

**TURNING INCARCERATION INTO INSPIRATION... A MUSSELSTORY  
WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HENDERSON FOR THE MUSSELMAN TRIATHLON, 2012**

Many triathletes use triathlon to stay healthy, William Perrine, 48, of Stewart Manor, NY uses multisport racing to do much more.

"In the end of 2007 I was a drug addicted, alcoholic, cigarette chain-smoking shell of my former self," Perrine recalls. "I had just finished a jail sentence and was up to my old tricks again - not because I wanted to be, but because it had become what I knew. What I knew was, basically, hopelessness."

"In June of 2008 I knew it would be prison - or worse - and I finally got help. After getting cleaned up I met a girl - Lynn, who I am still with today..."

"Lynn started triathlon in 2003 here on Long Island, and had done Ironman Lake Placid by 2006. She had stopped drinking at 26 and quit smoking in 2002. I watched her run the NYC marathon in 2009, right after we started dating, and I was inspired! The next month, on Christmas Eve, I quit smoking, too.

"So at some point Lynn said, "Now you can sign up for a road race." To which I replied that I couldn't run a mile!"

Lynn was forceful - she told Perrine he had until that May to train, and that he would need to be able to run for an hour by then.

"I started training. I did run/walks until I could run an hour," Perrine recalls. "I did my first 10k that May on Long Island." "Now," Lynn told him, "we can sign you up for a sprint triathlon. You have until August to get ready." "I did that pool triathlon and thought I would die," Perrine admits. "But I was hooked!"

"I have not YET done a full distance Ironman," says Perrine. "But I have done handfuls of sprints, a half dozen Olympic-distance races, and now a half-Iron."

This year Perrine's race calendar is filled. In addition to the Musselman Triathlon he will compete in an Olympic- distance triathlon in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and several sprint triathlons

in the greater New York City area. He'll cap the season with the New York City Marathon in November.

"Along with getting sober, triathlon and road racing have absolutely turned my life around," says Perrine. "I enjoy life now. I travel to beautiful places to swim, bike and run, and I feel a spiritual connection to our world that I had otherwise lost. The outpouring of support in the communities that host these special events, the comraderie of the racers, and the unbelievable feeling that you are *really living* - not just existing - keeps me coming back even through injury or set backs."

"It is a journey full of learning," Perrine admits. "I used to feel I would die on the street somewhere down the line. Now I feel I will be fit right up until I am old enough to do triathlons."

The sport, Perrine says, has transformed his life.

"I can work alongside the young bucks again," Perrine, an electrician by trade, says. "I am part of the world and be kind to others again. And that girl who started this, Lynn, is my training partner, racing partner, life partner, and best friend. We shall continue to live, love - and swim, bike and run! And, who knows - maybe even get married!"

Perrine admits he hesitates to share his addicted-to-tri-addict story with others. "I realize if I tell the truth, people may be turned off. I share my story because maybe, instead, someone can be inspired."