HALEY CHURA'S

Hardest Workout

ONE OF TRIATHLON'S SPEEDIEST SWIMMERS USES THIS WORKOUT TO KICK OFF A BIG TRAINING BLOCK.

CHURA'S DESCENDING LADDER WORKOUT

Although most of her swim workouts are in the 4,000–5,000-meter range, long-course pro Haley Chura likes throwing in a longer workout once in a while "to make sure a 2.4-mile Ironman swim feels short."

Below, Chura shares a descending ladder workout designed by Maria Thrash of Dynamo Masters. "I think sets like these are a great way to kick off a big training block," she says. "Most of my training these days is freestyle, but I like to throw in some stroke work every now and then so I don't forget my backstroke and 400 IM roots."

Warm-up

MAIN SET

3X600 ON 8:00, DESCEND 1–3
12X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY
3X500 ON 6:40, DESCEND 1–3
10X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY
3X400 ON 5:20, DESCEND 1–3
8X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY
3X300 ON 4:00, DESCEND 1–3
6X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY
3X200 ON 2:40, DESCEND 1–3
4X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY
3X100 ON 1:20, DESCEND 1–3
2X50 ON :50, BACKSTROKE, STEADY

Main set total = 8,400 meters

Cool-down

CREDENTIALS:

Although Chura's first race as a professional wasn't until the 2012 Ironman Arizona, her swim splits have been at the pro level for a while—for three consecutive years, from 2010–2012, she posted the fastest amateur swim time (less than 55 minutes) at the Ironman World Championship. Even after she turned pro, she still managed race-fastest swim times at Ironman Arizona (50:16), Ironman 70.3 Texas (24:33), Ironman 70.3 New Orleans (23:50) and Ironman Brazil (46:21). Chura got into triathlon after swimming the 200 backstroke and 400 individual medley at the University of Georgia. She also dabbled in middle-distance freestyle, which she believes may have foreshadowed her success in long-course triathlon swimming. In April, she quit her job as an accountant in Atlanta to train full-time, the same month she took her first pro win in New Orleans.