

Preparation Is Everything

1. EAT WELL, REST WELL

Test your pre-race meal in the weeks leading up to the race. Find out what works - you need a meal that gives you a decent bounce of energy, but doesn't sit heavy in the stomach.

A mixture of complex carbohydrates and protein is a great start. Wholemeal Spaghetti and Meatballs, Pizza and Chilli con Carne with Wholemeal Rice are good examples. Aim to have your normal breakfast approximately 2 hours before you race. Everybody is different, so find out what suits your needs. Make sure you're properly rested in the nights leading up to the race - the sleep you get the night before the night before pays dividends on race day. Take the occasional nap if you have to, but whatever you do, aim for eight or more hours' sleep a night as race day approaches.

2. PACKING YOUR BAG

Start by making a list of everything you could possibly need on the day. Think of emergencies, breakages, forgetfulness and nerves. The following is not an exhaustive list but it'll give you an idea: entry paperwork (numbers etc, directions to the race, course maps and start times); any prescribed medications; safety pins; spare number belt; roll of electrical tape; multi-tool for the bike; Vaseline; spare swim cap; small bottle of water; a towel that can double as a rag; a plastic bag (dustbin liner - for those severe emergencies!)

3. RACE NUTRITION

Test all foods in training to understand how your experiments affect your digestion. Test gels and sports drinks in training sessions to understand how and when to best use them.

4. SETTING TRANSITION

Build practice sessions into your training plan. Mimic swim-to-bike and bike-to-run transitions in the weeks before your event. Share the experience with a friend, watch and time each other to learn different ways of doing things. Always leave your bike facing the correct direction and in appropriate gear.

5. T1 - FINDING YOUR TRANSITION

Find a good memorable spot and park your bike in a place that means something to you. Once set, walk from your bike to the swim entry point and back again so you know where you'll be going. Focus and commit it to memory. Also check the bike and run entry/exit. Walk slowly and let the information settle in your brain. It will help keep you calm and save time later.



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6. T1

Sometimes pool exits are from the deep end and require you to climb out without using the steps. Ensure you practice this prior to the event, if you have any issues please let the Race Organiser know prior to the event so that they can put you in an appropriate lane.

Start as soon as you exit the water by removing your goggles and then your hat. Make your way to your bike where you will put on your Bike Helmet, Race Number and shoes.

7. RUNNING WITH YOUR BIKE

Most people find it easiest to do the following - stand on the left of your bike and hold the saddle in your right hand, taking the bars in your left hand for steering. Now run. Try it in training and see what happens.

8. MOUNTING/DISMOUNTING

Practise getting on and off your bike on some soft ground - in the race, run out of transition safely over the mount/dismount line, then find a space away from others and hop aboard.

9. SOCK-FREE RUNNING

This will speed up transition, but it will wreck your feet if you haven't tried it before - so do some of your run training sessions with no socks. Start with the short runs, where you can loop back home the moment you experience discomfort. Avoid blisters or rubbed feet as they could seriously throw off your training.

In transition, prepare your shoes with a little talcum powder to aid quick and secure entry in transition. If you're using elastic laces, set them up in advance. Set them with the correct tension to provide a balanced pressure on your foot - otherwise foot circulation can be affected, leading to numb feet and a painful run.

10. PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE

Whatever you do on race day, make sure you've done it in training. That way, surprises will be limited and you'll have a great experience and continue your Triathlon Journey.

