



Beginners Guide to Your First Triathlon

It's finally time to take the plunge and register for your very first Triathlon and what better way to give it a shot than by **doing it for free!** The sport of Triathlon has an incredible community, many long lasting friendships are made and more than often taking on the challenge of Triathlon has become a cornerstone in many people's lives. The Try-a-Tri Triathlon gives first time triathletes the opportunity to do their first triathlon for free in a safe and fun environment.

Training

Choosing a race – Start Short

That's simple, one of the best things about Triathlon is that they are generally held in incredible destinations, many of which are perfect for a family vacation. What's more the Try-a-Tri events are the only free triathlon events in NSW. Free activity's on a holiday, what's not to like about that? It's also notable that the Try-a-Tri is the perfect distance to dip your toes into Triathlon with a **200m swim, 8km bike, 2km run/jog/walk** these distances are achievable for most.

Training Plan – Take it Easy to Begin

Like any sport no top level athlete ever went from zero to hero in the space of a couple of weeks, it is important to build on your program and not go out too hard and run the risk of injury. While a structured training plan is great for keeping yourself accountable and aiding in achieving personal goals, it is not necessary in the early stages and a reasonable base level of fitness and training should be sufficient to see you across the shorter distance races.

Swim Training

One of the biggest fears for first time triathletes is the swim. As we are land dwelling animals that is understandable, often many are apprehensive about swimming in open water, swimming surrounded by other competitors and other things that like to swim in open water. The best news about this apprehension is it does go away with each time you swim your confidence grows.

FLIPPERS ARE OK IN TRY-A-TRI!

If you're not too confident in the water you do have the option to wear flippers for the swim.



Swim squads are a great way to improve confidence whilst improving your in water efficiency, swimming with others also tends to make people train more efficiently than they would normally. Most local councils have swim squads for all levels of swimmer, if you are going to spend some money on training, this should be your first port of call.

Other things that swim in the water are a part of nature, the fact that Australia has beautiful clean waters that these creatures live in makes us one of the luckiest countries on earth. The risk that anything untoward occurring is incredibly slim. There has never been a recorded attack in the history of triathlon, worldwide, that's thousands of races! All races have plans to ensure the safety of its competitors; this includes water vessels and water safety patrols as well as locally run air patrols.

Gear - What You'll Need

Getting/Selecting a Wetsuit

During the summer months when many triathlons are held the water is sufficiently warm to swim without a wetsuit. Often wetsuits can be quite expensive and getting the right fit can take a bit of testing as everyone is a different shape and size and different brands vary in fit. If you do decide to invest, wetsuits assist swimmers by raising the hips and increasing buoyancy, putting the body into a position of less drag. For a first time triathlete often they will need to decide between a sleeveless wetsuit and a full-length wetsuit. The biggest reasons

people go for a sleeveless wetsuit is that some find the sleeved wetsuits to be restrictive to their stroke or find that they overheat in a full length suit, that said due to some lost buoyancy and the potential to let water into the suit the majority opt for a full-length wetsuit.

Surf wetsuits are very different to swim and triathlon wetsuits and very ridged, not optimal for swimming, it's best that you leave the surf wetsuit for the big days at Pipeine.



Choosing a bike – Type of Bike and Fit

Choosing a bike is like buying a car, most would love a Ferrari but due to budget and practicality it may not be your best option. For your first triathlon it's all about having fun, you can use a Mountain bike, BMX, your race bike or even borrow a friend's fixie, the only condition is that everyone must have a bike, no sharing. If you are intending on training up for a race it's important to make sure the bike fits properly, just like shoes, bikes come in all different sizes and if you don't have them fitted to your body type and size you can run the risk of injury. The local bike shop is generally the best place to start with advice on bike fitting.



Choosing the right clothing to wear when training and racing

Here is the best piece of triathlon information you will ever get! **NEVER, EVER RACE IN CLOTHING OR USE NUTRITION YOU HAVEN'T TRIED ON RACE DAY!**

Use your training as the opportunity to find out whether there are any rub points on any of your clothing or to see if your nutrition agrees with your tummy. In your first Triathlon it is more about figuring how it's all done you can opt for a tri suit which you can wear from start to finish or you can change into whatever clothing makes you comfortable in transition. (You go into transition twice, once from the swim to the bike and once from the bike to the run, so you could change twice if you wish).

