

Triathletes Find Time For Fitness

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There just aren't enough hours in the day. How many times has that excuse, or some variation thereof, been used to duck something good for you, like a new exercise plan or diet?

It's a familiar excuse, and one which all working people know too well. Few people have the luxury of time, and fewer still have the gumption to use what free time they have to do something which is (yuck) good for them.

Yet three local professionals — two police officers and a doctor — not only find the time, but make the time to train and compete in triathlons.

John Martin, 37, and Dorothy (Dot) Graham, 28, are both Montpelier police officers who have finished their second competitive season as triathletes. Dr. Michael Mason, 40, a general surgeon at Central Vermont Hospital, is winding down his sixth triathlon season with three victories along with a second-, fifth- and 11th-place finish in his age division under his

All three triathletes started competing as a way of gauging their efforts against their peers and for the fun of competition.

Martin started running to help shave off a few extra pounds, and his natural competitiveness lead him to start racing. His first triathlons were club length — a half-mile swim in the pool, 10-mile bike ride and a 5-mile run, designed so nearly anyone can finish. Martin not only finished his first triathlon but thought it was "the niftiest thing I had ever seen."

Graham was in good running shape before she started competing in triathlons. Martin suggested the two of them train and compete together. Ironically, Graham has now posted better finishes than Martin.

Mason was also a road runner before he started triathlons. Mason and his brother Tim plan their race schedules together and have competed in all the same races for their six year careers.

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All three athletes maintain full work schedules and train whenever they can. "I keep an ideal training schedule in my head," says Mason, "and I have a realistic schedule based on my workload. Then I have my actual workouts, which often fall short of both."

Mason is only half-joking when he says he doesn't train as much as he'd like. He's always on call as well as having office hours, but still tries to get in two hours of training per day, usually two of either swimming, cycling, or running.

Martin and Graham try to train between 18 and 25 hours per week, but because of their schedules can't always count on training on a daily basis. Martin takes one day off per week as a rest day while Graham never rests.

Graham says she has no problem finding the time to train. "You make the time," she says, "once you find you're hooked, you just plan your day around it. I may not eat dinner until 8 or 9 o'clock because I'm still training."



Despite busy professional lives, John Martin, Mike Mason and Dorothy Graham (from left to right) have all opted to train for and run in triathlons in their spare time.

Photo by Chris Gee