



Beginners Guide to Triathlon

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- **Equipment** – If you are just starting out, you only need the basics.
- **Cycling** – your helmet is one of the most important safety purchases you will ever make.
- **Race Briefing** – The race briefing is extremely important and is compulsory for all competitors

Welcome to Triathlon

Triathlon is not just a sport; it's a lifestyle. Whether you are a novice or a seasoned triathlete, young or old, male or female, an elite or a recreational athlete, triathlon is one of the few individual sports that allow us all to participate and compete together.

While your improving your fitness and wellbeing, you can also have fun, and make the most of the great social environment and

camaraderie that this fantastic sport offers.

Swimming, Cycling and Running are the three different disciplines of triathlon making triathlon a unique 'one sport'.

Triathlon provides a number of distances so whether you are 7 or 70+ there is a race for you.

Whether you compete to win, for the personal challenge or



your aim is to simply 'get active' triathlon welcomes you...

Setting your Goals. What do you want to achieve?

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Well, you have obviously established that you want to do a triathlon or you are at least a little bit interested in one, or you wouldn't be reading this.

No matter what your background, age or current level of fitness, there is a race for you.

Following is a list of distances, which are 'standard' distances in Triathlon. There are races that a shorter than these for young children and longer such as the Ironman for the endurance athlete looking for a bigger challenge and of course there are variations on all of these.

Standard Distances

Enticer
250m 10km 2.5km

Sprint
750m 20km 5km

Club
1km 30km 8km

Classic
1.5km 40km 10km

1/2 Ironman
1.9km 90km 21.1km

Ironman
3.8km 180.2km 42.2km

So... the first thing you need to do is decide on what distance you wish to conquer, and set yourself a time frame in order to achieve this. (If you are not active at all I would suggest starting out with the 'Enticer' or if you are semi active the 'Sprint' distance is achievable.) then the 'sky is the limit' from there on in.

Check out the Triathlon NSW website www.trinsw.org.au for the latest race calendar to find out when a race is on.

Triathlon NSW advises to see your medical practioner

for a check up before you start any form of exercise.

The most important thing to remember is to go at your own pace, listen to peoples advice, but be realistic, everyone is different and what might be good for Johnnie who is 6ft weighs 90kilos and has already completed an Ironman is not going to be right for Kate who is 5ft and weighs 60 kilos and has never exercised.

So just remember to set your own goal, make it challenging but achievable, and with a little bit of effort and dedication you will get to achieve your goal.



Where can I go for Information?

There are several places you go for information; you can start with your State Association.

On the Triathlon NSW website there is a list of Local Clubs, also entry forms for you to download, the racing calendar for you to decide which race you would like to compete in, contacts for coaches, latest news, and of course the all important Triathlon NSW Membership Form. When you join the association you will have 24-hour insurance, and access to discounts and benefits only available to Triathlon

NSW members.

Triathlon Clubs are a great source of camaraderie, there is plenty of support and of course 'club races' are a great place to compete in your first triathlon. Following on from that you may have a friend of a friend who is involved in triathlon and can point you in the direction of your local bike shop.

Your local bike shop generally has entry forms and will always have bike mechanics to help you with your bike.

Your local swimming pool will have squad training sessions and if your going to get really serious you may wish to track down a certified Triathlon Coach. Of course lets not forget there are some great triathlon Magazines out there, which offer you invaluable information on the latest news and views from the triathlon world.



What Equipment do I need?

Triathlon can become a very expensive sport, if you 'just have to have' all the latest gear. However, if you are just starting out you only need the basics.

must wear a singlet or shirt, and for the females a swimsuit or bra top is fine

General items: Sunglasses, sunscreen, hat,

and pairing them with either a bra top (females) or singlet top (males) and wearing this outfit from start to finish therefore you just need to change your shoes during the transition

To get you from the start line to the finish line, all you need are the following items:

Swim: swimsuit, goggles, cap, towel, wetsuit (optional)

Cycle: Bicycle (mountain bike, road bike, touring bike), Bike helmet (must be in good condition & have an Australian Standards sticker on it) Water bottle, tri suit or bike pants & jersey (optional)

Run: Running shoes, socks (optional) shorts *please note: it is compulsory to have your torso covered so all men*

Of course this list can be added to, some people complete the whole race in a bike jersey and bike pants, or a 'tri suit' others wear a wetsuit in the swim and then wear their swimsuit for the entire race, it all depends on what distance you are going to race and what you feel comfortable wearing and of course this will only come with time after you have competed in a few races.

