVIN JAMES** works as a sports therapist with both age-groupers and elites, including the GB Triathlon Team.

NUTRITION



RENEE MCGREGOR is a registered dietician and sports nutritionist, and author of the bestselling book *Training Food*. She works with elite competitors and athletes across various sports.

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS...

If you have a triathlon query, send us your question and we'll try to answer it in the next available issue of **220 Triathlon**. Include as much relevant info as you can.

Email to: trclinic@220triathlon.com

Or send to: **220 Triathlon**, Immediate Media, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN



The aero advantages of a tri bike are negligible when climbing but, if you can, do a test ride to check its suitability

WHICH BIKE IS BEST?

Q I'm targeting my first Ironman this coming July on a fairly hilly course. Should I stick to a road bike or change to a tri bike? I'll only be able to purchase a tri bike six months before the event.

PAUL GALLAGHER, EMAIL

A Firstly, you need to consider if a triathlon bike is suitable for you on the specific Ironman course you're racing.

The majority of pro triathletes find that time-trial bikes are difficult

to handle due to the geometry, but they nearly always choose one because the positives far outweigh the negatives, by limiting their weaknesses to allow them to go faster over 180km compared to a road bike. There are advantages and disadvantages to using a tri bike, which vary depending on what type of rider you are.

When cycling uphill you'll benefit from a lighter road bike, as the geometry allows you a more comfortable and efficient ride. The aerodynamic advantages of a tri

bike are negligible when climbing and you may be forced to utilise the quadriceps more, which can hinder your run performance. A time-trial bike is more aerodynamic but you will be in a more uncomfortable position, which puts considerable pressure on your neck, shoulders, arms and groin, and although you may get used to this position it can still result in discomfort.

If you struggle on the hills and don't have solid descending skills then I'd almost always recommend a road bike. The only exception is if you're a particularly strong cyclist on the flats with otherwise fairly good bike handling skills.

A tri bike will generally be 1-2.5kg heavier than a road bike, so if your Ironman bike route is hilly then use your roadie, because the extra weight of a tri bike may take a lot more out of you for the marathon. Another thing to consider is gastro-intestinal issues: ask any of the best iron-distance triathletes and coaches what's the hardest and most challenging bike workout that can lead to digestive problems, they will almost always tell you it's a long ride in the TT position.

For gradients of less than 4%, the aerodynamic benefits can outweigh the disadvantages of the extra weight on a tri bike. See if you can go for a test ride on a tri bike before buying, and decide if it's right for you. If you're still undecided then I recommend you check out your Ironman course on both bikes. If this isn't possible then ride over similar terrain, and observe how much you gain or lose on each bike. If you're serious about the race and want to improve thereafter rather than just complete it, I'd recommend buying a tri bike.

Most triathletes benefit from using a tri bike, providing they're properly fitted, complete key, long bike sessions on it and practise running off it straight after riding. Do your research and consider the area where you train, and make sure you choose the correct frame size and get a good bike fit. **MK**