



Tips for First Timers

YOUR FIRST TRIATHLON

Your First Triathlon needn't be a stressful experience. We know you will probably have lots of questions, and even if you don't, there are a few tricks of the trade that will ensure you don't stick out like a sore thumb! Here are a few little gems to help you on your way.

TRAINING

Training programs will differ between individuals and will depend on how fit you may already be. The bcu Coffs TRI is a participation-based event. All fitness levels and abilities are encouraged, so you don't need to worry about being at peak fitness level. To be safe, you just need to ensure your body can cope with this sort of exercise. If you are in doubt, we encourage you to visit your GP for a health check before undertaking any sort of training program.

How much preparation required will depend on your base fitness level. Your base fitness level is the level of fitness you have prior to training for the triathlon. For example, if you have been doing other forms of fitness in the lead up, such as walking, football, netball, tennis or aerobics, you will already have some fitness, which means you're already well on the way to being prepared for the triathlon.

If your goal is to purely to finish the race, we recommend at least 4 weeks of preparation. 1-2 times a week for each discipline (swim, ride, run) should be enough, again, depending on your base fitness level. As you get closer to the event, you may like to do a double or 'brick' session, such as a swim followed by a run, or a ride followed by a run, just to get your legs used to being worked in different ways. This is a huge help psychologically too, as your mind also gets used to the feeling of fatigue.

Just be sure to have at least 1 day off per week to rest and don't go too hard too soon – start small and build up from there. If you need a little inspiration, there are loads of fantastic triathlon training programs to be found on the WWW.

One final but important training tip is to have a good look at the course maps on the website. If possible, try and complete at least one leg of the course (or parts of it) prior to race day. This will help you to feel more confident during the event, as you will know of any tricky bits and how far you have to go.

WHAT TO WEAR

Don't wear anything new on race day. Triathlon suits are very popular, or some shorts/bike pants that you can swim, ride and run in. You will need your torso covered for the ride and run legs so if you wear a swimming costume for the swim, you'll need to put a singlet/t-shirt on for the rest of the race.

EVENT CHECK-IN

Check in occurs at timeslots indicated on the individual race pages. At check in, you will need to bring along your ID and Triathlon Australia membership if you have one. After presenting yourself to the check-in desk, you will be given a bag of goodies and a race kit, which includes the items listed below.

- **Armband** – This will have your personal ID number on it, which matches your bike and helmet numbers. Wear this on the morning of race day and keep it on until you leave the event.
- **Race Number** – This goes on your front and must be worn for the cycle and run legs. Pin this to the front of the top you will put on in Transition, or get yourself an elastic race belt.
- **Helmet sticker** – put this on the front or side of your helmet
- **Bike Seat Post Sticker** – put this around your bike's seat post
- **Bike I.D Sticker** – put this in the middle of your handlebars
- **Bag sticker** – put this on the bag that you'll put into storage. No bags are allowed to be left in the transition area.
- **Swimming cap** – This is compulsory for the swim and goggles are optional. The cap is colour coded to suit your category or wave start. At the start of the swim, you will be set off in 'waves'. Waves are just groups of swimmers to space everyone out a little bit. You'll start in the wave with other swimmers wearing the same coloured cap as yours.
- **Timing Chip** – This needs to be placed around your left ankle with the timer facing outwards. Don't put it on too tightly, but tightly enough that it won't move around too much and annoy you during the event. Once you have completed the race, a volunteer will help you to take this off prior to leaving the finish chute. Be sure not to lose your timing chip, or walk off with it as you will be charged \$50.