You can think about purchasing a 'tri suit' or bike shorts with a towelling gusset

The less you have to think about in the transition from Swim to Bike and Bike to Run the more you can concentrate on your race. For those that may be conscious of their size or shape, male or female, think about wearing a t-shirt or loose singlet top for the cycle and run.

REMEMBER: It's not a fashion statement it's all about finishing and having fun.

"Remember, it's not a fashion statement it's all about finishing and having fun"

Training Programs

This is where you need a little time to sit down and work out when you can fit 'training' into your already busy week. It is important to remember to increase your training load slowly.

Allow your body to adapt to training sessions. Some days will be harder than others, you will have easy sessions and demanding sessions.

You must make sure you allow for rest days especially after a demanding training session. Remember anyone with a basic level of fitness can complete a 'sprint' distance triathlon.

If you wish to have someone to assist you in your training, please contact the Triathlon NSW office and we can direct you to an accredited

Triathlon Coach. As previously mentioned Triathlon NSW advises that you see your medical practitioner for a check up before you start any form of exercise.



Nutrition

The most important thing to remember here is to listen to what the majority of Nutritionists say, and that is to have a 'balanced diet' that includes all the major food groups. Carbohydrates are important which include breads, pastas, fruit and vegetables. Protein is also important as protein helps to repair muscles and tissues this includes dairy products, lean meats, eggs, chicken and fish.

Extra fluids will be important also. It is extremely important to keep the body

hydrated. Keep up your water intake before, during and after training and racing. The recommend daily allowance of hydration is 6-8 glasses per day for average activity so if you are training and racing, this fluid intake will need to be increased.

There are many electrolyte replacement drinks on the market now which can be taken during and after training sessions, these drinks help replace the sodium, potassium and carbohydrates that you lose from your body during training.

On race day, once again make sure you have plenty of fluids, when it comes to food intake your diet pre race should be light however this is a very individual thing. You should test diet and fluid intake out during your training sessions.

Never experiment on race day.

"have a balanced diet, that includes all the major food groups"

Swimming

To get started in swimming you need a few basic items:

Swimsuit – purchase one that is comfortable, practicable for swim training, you don't want it too tight as it may rub and cause chaffing. *Note: all swimsuits will wear down from the chlorine so try and purchase one that is a little more chlorine resistant as it will last longer.*

Swim Cap – this will keep your hair off your face and out of your eyes; it also protects your hair from the chlorine of the pool. *Tip – make sure you dry your cap and turn it inside out, sprinkle some talc powder on the cap, this will help to prolong the life of your cap.*

Goggles – make sure you purchase goggles that fit your face so they do not leak and let water in. *There are lots of different goggles on the market; you may wish to*

seek advice from your local pool or the shop assistant.

Fins/flippers – if you are swim training on a regular basis, these will assist you with the development of kicks and make it easier to perform drills and of course provide variety whilst you are swimming your laps. *Note: the fins are commonly known as 'swim fins' or 'boosters' they are smaller and shorter than the flippers that are used for scuba diving.*

There are other swimming accessories like pull buoys & paddles, etc and as you get more confident in the water you can add these to your swim training.

The most important thing to remember whilst swimming is to relax in the water. Swimming is all about technique, and there is a lot to think about, stretching,

breathing, kicking, your arm pull etc. The best thing to do to begin with is just get in there and swim, swim, swim. You can only improve and then when you feel a bit more confident in the water, join in the swim squad at your local pool. There you can learn more about technique, increase speed & confidence and receive professional advice from a qualified swim coach or an accredited triathlon coach. *Please note: You cannot use pull buoys, paddles or fins in a race*





Cycling

To get started on the bike the most important two items are your helmet and of course you need a bike.