Packing Your Gear - List Writing, what you should bring

Packing for a triathlon can feel like you are packing to move house, there are so many little things you need to remember even professionals still use checklists when packing for a race.

Here is a good guide for packing:

Swim

- Tri shorts, swimsuit, or tri suit
- Goggles
- Bright-coloured towel (for finding your spot in transition)
- Wetsuit

Bike

- Bike
- Helmet
- Cycling shoes and socks (if wearing)
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle(s)
- Nutrition (ie. gels, bars or sweets)
- Tool Kit: tube, CO2, levers, multi-tool
- Floor pump (pump up your tires before you leave home but leave the pump in your car just in case)



Run

- Running shoes
- Race belt (to attach your race number to)
- Hat/visor

Other

- Timing Chip
- Training device (Garmin, Timex, etc.) & heart rate strap
- Body Glide (to stop any chafe spots)
- Sunscreen
- Vaseline, powder, band-aids
- Post-race, warm change of clothes, thongs
- Money for sausage sizzle after
- Race Number attached to race belt and stickers attached to helmet, bike, bag and pump.

Pre-Race

Leading up to race day- Carb loading and Pre-hydration.

On the shorter length races carb loading and hydration don't hold as much importance. It is always important to ensure you are properly hydrated, but it is also possible to over hydrate prior to a race, by over hydrating you flush out the balance of important salts and minerals so be sure to cycle through a few electrolyte drinks when you are hydrating in the day prior.

Many people refer to the need to carb load. As everyone's body composition is different, the variance in level of carb loading differs. One misconception is that you should carb load the night prior to an event when in fact it should be two nights prior. Carb loading the night prior can leave you feeling bloated and full on race morning. Again don't make the mistake of trying something the night before a race, leave the spicy vindaloo at the new Indian restaurant down the road for after the race.

Race day checklist

- Wake up early and eat 2-3 hours before your start time. Eat only familiar, easily-digestible foods (ie. banana and a toast and vegemite).
- Try and Poop before you leave home, often pooing in porta loos is a less than enjoyable experience and lines can often be lengthy.
- Take a shower and start the morning feeling fresh and awake.
- Make sure your water bottles are filled and on your bike.
- Apply your glide, vasoline and sunscreen before you leave home, bring it with you just in case you need extra.
- Leave yourself plenty of time to drive to the event, often changed traffic conditions are already in place prior to the race start, so know your route and where you can park.
- Stop drinking fluids about 1 hour before your start time. Continue sipping a weak electrolyte drink as needed. Pee and then pee again (don't worry, everybody pees in their wetsuit).
- Get to the race early to secure a good spot for your bike in transition, when getting to transition you need to be wearing your helmet fastened prior to entering. Ideally a good spot in transition is on the end of the rack close to the bike in/out.
- Make a mental note of landmarks to help you easily find your rack.
- Use your bright coloured towel so your area stands out...and be courteous. NO BEACH TOWELS!
- Organise your gear in the order you will use it - run through transitions in your mind, bike then run, remember to take everything you need for your swim.
- Put your clothing from the morning and for after the event into your bag and check your bag and pump into the baggage check.
- Attend the Race briefing, the referee will outline the rules and any important information including any hazards or course changes.
- Put on your wetsuit and cap and hop in the water for a good swim warm-up 15-20minutes before your start time.
- Be in your allocated start area 5-10 minutes before the gun, look out for others wearing the same coloured cap as you they are part of your wave and generally a good indicator of where you need to be.

The Race

The Swim

- Know the course, know which side of you the turning bouys are supposed to be on and how many laps the course is.
- Make sure you get yourself to the start line with plenty of time and start with the correct wave so your timing is calculated correctly.
- If you are a less confident swimmer start at the back or to the side and let the quicker swimmers go ahead first to avoid the washing machine at the start.
- Use the boys to sight and swim towards, it means you swim the shortest possible distance, nobody needs to swim further than they have to.
- If you are a weaker swimmer, give yourself plenty of room on the turning buoys often the turning buoys are a point of congestion and first timers can get a little apprehensive, so give yourself a nice wide berth.
- Swim all the way until you beach yourself, don't stop swimming until your hand touches the sand.
- Stand up and unzip your wetsuit pulling it down to your waist.
- When you have reached the shore it's not uncommon to feel a little dizzy as you regulate your breathing again, take your time and walk instead of run if necessary.