WHAT TO BRING ON RACE DAY

- Wear your race outfit and something warm over the top
- The contents of your race kit (stickers should already be ON your bike and ID wristband and timing chip ON you)
- Goggles & Swim Cap
- Small towel for transition
- A top with your number pinned to the front of it, or a Race Belt.
- A drink bottle(s) filled with water or sports drink
- Bike & Helmet
- Bike shoes (if you need them for your particular bike)
- Running shoes (you may like to re-thread these with elastic laces for a quicker transition) and socks (optional)
- A visor/hat and sunglasses for the run (optional)
- A bag to put in storage

TRANSITION

This can be the most daunting part for some. The transition area is the place where you will 'transition' between each discipline. You will be allowed into transition prior to your race start but make sure you allow plenty of time to get organised.

Each participant is given a small space to put their things next to their bike. Triathletes like to set out their belongings in a logical way to make the transition between each

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discipline as fast as possible. As there will be lots and lots of bikes in the transition area, look for some sort of landmark so that you can find your spot on the rack quickly and easily each time you transition.

How to organize your gear in transition:

You will take the swim cap & goggles to the race start.

Some people rest their helmet on their handlebars of their bike, but here's one way of organising your gear:



RACE TIPS

Here are a couple of tips to help you on race day. It's also very important to familiarize yourself with the Triathlon Australia Race Rules:

<http://www.triathlon.org.au/Assets/Triathlon+Australia+Digital+Assets/Resources/Technical/TA+Race+Competition+Rules.pdf>

Swim

- Don't try and start at the front of the pack if you're not a fast/strong swimmer. Start closer to the back of your wave or slightly to the side and just try to follow those in front of you.
- Pop your head up every now and then and look for the markers in the water to check you are still on track. Stick as close to the markers as you can to avoid swimming further than you need to!
- Put your arm up straight in the air if you require assistance and a lifeguard will attend to you as soon as possible.
- Stand up when your hand can touch the bottom of the sand. At this point you might like to either 'dolphin dive' or wade the rest of the way. This is usually faster than swimming and is allowed.
- When running out of the water, take it a little easy at first. Some people do feel a little light headed and off balance while they get used to being on land again

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- Once you reach the transition area, you may like to have a quick towel dry, or simply slip your shoes and top straight on and get on your way
- To make putting your shoes on nice and quick, you may like to take your laces out and re-thread with elastic instead
- Have a drink and stick your bottle into your bike's water bottle holder if you have one

Bike

- Don't be too intimidated by other people's bikes or gear. You're here for you and all the experienced triathletes had to do their first race too. A mountain bike is fine if you don't have a road bike.
- Put your helmet on after your shoes and top, prior to taking your bike off the rack
- Wheel your bike out of the transition area and run it to the mount line before getting on. Someone will tell when to get on if you're unsure.
- Don't ride too close to the bike in front of you or you may be accused of 'drafting', which is against the rules. Once you are getting close to someone else, simply overtake them if it is safe to do so. Always keep to the left.
- Dismount from your bike prior to the dismount line. Marshalls will be there to advise you
- Take your bike back to your spot and take your helmet off **after** you have placed it back on the rack

Run

- Make sure you know where the run exit is
- Take it easy at first until you find your rhythm
- Make use of the hydration stations by slowing down briefly for a drink if you need one
- If you feel up to it, give your last effort in the form of a sprint once you can see the finish line
- Enjoy your finish!

Nutrition Tip for Race Day - What to eat beforehand:

- Have a good day of eating the day before your race. Meals with carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread, pasta, brown rice and potatoes will give you lots of energy throughout your race
- Drink plenty of water in the week leading up to the event and especially the day before. This will ensure you're well hydrated, which helps to prevent fatigue.
- If your race isn't first thing in the morning, try to have a low fat, simple breakfast such as cereal and fruit or toast to fill your belly
- A couple of hours before your event, have something to eat such as a light sandwich, some toast, fruit juice, a banana or a sports drink
- Don't drink copious amounts before your event. Instead have small sips on your water or sports drink
- After your event, it's important to replace the fluids you will have lost while exercising, so again, lots of water and a sports drink would be a good idea
- Have a banana, watermelon or similar immediately after the event to begin the recovery process

MOST IMPORTANTLY, GO OUT AND HAVE FUN!!