Helmet – this is the most important safety purchase you will ever make. I cannot stress enough how vitally important this is. Make sure your helmet has met with the Australian Safety standards, *(the sticker/label will be on the inside of your helmet.)*

Bike – you don't need to purchase the latest, lightest frame with the most expensive components in the shop. Purchase one that is a perfect fit, has good componentry and one you can learn to ride on. The most important point to remember when purchasing your bike is to make sure it fits 'you'. The 'bike fit' is crucial, to having a comfortable ride, prevents injuries and of course, so you will enjoy riding your new bike.

Most bike shops have packages for frame, forks, components, & wheels. You can add the accessories slowly, just make sure the 'bike fits you.

Accessories – pump, spare tubes, tyre leavers, Speedo, Cycle shoes, tri bars, Bicycle pants, gloves, rain jacket, the list goes on. Cycling is definitely one of those sports that has lots of extra's, and the more you ride, the more

addicted you will get and you'll find yourself visiting the bike shop more often, looking at all the latest gadgets and accessories.

You don't need to purchase clip in cycle shoes straight away, even if you are confident on the bike. Have a few months worth of training sessions, learning about your bike, manoeuvring in the traffic, and learning the road rules first. Once you have mastered this, purchase your cycle shoes and all the other nick knacks available.

Oh... by the way...when you do purchase the 'clip in' cycle shoes, don't worry about falling off, because I don't know anyone who has not fallen off there bike at some stage of there cycling career. Don't worry though, it is usually when you have slowed right down and you forget to 'unclip' your pedals before stopping. You just have to practice 'clipping' your foot in and taking it out of the pedals.

The most important accessories to purchase straight away when you buy the new bike would be your pump, spare tubes and a 'spare kit'. Get the staff at the bike shop or maybe even a friend to show you how to change the tyre, as you never know when you're going to get that flat!!

The first points to remember when cycle training is to put your helmet on. Ride in the cycle lane or as far left of the road as possible and obey all the road rules. *Remember, cars are much bigger than you.*

When you first go out training, try and find someone who has some experience and knowledge to go with you. This will be invaluable, to help with the little 'tricks of the trade'. Make sure you are positioned on your bike correctly, when pedalling, try to pedal smoothly, 'spinning', rather than the push up, push down action. And... After you have been cycling for a few weeks practice running off the bike.

Once again the only way to gain confidence on the bike is to get out there and ride. Joining friends, your local triathlon club or a cycle group is a good way to learn more, and of course there is always safety in numbers.

Finally, many triathletes belong to cycle clubs as well, these are a great way to learn about specific cycle skills & technique and of course once again, you can always seek direction from an accredited triathlon coach.

"Make sure your helmet has met with the Australian Safety Standards'."



Running

The beauty of running, is that all you need is a good pair of running shoes, a pair of shorts, bra top and or a shirt/singlet, pair of socks, hat, sun block and your... out the door.

Shoes – your running shoes are a very important purchase. Running shoes is one area, which I would suggest not to 'skimp on'. The reason for this... running

is an 'impact' sport, and if you don't invest wisely you can do all sorts of damage to your body. So, make sure you shop around, get some professional advice, get someone to look at your feet, so they can decide whether you pronate, supinate, need extra shock absorption, need added stability etc.

Don't necessarily buy the most expensive shoe, shop

around, talk to friends, read literature and ultimately you decide. Don't let the shop assistant talk you into 'just anything', and if you find you have feet problems, see a podiatrist or sports physician; you may need to invest in orthotics.

Cont...

"Your running shoes are a very important purchase."

Running cont...

Clothing – people run in all sorts of clothing, it just depends on what you feel comfortable in. There is specific running clothing on the market, shorts, singlets, bra tops, t-shirts etc. However... you may feel just as comfortable in your favourite board shorts and old singlet. There are also lots of water bottle holders, running caps, socks etc on the market specifically manufactured for running.

Running is one of the few sports where equipment plays a small role. The first thing to remember about running is to start off slowly. Depending on your level of fitness you may need to start off with a walk/run system before you can go straight into running.

Vary your running, variety is important, hills are great for strengthening and conditioning, venture off road – but be careful as you can trip and fall on the uneven surface, run on the sand at the beach, go down to the track and do some sprint training.

When running make sure you keep your fluids up, always carry water with you, unless you know where the taps are on your run route of course. And be prepared for all types of weather, in summer, try and run in the cooler parts of the day, put sunscreen on and wear a cap. In winter all you have to do is dress for it, perhaps wear long tights, and if it's really cold you may require gloves and a beanie.

