

Three Spirit

A thirst for adrenaline and the demand for excellence drive double-European-champion Olly Freeman through triathlon's triple challenges. An elite Mazda Ambassador, Olly's also driven by the new Mazda CX-7



Driving performance

"My sport gives me the mentality of constantly striving for excellence and that transfers to everything in my life," says Freeman. "It's specially true when choosing a car, because with all the travelling to and from training and race locations, driving is like a fourth discipline. With an exciting drive and plenty of room in the back for my triathlon kit, the Mazda CX-7 has everything I need from a car."

A SPORTS CAR INSIDE

The all-new Mazda CX-7 is where sportscar meets SUV; its styling, handling and performance bred from Mazda's sports car pedigree. The 2.3 DISI turbo engine delivers 260ps through an intelligent 4 wheel drive system and it'll take you from 0-62 in an exhilarating eight seconds. Whilst the heated leather seats, climate control air conditioning, BOSE® premium sound system and cruise control will help smooth out your journey. There's one high spec model at £23,960 on the road. For more: menshealth.co.uk/triathlon.

If you're ready for a raw challenge and a triple dose of pure exhilaration, three is the magic number. Triathlon's unique combination of disciplines – swim, bike and run – are a true test of body and spirit for the discerning thrill-seeker. And as the sport's rising star, Olly Freeman explains, it all starts in the water. "The swim is the first leg, so it's the one on your mind as you drive to the race," says Freeman. But, as Olly remarks, it can be a real baptism of fire.

"At world cup events – triathlon's equivalent of the Grand Prix – you have 80 guys in the water, it's crazy." So you get the intense buzz of competition as soon as you dip your toe in, but as if to encapsulate the essence of the sport from the off, you need to strike a balance between all out fury and clever thinking. "There's quite an adrenaline rush in the crowd, but you need to conserve your supplies for the rest of the race," says Freeman. "As with motor sport, getting a good start is critical. Get half a stroke ahead and hit the first turn out in front and you'll be swimming in clear water as I was at the European-Championships this year."

So a good start is the key. It all started for Olly at the age of eight when he won his first race on a battered old mountain bike. When will it start for you? Your first step can be the first of our exclusive training guides (see Body Engineering Part 1). Then check out next month's Men's Health for Part 2, when it's time to get on your bike.

Body Engineering Part 1 Strokes of Genius

Your 6-week swim training programme, courtesy of Olly's coach Glenn Cook

Weeks 1-4 You should aim for two sessions a week.

Session 1 Endurance. Your goal is increasing the time you can swim for continuously. Calculate your target time for the race distance (eg 45 minutes for olympic distance) then work towards swimming for that long without resting. Don't worry about how far you actually cover, just keep going for that time.

Session 2: Pace. Break your target distance into chunks – if you're aiming

for olympic distance, that could be 30x50m or 15x100m – then swim at your goal pace, resting between chunks (for say, 30 secs). If you're on pace, start cutting your rests.

Week 5 You should be comfortably continuously swimming for your goal time, so switch to two pace-improving interval sessions.

Week 6 One interval session, covering around 60% of your week 5 sessions. Swimming is low impact so you can train closer to the race than with running, but you should leave a clear two days before race day.

And to give you the edge, here are Olly's three top tips

- 1 "You need to create a balance between a swimmer's, a cyclist's and a runner's physique. Focus most of your training on endurance – repeated lengths, not time in the weights room – to build your base layer of fitness.
- 2 "Technique-wise, work on that all-important start. Fine-tune your diving technique to get yourself ahead of the pack when you hit the water.
- 3 "Make sure you do some of your training in open water. It's crucial to get used to choppy waters, and the extra buoyancy and restricted movement that come with wearing a wetsuit. For more tips go to menshealth.co.uk/triathlon

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda CX-7: Urban 20.5 (33.8), Extra Urban 34.9 (8.1), Combined 27.7 (10.2). CO2 emissions (g/km) 243. Model shown is Mazda CX-7 (280ps). OTR price £23,960 with optional metallic paint (£375). On the road price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, 1st registration tax, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Details correct at time of going to print.



Olly Freeman... great at triathlon, terrible at remembering where he parked his Mazda CX-7

It all started for Olly at the age of eight when he won his first race on a battered old mountain bike. When will it start for you?

