



# AARP to train islanders over 50 for triathlon

Does the acronym AARP bring to mind images of old folks in armchairs? If so, it is time to change your perspective. Think of being outdoors, swimming, biking, running, and making friends. AARP is in the triathlon business.

Formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons, this organization now goes only by its AARP acronym. Since more than half the 34 million members are still working, the retired part doesn't fit the image anymore. Promoting mental, physical and lifestyle goals of people 50 and older has become a major part of the AARP mission.

This year, AARP is sponsoring a series of triathlons called the AARP Tri-Umph! Classic, sure to promote health and physical well-being. Four AARP triathlons have already taken place, in Chicago, Dallas, Pinehurst (North Carolina) and Los Angeles. Two more will be held, in Tampa Bay, Fla, Sunday, and in Honolulu on Dec. 2.

AARP is thorough. In addition to organizing the series, the group provides a training program in each city to help people prepare for their first triathlon.

Brian Clarke, longtime trainer and program director, is in charge of the training program in Honolulu.

Clarke sees the event as a great opportunity for middle-aged baby boomers to develop a lifestyle that supports successful aging. His trainees are involved in the event for a variety of personal reasons. Most just want to complete the triathlon. They don't expect to set records, but they do have expectations for their health and fitness.

Some want to lose weight. Others are more concerned with having fun. They all enjoy the increased sense of energy and reduced risk of chronic disease that come with fitness, and hope to use the triathlon to help themselves age as gracefully as possible.

Based on years of training people of all ages, Clarke believes that moderate exercise training can improve mental well-being.

He even guarantees that most people will feel better after one of his workouts. Plenty of published research bears out his observations.

Studies report that exercise is as effective as antidepressant

drugs for treating depression in many people.

Such theories aside, Clarke finds that being in a training program with friendly, supportive people is a big part of the transformation that takes place during every workout.

The training program also provides the structure and discipline that most of us need to stay committed. Positive mental and physical changes follow with time.

The Honolulu Tri-Umph will take place at Schofield Barracks and consist of a 400-meter swim in Richardson Pool, a 12-mile bike ride on a calm, scenic course and a 3-mile run (or walk) through a quiet, shady neighborhood.

To register, call (866) 812-2200. Or find online at [www.aarp.org/triumph](http://www.aarp.org/triumph).

Being over 50 doesn't mean you can only enjoy sports as a spectator. There are many ways to get active. The triathlon is certainly one great way. If it's too late for you to be a participant this year, come out and watch. Then start getting ready for next December's 2nd Annual Honolulu Tri-Umph! Classic.

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