Once again, if you get totally hooked you can always get an accredited triathlon coach to help with your technique, and 'run specific' training. *Another tip.... when you can, purchase an extra pair of running shoes, so you can alternate them. The shoes will last & wear longer, and of course if it rains, you will always have a dry pair.*



What happens at a race?

Registration

When you arrive at a race, registration is the first place to go. This is where you will register your name and pick up your race pack. Following is a list of procedures that will happen at registration:

- Advise registration staff you are competing.
- Registration staff will cross off your name on a list (you generally either line up alphabetically or in your age group eg 20-24years, 45-49 years).
- Pick up your race pack – which could include: swim cap, race merchandise, Race number sticker for your bike, map of the course, race number 'bib', safety pins.
- If the race is being electronically timed you will also need to pick up your timing chip. (Your timing chip is generally either attached to your shoe or it is strapped to your ankle).
- If you are starting in wave starts, you will be advised of the time your swim wave will be starting. (This is generally organised into age groups, and each age group will also have a different coloured swim cap and start time, eg 8.00am: wave 1 - all women, 8.05am: wave 2 - men 20-24, 8.10am: wave 3 - men 30-34 etc).
- Your legs and arms will be numbered with your a race number.
- Affix your bike number to your bike (this is for security reasons, after the race you will then be able to get your bike out of the transition area)
- THIS IS THE TIME TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS. Make sure you 'check out' all exit and entry points, know the course and know where you are going, all courses should be marshalled. However do not rely on the marshals to give you directions, **make sure you know where you are going.**



"Make sure you check all entry and exit points."



Transition

You must register first, before proceeding into the transition area. Once in the transition area rack your bike and set up your race gear.

Once again, check out all exit and entry points in relation to where you have set up and racked your bike, (so you don't waste time trying to find out where you are coming back in off the bike) There will always be marshals and

technical officials in the area to direct you if necessary. *Another tip.... see if you can line yourself up with a landmark (eg a tree or pole). It's amazing how different a transition area can look during the swim – bike transition and bike – run transition.*

Generally no bags are allowed in the transition area, so ensure you make

allowances for when you finish the race as at the majority of races the transition area is closed until the last person has crossed the line. In some instances there will be an area provided to place your bag.

Race Briefing

The race briefing is extremely important, and is for your own benefit. The race briefing is compulsory for all competitors. At the race briefing the Race Referee will explain the rules of the race, the course details, announce any changes or concerns about the day.

Make sure you listen to the race briefing, as an excuse that you 'did not hear', will

not be accepted. *Please note: there are many rules and regulations in triathlon and they are there to ensure the safety of yourself and all your fellow competitors. Remember... our hard working technical officials are there looking after you, so show them some courtesy and...listen.*



Nutrition and Hydration

Make sure you hydrate well throughout the race. There will always be water and sometimes electrolyte drinks at the aid stations. As mentioned before, do not try new products or rely on the products provided on the day. Always be prepared and take your own, water, drinks and food etc.

Once again please note the recommended daily

allowance of hydration is 6-8 glasses per day for average activity so if you are training and racing this fluid intake will need to be increased.

"Do not try out new products or drinks on race day."

Pre Race Points

- Keep a log book to record your progress, weekly distances and times etc.
- Make sure you warm up and warm down at every training session, this includes stretching and a gradual increase and or decrease in pace and heart rate at the beginning and end of each training session.
- Stretching is extremely important it will help prevent injuries and your increased flexibility in the long term will help with your overall performance.
- Test yourself once every four weeks in time trials over a measured distance in all three disciplines to monitor your progress.
- Most important of all, have fun training, at times it can be a chore, but keep in mind your goal, remember you set yourself this goal, and you knew it would be challenging, so don't lose sight of it.



"Stretching is extremely important it will help prevent injuries."

The Race

Just before you start, go through your checklist in your mind, make sure you have everything in place, know where your bike is racked, where the exits and entry points are etc. *(A good idea is to check all this out before race day. Make a check list and pack your bag a couple of days before, that way, when you get down to the race, you know you have everything)* Don't be afraid to ask fellow competitors, remember they were all beginners once, and triathletes are always happy to offer some advice.

