



GUIDE FOR NOVICES

This is a very general guide for the Novice Triathlete and may help to smooth the path of that first race and encourage the start of a learning process that leads on bigger and better things. It is recognised that this may be a “one off” experiment for the competitor, so we understand the need to improvise during that first experience and only invest later once the “bug” catches hold.

Before the race: Make sure you eat well the night before the race and have a good breakfast. You will use as much energy as you can consume.

TERMINOLOGY

Transition

This is the section passed through between Swim and Bike and Bike and Run. Basically you “rack” your bike here, together with any other essential items of kit or sustenance (drink and or food). It’s a good idea to acquire a small covered box into which your “bits” can be placed and accessed during and immediately after the race.

Equipment

- **Swim:**
You’ll need a swim suit and goggles. There are tri-specific single & two piece costumes which are designed for versatility and extra comfort – particularly on the bike. Only invest if you intend to be a regular competitor.
- **Bike:**
It must be roadworthy. It should be a comfortable fit to your size. It can be a mountain bike, a hybrid, or a tourer – it does not need to be a “racer”. Many borrow a bike for their first race, which is fine. If you do borrow, make sure you spend a little time getting familiar with it and satisfy yourself it is fully roadworthy.
If you plan to use a non-racing bike it may be worth investing in “slick” tyres. Taking a mountain or hybrid out on the road and “racing” is OK – but the resistance caused by the extra tyre tread will mean you have to work harder to maintain your speed.
The other mandatory piece of equipment is a helmet. All triathlon races operate a “no helmet, no race policy”. The helmet must be worn – fully strapped – before moving your bike from the rack and may not be released until the competitor has placed their bike back on the rack.
- **Footwear:**
You will need to choose to either don your trainers after the swim and wear them through the bike and run sections or to use cycle-specific shoes, (clip-on style), and change to your trainers during the second visit to transition.
There is no right or wrong way in your first race. If you are a “strong” cyclist you will probably go the “clip on” route because you’ll feel more comfortable and can use the footwear to your benefit. If cycling is not really your strength at this early stage – you’ll not benefit from the clip-on style shoe, rather you will lose time passing through the second transition which will not have been made up over the relatively short bike section.
- **Running:**
A good pair of trainers is the primary requirement.
- **Clothing:**
After exiting the water – you are going to be on the bike for the best part of 30 minutes or more and running for 20 to 25 minutes. The nature of the event means you will be able to work hard through out this period and assuming you have done a reasonable level of fitness preparation, will be able to work continuously at your “aerobic threshold” level.
In other words, pace judgement is not likely to be a huge issue.

Therefore, assuming the race is held in air temperatures exceeding 10°C, - minimal clothing will be adequate. That is to say:

Female Racers – continue from the pool through the race in your costume and only supplement your dress with the required footwear and a number belt. (You must display the printed race number which is issued to you at registration). You can, of course, put a “T” shirt on - (with number affixed) – but remember the dampness from your swim suit will quickly make it wet and cause it to lose a lot of its “heat” conserving properties.

Male Racers – the upper torso must be covered in Triathlon racing. Standard triathlon wear is either a one piece singlet or a two piece suit which provides upper torso cover and matching swim trunks - plus number belt. Most Novice racers will use their normal trunks and cover the torso with a “T” shirt which is put on during the first visit to transition – before the helmet!

It is worth considering bringing “arm warmers” which can be quickly slipped on in transition and rolled up only if the air temperature gives cause for concern. A final note – nudity in transition is allowed, but not recommended!!

Race Format

Familiarise yourself with the Bike Course. If you can, try it out in the weeks prior to the race. Arrive early in order to prepare for the race. You have to:

- Find the venue
- Park your car and access/set up your bike
- Attend Registration
- Visit the toilets
- Change
- Have a chat with your friends
- Rack your bike
- Plan what to wear
- Arrange your race kit
- Warm up
- Visit the toilets
- Attend the Pre Race Briefing

You’ll enjoy the race more if you leave yourself a good 55 minutes to complete this process.

Some Tips For The Race

Race Briefing:

- Listen carefully! The last minute instructions are given to enhance your safety and make sure every one gets maximum benefit and enjoyment from a safe race.

Swim:

- Relax at the start and ease into your swim rhythm over the first two lengths.
- To overtake in the pool – you tap the person in front’s feet. They pull aside at the next end turn and allow you through. Visa versa if you are “tapped”. You’ll be stopped by the Pool Race official if you ignore this basic rule! (Please ensure that you only overtake at the ends of the pool)
- Beware of a slippery pool-side as you exit the pool area.

Transition 1 (T1)

- Think in advance of the sequence you will use through the first transition.
- Shoes on – T Shirt on – (no T shirt; then number belt on) – helmet on – remove bike and proceed, in the designated flow direction, to the exit. No cycling is permitted in transition so you mount your bike at the exit line or beyond.
- It’s a good idea to set the bike’s gear in the desired ratio to enhance your get away. Nothing worse than suddenly finding you’re in top gear and there’s a dirty great hill staring you in the face!

Bike:

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- Rules of the road apply; marshals are there to make sure you go the right way not hold up traffic unless the Race Director specifically tells you otherwise in the briefing.
- Ride hard, but take care. You must obey the draft rules which will be explained in the briefing.
- Take care when approaching the second Transition - T2 - and be prepared to dismount before crossing the line into the designated transition area.

Transition 2 (T2)

- The sequence is: Rack your bike back where you got it – remove your helmet – replace bike shoes with running shoes, if necessary – leave T2 in the designated direction on to the run route.

Run:

- It's only a few kilometres – so press hard! There will be a water station should you need to hydrate.
- Smile for the camera as you “cruise” comfortably through the finish.

Finish:

- Relax, enjoy the atmosphere, watch the experienced racers as they go through T1 & T2 and see how it should be done at speed. Collect your bike and all your gear, shower and make your way to the presentation area for some food and drink and allow yourself to reflect on when you'll be doing it all again!

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