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# Lovel embraces CNN Triathlon Challenge

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## LOVEL EMBRACES CNN TRIATHLON CHALLENGE

WHEN NINA BARNETT LOVEL '74 decided to apply for the CNN 2011 Fit Nation Triathlon Challenge, she wrote the program's producers and said, "I'm just a plain ol' baby-boomer, circa 1952, 'raised-right,' nurtured in the genteel South, loved and educated by fabulous parents who taught me to cross my legs at the ankles, chew with my mouth closed, and keep my elbows off the table."

She followed that descriptive, light-hearted note with an audition video, in which she informed the world that "Fifty-eight is the new twenty-eight, so we better get busy."

No doubt her sense of humor helped draw the attention of the folks at CNN, who called her December 24 to say she was one of six people nationwide to be selected for the challenge.

Today she's in the midst of a six-month training regimen that will culminate August 7 at the New York City Triathlon, where she and her fellow trainees will swim 1,500 meters in the Hudson River, bike about 25 miles along Manhattan's West Side Highway, and finish with a 10K run through Central Park. All recorded, of course, for posterity.

And she's rarin' to go. "The goal is to set examples for viewers around the world that normal, everyday people are capable of adopting a healthy lifestyle, getting in shape and accomplishing goals," she says. "I want to prove that my generation can get off the couch, move around and feel better."

Lovel, who lives in Rome, Ga., coordinates research and information management at Georgia Northwestern Technical College. She's also the senior member of the "Six-Pack," as she and her fellow triathletes have been dubbed.

They will compete in New York alongside Sanjay Gupta, chief medical correspondent for CNN and host of "Medical News." Lovel is also working with Frances Largeman-Roth, a dietitian and senior nutrition editor for *Health Magazine*, and Laura Cozik, athletic director of the Fit Nation Triathlon Challenge.

CNN provides each participant with a six-month gym membership, bicycle, uniforms, wet suits, and expenses during the New York event. While they train, they're taping and blogging about their efforts, and making



occasional appearances on the network to discuss their progress. They've also come together twice for five-day boot camps.

Lovel, who majored in biology at Furman, is not entering the challenge off a sedentary lifestyle. She is a longtime recreational swimmer and an avid kayaker, and last summer she ran her first 5K race. She has since run four more.

But she believes the Triathlon Challenge will propel her to a new level of fitness. "I consider myself just plain lucky to be chosen," she says. "I hope to set an example for others, gain self accomplishment, and be healthier than ever."

"My children are very proud already. I have a two-year-old granddaughter, and I hope when she gets older, she will be proud of me too."

Visit [www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/fit.nation](http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/fit.nation) to keep up with Lovel's progress.

*Adapted from an article provided by Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Photos by John Nowak/CNN.*