Are you ready.....lets talk you through it.

- The race is about to start...
- You have your goggles, swim cap, timing chip (if applicable), maybe a wetsuit and you are ready to start the race. *All of these things must come back into the transition and placed neatly at your area in the transition. (Do not throw your wetsuit, or goggles etc, just anywhere, they must be neatly placed out of the way.*
- After you have placed all of your swim gear out of the way, the first item to remember is to put your helmet on and do it up before you take your bike from the rack. Don't forget your bike shoes and make sure you have at least one water bottle on your bike.
- Proceed with your bike to the 'Bike Exit' to the Mount/Dismount line where officials/marshals will direct you.
- Always practice safe cycling, cycle in the bike lane or keeping left at all times. Stay out of the 'draft zone'; do not cross double white lines. Always watch out for police and marshals, pay attention to their directions and finally, watch out for other traffic.
- On return into the transition area, make sure you dismount at the Mount/Dismount line, and proceed back to your area in the transition. *Do not undo your helmet, it must be firmly on your head and done up until you have racked your bike in the same position as when you started. (Make sure your bike is neatly placed, as you must leave room for other competitors to rack their bikes in the same place.) Be courteous, think of fellow competitors.*
- *Please note: Do not throw your bicycle into the area and run off. If must be placed in exactly the same place and position as when you picked it up) finally take your helmet off.*
- Put on your running shoes, hat & sunglasses and proceed to the 'Run Exit'. On the run, make sure you hydrate well and follow the run route to the FINISH LINE....

Congratulations!...You have finished...



"Don't be afraid to ask fellow competitors questions, they were all beginners once."



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*The reasons for
entering have
nothing to do with
winning*

www.trinsw.org.au

Drafting

Your Draft Space

Imagine yourself on your bicycle and you are looking at the ground in front of you. Draw a rectangle around yourself. Starting at one and half metres on both sides of your front wheel, extend this 1.5m on both sides of you around you to 1.5m behind you. This rectangle should be about a 7metre box... This is Your Draft Space.

- At no time is anyone allowed to be in someone's draft space for more than 15secs.
- You are only allowed to be in someone's draft space if you are overtaking or being overtaken. Again this can only be for a 15sec duration.
- If you are being overtaken or someone is

attempting to overtake you, it is your responsibility to drop back or you would now be considered to be in a drafting zone. After you have removed yourself from the drafting situation you can then attempt to overtake.

Drafting Penalties

A stop/start penalty will be issued to you if you are in violation of drafting.

A stop/start penalty is issued as follows: a whistle is blown, your number will be called and a yellow card will be shown to you. You will then be instructed to stop. Once you have safely stopped you will be asked to dismount from your bicycle (on the gutter side) and lift your bicycle off the ground.

A draft violation statement is given to you and your race number is recorded. Once completed you will be instructed to proceed.

Two or more violations in one event will result in you being disqualified.

As a triathlete it is your responsibility to take the time to read and understand the rules in full detail. If you do not understand the rules and would like a complete detailed copy of the rules please ask an official or contact the Triathlon NSW office on 02 9518 7766.

Post Race

After the race, make sure you hydrate well and eat the fruit and drink that is provided to replace all the fluid you have lost. This is the time when everyone mix's and mingles and most importantly exchange all the details of their race.

You are not allowed into the transition area until after the

last competitor has finished. Therefore you are not allowed to take your bike or any equipment out of the transition area until after this time. Ensure you have a change of clothes available.

Security is important; to enable the security and safety of all competitors' equipment, you must show your race number to retrieve

your bike and equipment from the transition area. You are not allowed to take equipment out 'over the fence'.

Good Luck... have fun and enjoy your new sport

Well I guess that's about it...Welcome to the fantastic sport of Triathlon. Don't forget to check out the Triathlon NSW website www.trinsw.org.au for further information.

I hope this helps you on your way to the first of many triathlons. . Have fun, perhaps join a swim squad or

triathlon club. Remember.... it doesn't matter where you place. This is all about *you*. It's all about *you* accomplishing something for *you*.

Stay safe in training and don't forget.... moderation is the key to success.