



The Athena Wellness Podcast
Episode 068 – Advice for First Time Triathletes with Kristin Duffy
September 1, 2021

00:05

Welcome to the Athena Wellness podcast, the show that invites you to take a seat around the community fire and listen to stories that inspire. I'm your host, Kathy Robinson, author, coach and founder of Athena Wellness, a company that's dedicated to supporting you on your journey to live more wholeheartedly.

Kathy

Hello and welcome to Episode 68. Thanks so much for joining me for the shortened Wellness Wednesday episode, a little midweek boost to help keep your Warrior Vibe high.

Today I'm joined, once again, by Kristin Duffy, actor, podcaster and avid triathlete. In our previous conversation in Episode 67, we talked about the importance of continuously reinventing ourselves through our work. And today we explore reinvention through sport.

We talk about:

- The decision to train for an event like a triathlon;
- What it's like to complete the first one;
- How endurance sport can become a passion; and
- Advice for the first time triathlete.



Even if you have no plans to train for an endurance event, you will enjoy Kristin's uplifting storytelling. You may also find yourself inspired to try something you've always dreamed of, but needed a little nudge to make that dream a reality. I hope this conversation gives you that boost.

01:43 Kathy

Once again, I'm joined by actor and founder of Slackline Productions, Kristin Duffy. Welcome back, Kristin.

Kristin

Thank you. So nice to be back.

Kathy

So you mentioned your love of triathlons the last time that we got together. And I know you're an avid triathlete, you've completed multiple iron distance triathlons. What got you interested and what was it like to begin down that path?

02:09 Kristin

So last time we talked, I mentioned about working crazy hours. And I did a corporate challenge when I was working in my first job in New York. And we just had to run 5k. But at that point, I was not running 5k. And I think I ran/walked my way through it. And maybe it was the second one that I did that I actually was determined to keep jogging the whole time.

But I remembered I came home and I said I'm going to do a triathlon, totally tongue in cheek. And a card came in the mail the next week that was for the Leukemia and



Lymphoma Society, which I think is still pretty well known in the States as far as team and training and things.

But a card came from Team and Training and it said "Do you want to do a triathlon?" And I just thought, "Not really." But I said I was going to, so okay.

And I went to this meeting and was really determined, you know, this could be my reason to leave work sometimes. And this woman was there that I knew from the gym. I mean, I'm not saying I never did any exercise. I did go to the gym, you know, maybe a couple times a week. But she taught step aerobics and that shows how long ago that was, I don't know if anybody does step aerobics anymore. (laughter)

But she was there and I thought, "This is going to be excellent. We can train for this triathlon together." And you know, she's just a great instructor, but this time we'll be working out together and you know, in a triathlon way.

She got up to speak because she had five brain tumors. And I thought, "If this woman can kick my butt week after week in step aerobics while she has, she had leukemia as a kid, and you know, had all these brain tumors, if she can do that, I can do a frickin triathlon." And so I signed up.

My partner at the time came along and was hesitating because he had to write a check that said, you know I'm going to get involved with this organization and everything. And I said, "Absolutely not. I'm writing that check tonight. You can do whatever you want. I'm doing this triathlon." And I did.



We had, we were so lucky, with two of the most amazing coaches, and I met an amazing, amazing, I'm gonna use the word amazing one more time, amazing group of friends that we all did the triathlon. It wasn't even a sprint, it was an Olympic distance triathlon, which you know, is kind of not what everybody chooses for their first one. But I did it with so much confidence after the amazing coaching I had, after the friend group I'd made.

And it just kind of sprung from there because once I did it, we all kind of got a little bit addicted to it. And eventually went on to this organization, Tri Life, that my two coaches started. And it was for people who wanted to do Ironman. And I knew that if I started training with them, I'd do an Ironman because they were just those kind of coaches.

05:09 Kathy

So I agree that these endurance sports can become very addicting. So it was the camaraderie, it was the feeling. I mean, what was it like to cross that finish line that first time? And how did that lead to the next one?

05:26 Kristin

So it was not anything I ever thought I'd be doing. So yeah, crossing the finish line the first time was, yeah, it was just what am I doing here? What am I doing here? (laughs) And I mean, the silliest thing is, I don't even remember, this continued for a long time, because of the fact that I was training with so many friends, it didn't even feel like a huge accomplishment. And you know, a lot of people do do triathlon, but then you talk to people that aren't in that world and they're going, "Oh, my gosh, how did you do that?"



But you have to be reminded by people who aren't participating in it, because it just seems like what you do once you start doing it. And I was very adamant that I was going to stick to shorter distances and I liked doing the first one, so I wanted to get a little bit faster.

What ultimately ended up happening is, I think, after I did my second Olympic distance one was when this Tri Life thing sort of came about. Most everybody from my first group had gone on to do a half iron distance race, and they were all ready for the next challenge. Whereas I was like, "Hold on, hold on. I need some time to get used to this one. I'm never gonna do an Ironman. Come on. This is ridiculous."

I went away for work. And my best friend at the time, Michelle, who was in one of the groups said, "I will not sign up. There is no way I'm doing this." Everybody else signed up. Well, she signed up, too. And I came home and was like, "Great." (laughs)

So it wasn't even peer pressure. But it was pure competitiveness, that after stealth training by myself for about five months or something, the opportunity to sign up came up, which was rare because Ironman races always sell out. But a friend of mine could pull a few strings. He basically had two slots, so I got one of his slots. And so between the check clearing in April and July, I did my real training for my first Ironman. Now that was a real, that was again, it was like all my friends did it. So it didn't seem like a big deal. But yet, I never thought I was going to do an Ironman triathlon.

07:34 Kathy

Mm hmm. What advice would you have for someone who, especially at mid age, says, "You know what, that sounds intriguing. I want to give it a shot."



07:44 Kristin

I think, I mean, I'm not just saying this because I do some coaching now. But I do think coaching is a good idea. I think if you can afford to have somebody who really helps you directly with a plan, which is not what I specifically do, I tend to coach groups, but you know, if you have something that you have a plan that somebody can help you follow, because injury is something that can happen.

I do think triathlon is great for it because if running starts bothering you, you can you can train more on your bike, you can get in the pool. And so people that tend to be runners and find themselves getting injured all the time, a lot of times go into triathlon because it's less likely that you'll have that constant impact-type injury.

But yeah, I would say, start slowly. If it's intriguing, there are sprint distances that are very short, that if you're physically fit at all, you can do them. As long as you know how to swim. That's the one thing that people go, "Oh, I can't swim." Okay, get some swim lessons.

I honestly believe if you are physically fit, you can do it. And I mean physically fit, like I'm not talking crazy, I'm talking basic levels of fitness, can go out and train a bit, do a sprint triathlon, feel that sense of accomplishment. And then, the choice then is, you know can do it, do you do it faster or do you do it longer?

09:06 Kathy

Mm hmm. Excellent advice. I thank you again, Kristin. And thanks so much for your time, much appreciated.

Kristin



Thank you. Take care.

09:17

Thank you so much for joining me today. I know there are many ways you can spend your time. Thank you for choosing to spend it with me. Until our paths cross again, be kind to yourself and show your Warrior Spirit some love.

If you know anyone who could benefit from today's episode, please pass it on. And many thanks for supporting the show by subscribing and leaving a review. It means a lot and it helps others find their way to our circle.

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Until next time, be well!