



THE EXACT PROGRAM I USED TO REMAIN JACKED WHILE TRAINING FOR AN IRONMAN 70.3

Low-volume, high-intensity 3-day resistance split (Upper / Lower / Full) built around the big three lifts, layered with the 8 weekly endurance sessions an Ironman 70.3 build demands. Every lift capped at 2 working sets so recovery for swim, bike and run never gets compromised.

The Logic: You cannot out-volume an Ironman 70.3 block in the gym. This split works because it's brutally efficient — one hard main lift plus a couple of accessories per session, 2 sets max, taken close to failure. It's just enough mechanical tension to hold onto muscle and strength through a 10–12 hour training week, without digging a recovery hole that wrecks your swim, bike, or run quality.

WEEKLY OVERVIEW — 11 SESSIONS

Day	Session A	Session B
Mon	Lift — UPPER (Bench focus)	Swim — Long Steady Swim
Tue	Bike — Turbo Power Session	Run — Hard Intervals
Wed	Lift — LOWER (Squat focus)	Swim — Technique / Drills
Thu	Bike — Easy Ride	Swim — Long Steady Swim #2
Fri	Lift — FULL BODY (Deadlift focus)	Rest / mobility
Sat	Bike — Long Ride (weekend session)	—
Sun	Run — Long Run, steady (weekend session)	—

3 lifts | 3 swims | 3 rides | 2 runs. Lifts sit early in the day where possible, endurance work follows so strength is never done pre-fatigued from a long ride or run.

RESISTANCE TRAINING — 3 DAYS / WEEK

Rule for every session: **2 working sets maximum per exercise**, taken to 0–2 reps in reserve. One heavy top set, one back-off set at the same or slightly reduced load. Full 2–3 min rest on the big three lifts so bar speed and form stay sharp. Warm-up sets don't count toward the 2-set cap.

MONDAY

Upper Body — Bench Press Focus

~40 minutes | done before the day's long swim

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Intensity	Rest
Barbell Bench Press	2	4-6	Heavy (RPE 8-9)	MAIN
Weighted Pull-Up	2	5-8	Heavy	ACC
Cable Fly	2	10-12	Moderate	ACC
Lateral Raise	3	12-15	Moderate	ACC
Chest-Supported Row	2	8-10	Moderate	ACC
Bicep Curl + Triceps Pushdown (superset)	2	10-12 each	Moderate	ACC

WEDNESDAY

Lower Body — Squat Focus

~40 minutes | kept light on posterior-chain volume ahead of Thu/Sat cycling

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Intensity	Rest
Back Squat	2	4-6	Heavy (RPE 8-9)	MAIN
Romanian Deadlift	2	6-8	Moderate-Heavy	ACC
Single-Leg Extension (isometric)	2	4s hold x 6-8	Moderate	ACC
Single-Leg Curl (isometric)	2	4s hold x 6-8	Moderate	ACC
Standing Calf Raise	2	10-12	Moderate	ACC
Tibialis Raise	2	12-15	Light	ACC

FRIDAY

Full Body — Deadlift Focus

~40 minutes | last hard strength stimulus before the weekend's long ride and long run

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Intensity	Rest
Conventional Deadlift	2	3-5	Heavy (RPE 8-9)	MAIN
Lat Pulldown	2	8-10	Moderate	ACC
Barbell Bench Press	2	6-8	Moderate-Heavy	ACC
Bulgarian Split Squat	2	8-10/leg	Moderate	ACC
Lateral Raise	2	12-15	Moderate	ACC
Bayesian Curl	2	10-12	Moderate	ACC
Skullcrusher	2	10-12	Moderate	ACC

The big three rotate as the main lift of the day — Bench Monday, Squat Wednesday, Deadlift Friday — so each gets a genuine heavy top set every single week without the sessions ever running long.

SWIM — 3 SESSIONS / WEEK

MONDAY

Long Steady Swim

Segment	Detail
Warm-up	400m easy, mixing strokes / drills into the first 100m
Main set	1 continuous long swim, Zone 2 effort, holding steady stroke rate, up to 2400m total (e.g. 2000-2400m straight, or broken into 2-3 large chunks with 30s rest)
Cool-down	200m easy
Focus	Aerobic durability and pacing discipline for the 1.9km race swim

WEDNESDAY

Technique / Drills Swim

Segment	Detail
Warm-up	300m easy
Main set	Drill-focused: catch-up, single-arm, fist swimming, high-elbow catch drills, 50-100m reps with generous rest, plus technique-focused build sets (e.g. 8x50m drill/swim by 25)
Cool-down	200m easy
Focus	Stroke efficiency and technical faults — the lowest-fatigue session of the week

THURSDAY

Long Steady Swim #2

Segment	Detail
Warm-up	400m easy
Main set	Second long aerobic swim of the week, similar structure to Monday but often with a small negative-split or pace-holding element, capped at 2400m (e.g. 3 x 800m Zone 2, descending effort)
Cool-down	200m easy
Focus	Repeat aerobic exposure — volume is what builds open-water endurance

BIKE — 3 SESSIONS / WEEK

TUESDAY

Turbo Power Session

Segment	Detail
Warm-up	10-15 min easy pedaling, gradually building effort
Main set	5-6 rounds of 4 minutes hard — hard enough that you can only manage a few words — followed by 3 minutes easy pedaling to recover. Repeat until you've completed all rounds
Cool-down	10 min easy spin
Focus	Race-relevant power and top-end fitness in a short, controlled dose

THURSDAY

Easy Ride

Segment	Detail
Duration	45-75 min
Effort	Zone 1-2, conversational pace throughout
Focus	Active recovery from Tuesday's turbo session, keeps aerobic volume ticking over without adding fatigue into Friday's lift or the weekend long sessions

SATURDAY

Long Ride (Weekend Session)

Segment	Detail
Duration	2.5-4+ hours, building over the training block toward race-day 90km demands
Effort	Zone 2 aerobic base, with occasional race-pace efforts worked in during peak weeks
Nutrition	Practiced race-day fueling — carbs per hour, bottle handling, on-bike nutrition rehearsal
Focus	The single most important session for 70.3 bike-leg durability

RUN — 2 SESSIONS / WEEK

TUESDAY

Hard Interval Session

Segment	Detail
Warm-up	10-15 min easy jog, plus a few short pickups to open the legs up
Main set	5-6 rounds of 1000m run at a hard, controlled pace — a pace you could just about hold for a 5-10 minute race — with 2-3 minutes of easy jogging or walking to recover between each rep
Cool-down	10 min easy jog
Focus	Running speed and threshold, done same day as the bike turbo to concentrate the week's hardest sessions and protect recovery elsewhere

SUNDAY

Long Run, Steady (Weekend Session)

Segment	Detail
Duration	70-110+ min, building toward race-day 21.1km demands
Effort	Zone 2-3, steady and comfortably hard — run off the previous day's long ride to bank some brick-style fatigue resistance
Nutrition	Practice race-day fueling on longer efforts
Focus	Aerobic durability and run-off-the-bike conditioning, closing out the training week

Why it worked: capping every lift at 2 sets kept total weekly strength volume low enough that it never competed with the 8 endurance sessions for recovery, while still hitting bench, squat and deadlift heavy every single week. That combination held onto muscle and strength through the whole Ironman 70.3 block without ever compromising swim, bike or run quality.