

Tekst 8

Swim, cycle, run? Try fridge, beer, couch

adapted from an article by Robert Shrimley

- 1 It was the photos in my Facebook news feed that forced me to accept the unpalatable truth. People I knew were suddenly there before me in Lycra-style swimming suits under a caption along the lines of “Aberystwyth Triathlon” or “Only seven miles to go!” It’s a confidence shaker; I’d always prided myself on being the type who would never knowingly be friends with the kind of person who might compete in a triathlon.
- 2 My idea of an acceptable triathlon is a gentle walk to the fridge, followed by a gruelling tussle with the lid of the beer can and then a dash back to the couch. I’m not one to boast, but I’m now sub 1 min 30 secs. The boasting however is a key part. The pictures on Facebook or the casual dropping into conversation of phrases such as “I’m still a bit knackered from the triathlon last week” are central – almost the fourth leg, if you will. It takes a certain type of narcissist to post pictures of themselves in Lycra.
- 3 The not-so-subtle point about triathletes is the overweening desire to show that they are simply better than everyone else. The mid-life crisis may be close at hand but by wearing tight Lycra they can shake it off. Of course, they know how 32 their activities make them look, which is why there’s so often a charitable cause attached to deflect criticism. Will you sponsor me? I’m competing for Egotists Against Ageing.
- 4 Some of the competitors are single but the ones who are surely beyond explanation are the already-marrieds. What’s the point of marriage if you still have to prove what a man or woman you are? I thought the whole point of tying the knot was that you could gently start to let yourself go. Clearly, triathlon is a leading indicator of a marriage about to hit the rocks.
- 5 I’m told the ultimate triathlon is called the Iron Man, involving a 3.8km swim, a 180km bike ride and a marathon at the end. This, my sporting friends, is the tragic message: even if you can manage a triathlon there is someone who can do better. And surely this is not even the ultimate. 34, there are no sharks in the water, the bike still has a saddle and there’s no one chasing the runners with a red-hot poker. Or perhaps there is a Super Iron Man event that I haven’t noticed? If not, then surely there’s a gap in the market.

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- “the unpalatable truth” (paragraph 1)
- 1p 30 Why does the writer talk about “the unpalatable truth”?
- A He dislikes having friends who take part in extreme sports.
 - B He fears his friends want him to join a trendy sports club.
 - C He hates not being able to match his friends’ athletic progress.
 - D He thinks his friends look unattractive in their sport outfits.
- 1p 31 Which of the following becomes clear from paragraph 2?
- A Many athletes need to exhaust themselves in order to feel good.
 - B Serious athletes follow a balanced diet to improve their performance.
 - C Showing off one’s achievements seems to be an essential part of participating in triathlons.
 - D The influence of social media on the outcome of competitions should not be underestimated.
- 1p 32 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 3?
- A appalling
 - B attractive
 - C authoritative
 - D selfish
- 1p 33 What is the point made by the writer in paragraph 4?
- A It is well-known that a triathlon is a suitable event at which to find a new partner.
 - B Married people should not have to impress their partners by staying in shape.
 - C Taking part in extreme sports means having less time to spend with your family.
- 1p 34 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 5?
- A After all
 - B Besides
 - C However
 - D Similarly
- 1p 35 Welke van de volgende stijlmiddelen wordt door de schrijver **niet** gebruikt in dit artikel?
- A overdrijving
 - B relativering
 - C spot