

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO RACE DAY

Check out and print the Race Day Checklist. Mark your gear with your name, especially your wetsuit before you race.

Two key purchases for beginners novices are a number belt and elastic lock-laces for your running shoes.

REGISTRATION

Make sure you arrive at your race with plenty of time to prepare (one hour ahead is the minimum!). Always ride your bike before taking it through to racking / transition to ensure nothing has gone wrong during the journey to the race. Be sure to leave it in an easy gear ready for the start of the bike leg.

Attach your race numbers to your bike and helmet in accordance with your race instructions and take your bike through to transition. A marshal will check your numbers match those on your bike and can often check your bike over too. Make sure that you have bar-ends on your handlebars, or have taped over sharp edges if they are missing, as this is one of the things they will pick up on.

TRANSITION

Locate your bike racking area (which corresponds to your race number) and rack your bike by hanging it from the front of the saddle with the handlebars facing out ready to be led out to the "Bike Out" exit.

With your rack location found, take time to walk around the transition area and come up with a way of easily locating your racking spot. It is better to chose a landmark to do this, as other competitors' bikes and kit may or may not be there when you exit your swim.

Walk from "Swim In" to your rack and then to "Bike Out". Then walk from "Bike In" to your rack to "Run Out" and make sure you are very familiar with the route you will take.

Bring your track pump into transition so that you can fully inflate your tyres half an hour or so before the start of your race. If your bike is in transition overnight, make sure you fully inflate your tyres in the morning, as the increase in heat as the sun comes up is often enough to make inner tubes burst under pressure.

Load your bike with the energy drinks you will require in the race. Make sure you are also carrying a small saddle bag with spare tube and tyre levers, and a minipump on your bike in case you puncture.

Lay out your kit next to your bike in transition. Make sure that there is only your kit between your bike and the next one, and the competitor next you has their kit on the other side of their bike. Move things around if necessary.

Place a small towel on the ground to help identify your spot, and also so that you can wipe your feet if they are covered in gravel/sand on exiting the swim. On this towel, place the rest of your kit:

Put your bike shoes at the front nearest you (if not attempting the shoes on the bike routine) with the Velcro straps undone and opened up ready to go on. Put talc or Vaseline in your shoes in the areas you think are likely to rub

Put your number belt on top of your shoes, unless you have your number pinned to your kit and are wearing it during the swim

Nestle your helmet upside-down on top of your shoes with the front of the helmet closest to you and the straps untangled and opened out ready to go straight on your head. Putting the helmet on your aerobars is risky as the wind or other competitors could easily knock it off while you are doing your swim leg.

REMEMBER: put your helmet on first once you have taken your wetsuit off, as you will be penalised if you remove your bike from the rack before putting your helmet on. Likewise when you return to transition, rack your bike before removing your helmet

Place your sunglasses opened inside your helmet ready to go straight on. You may prefer to put these on last as they can steam up when you've just got out of the swim

Put your running shoes behind your bike shoes, with laces undone (if not using elastic lock-laces which are highly recommended) and ready to go on. Again, put talc or Vaseline in your shoes in the areas you think are likely to rub

Have a spare drink bottle in transition that you can use to hydrate before the race and during transition if need be. It may also be useful to wash the sand from your feet after a beach swim

Put some gels or energy bars in your back pockets or taped to your bike for ready access during the race

THE SWIM & TRANSITION 1

Always check the swim course before your race from as many angles as possible and try and pick out objects on the shore line which will help you sight the turn buoys and the swim exit.

Make sure you thoroughly warm up before the swim. Do lots of arm swings and stretches. Put your goggles on first and then your swim cap, as this will prevent your goggles getting knocked off in the rough and tumble of the mass start. If conditions are cold, then wear a second swim cap underneath your race swim cap.

If you can get in the water before your start, then try and get in beforehand and do some swimming to elevate your heart rate ready to race.

As you wait for the gun to go off, make sure you tread water with one arm in front and one behind ready to kick and go as soon as the gun goes off. Don't get caught napping!

As you come to the finish of the swim, engage your leg kick more to wake up your legs and get them ready for the run into transition.

On leaving the water, put your goggles on top of your head and locate the zip cord of your wetsuit while running towards transition. Pull back the Velcro flap with one hand while pulling down the zip with the other. Make sure it goes fully down. Once the zip is down, pull off one shoulder and then the other and then pull one arm through and then the other. Pull the suit down to your waist and keep running towards your bike rack. You can take your swim cap and goggles off while you are running.

When you arrive at your transition spot, pull the suit down to your knees and stamp on the suit to help get it to ankle level. At this point you can use your hands to ease the suit off over your feet.

Throw the suit on top of your bag or over the racking bar.

Then it's glasses on, helmet on, number belt on, bike shoes on, unrack your bike and go!

Don't mount your bike till you are in the designated bike mounting area outside "Bike Out". The marshals will tell you when you can mount the bike. Make sure your race number is clearly visible on your back.

BIKE LEG & TRANSITION 2

Make sure that you are familiar with the bike course and if it is multiple laps, come up with a failsafe plan for counting your laps.

If you puncture on the bike, your first priority is to find somewhere safe and hassle free to stop and change your tyre. Make it a clear patch of ground so you can put things down and not lose things if dropped. If it's the back wheel you should spin the wheel and click into the small rear cog before you release the brake calliper and take the wheel off. This will make it easier to get it back on in the right gear later.

REMEMBER: You should practice changing an inner tube before race day, so that you are familiar with how to do it. Try to stay calm while you change the tube.

As you finish the bike course, make sure you dismount the bike in the designated dismount area, and run through to your racking spot. **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR HELMET UNTIL YOU HAVE RACKED YOUR BIKE.**

Rack your bike this time by the handlebars, facing away from you. Then take your helmet off and remove your bike shoes (if you haven't left them on the bike during dismount). Get your running shoes on and start running to the "Run Out" area. Slide your number belt round so that your number is on your front before you exit transition. If the marshals can't see your number, be ready to call it out to them.

RUN LEG

Make sure that you are familiar with the run course and if it is multiple laps, come up with a plan for counting your laps. Know where the water stations are before you race. **RUN LIKE THE WIND!!!!**