Transition 1

- Find your colourful towel and or landmark that you used to remember your spot in transition.
- If you had a wetsuit pull it down to your ankles and stand on it to remove.
- Make sure you put your helmet on (the right way and buckled up) before you touch your bike, it's the rules.
- Put on your bike clothes (if not wearing a trisuit under your wetsuit) make sure that your torso is covered for both the bike and run.
- Don't forget to take your nutrition for the bike leg with you.
- If your spare and tyre changing gear isn't attached to your bike, take it with you.
- Make sure your gear is all contained in your dedicated area.
- Put your race belt on with the number facing to the back.

Bike

- Wheel your bike to the mount line, do not get on your bike before the mount line and ensure if you are slower at getting onto your bike you mount off to the side and not the middle of the path.
- Ensure that you keep a distance of 10 metres between the rider in front of you to ensure that you don't draft for a fair and safe race.
- Ride on the left hand side of the road, when overtaking let other competitors know ie. "passing right"
- Obey all TA official instructions.
- Take it easy into any corners and slow down where instructed.
- No ipods, phones or listening devices are permitted under any circumstance at any stage of the race.
- Safely dismount your bike prior to the dismount line being aware of other competitors that may be behind you and coming through quicker.
- If at any time you are found to breach the rules, you will be instructed by an official to go to the naughty corner, this is known as the penalty box, you must stop at the nearest penalty box after being cited, penalties vary and can be for drafting, blocking, helmet offenses and littering. (see rule book for particular offenses).

Transition 2

- Place your bike back on your allocated rack, again using your landmarks and bright towel to remind you of your rack position, transition can be very confusing so don't use other peoples bikes as a marker as they may still be on course when you return.
- Remove your helmet once you have racked your bike, remembering that whenever you are touching your bike you need to be wearing a helmet.
- If not wearing a trisuit change into your run gear and run shoes.
- Make sure you are still wearing your race belt and turn it around to face the front.
- Again no listening devices are allowed in any part of any race.

Run

- Always run on the left keeping divider cones on your right, unless a course specifies differently.
- Obey TA officials at all times.
- Move through aid stations quickly, get your drink and move off to the side, be aware of what is going on around you. If you don't need a drink stay clear of the aid station.
- Only litter at aid station areas, this includes all cups and nutrition wrappers.
- Smile for the photographers, nobody likes a grumpy race photo!

Finish line

- Smile for the Cameras, you've done all that hard work reward yourself with a cracking photo worthy of a facebook profile.
- Once you have finished don't stop on the line, it's really important that you move through so the finish doesn't become congested, save the hugs and the hi-fives for the recovery area.
- Give your timing device back to the volunteers collecting

POST-RACE

Recovery

- This is the spot to grab yourself some ice cream, you've earned it, make sure you grab some water or electrolyte and some fruit, you're sure to have spent some energy!
- It is also the spot to meet with friends new and old that were in the race and tell war stories about how you put the wrong shoe on the wrong foot, it is an area just for athletes so tell the family to meet you at the recovery exit.

Medical

- Often people push themselves pretty hard and for whatever reason end up in Medical. Competitor safety and welfare is our utmost concern. At every event we provide medical professionals to ensure everything from a blister to the serious stuff is handled properly.
- If your friend or family member hasn't shown up at the finish line there is every chance they might be in medical, often it's better to be safe than sorry. We ask that everyone fill in the reverse side of their bibs so in case of emergency can be contacted if the situation arises.

Presentation

- In Triathlon we are all winners just for giving this awesome sport a go. There are no first, seconds or more everyone wins by giving Triathlon a go.
- Be sure to stick around as we have fantastic sponsors that just love giving away great prizes.

Results

- The wonderful people at multisport Australia take care of all our timing. A couple of hours after the race be sure to check out their website www.multisportaustralia.com.au and follow the links to see whether you hit those swim leg goals you had hoped to hit.

Enter the next race

Now that you have seen how incredible triathlon and the triathlon community is, keep at it and enter another race, Elite Energy hosts a number of triathlons throughout the year. Go to www.eliteenergy.com.au to see where and when our other races are.