

## Top Triathlon Tips

### Training

**Get a training plan (and use it!)** - especially if it's your first event or you're aiming to cut your time. You don't need to stick to it religiously, but it will give you an idea of how to structure your time and stop you falling back on just training in the area you're most comfortable with. Make sure you base your training on the course you're doing – e.g. are there lots of hills? Is the run off-road? Make sure you build up gradually (10% per week), and taper (cut down the volume) appropriately before the race.

**Iron out your weaknesses** - Identify your weak spots and focus on them in your training.

**Interval training for speed** - Make sure you do some base (easy) training, and steady state training to get used to the distance and intensity. But don't get stuck in steady state, to increase your speed, try some interval training.

### The Swim



#### Face the monsters!

If your swim is in open water, then get some open water practice in – you need to get used to your wetsuit and practice open water skills, as well as getting over any fears of what lurks beneath. There's an increasing number of lakes set up for swim training, or cold-water Lidos where you can get used to the cold water. See <http://bit.ly/1FHQt4N> and check out whether they hold swim races which are great practice.

#### Practice your open water skills

You won't have the lines on the bottom of the pool to guide you, so practice **sighting** - look for something in the right direction, then swim in that direction, raising your eyes forwards, then turn to breathe.

You save a massive amount of energy by **drafting** (swimming behind someone or on their thigh), but it takes some getting used to. Practice drafting and swimming close together in a bunch to get used to it.

Practice **taking your wetsuit off** as fast as possible after every session.

### Nutrition

**Training** - Make sure you're getting enough protein (exact amount depends on body weight but aim for around 20g) after training, as well as good quality carbs to replenish energy stores and boost your immunity. Experiment with anything you plan to eat on the day (before and during the race) in training to see what works for you.

**Race day** – Cut down on fibre in advance of the day, have a good breakfast with slow release carbs, with enough time to digest. Anything under 90 minutes, your body should have enough energy stored. More than that (e.g. Olympic distance) and you'll need to take on additional fuel, usually energy drinks (on the bike) or gels (on the run). Practice this in training to see what works for you and to train your stomach. Don't forget water during and after the race or post-race protein intake.

### The Bike



#### Get out in the fresh air

Spin, gym bikes and the turbo are great for developing your fitness and are often the most time-efficient bike training.

But bike fitness is no use without bike handling skills as well, so get out there and practice using your gears, cornering and general bike handling. And learn what clothes work for you for different weather – who knows what it will be like on race day!

#### Turn your bike session into a brick session

When you've finished on your bike training try and go immediately out for a run, even if it's just for 5 minutes. It's invaluable training to get used to the 'wobbly legs' you get coming off the bike and into the run, and for practicing your transition – how fast can you take your helmet off and get your running shoes on.

### The Run

Take your run to a new level by focussing on technique, as well as strength, mobility and stability training.

### The 4<sup>th</sup> discipline – transition



Practice, practice, practice - everything is much harder when you're tired, the adrenaline is pumping, and your hands are cold/ your legs wobbly. As you get closer to race day, practice a fast kit change over in every training session.

## Essential kit

- **What to wear** - the main issue is finding something tight fitting enough to wear for the swim that will also work for the bike and run. Generally swimming clothes aren't comfortable for running in and normal gym clothes are too baggy for swimming. A trisuit is best (it's tight fitting for the swim, has built in support (for women) for the run, and padding for the bike) but don't buy one unless you know you'll do another race. Otherwise a tight fitting top (e.g. compression) and cycle shorts (no pants underneath!) works well. Don't worry about them being wet for the rest of the race, you'll soon dry off/ get just as wet from sweat.
- **Wetsuit** (depending on if its outdoors and time of year) - ideally you want a swim wetsuit, a surf wetsuit is very heavy, look into hiring for your first race.
- **Bike** – if borrowing or hiring make sure you practice on it and it's fitted for you.
- **Puncture repair kit** (and the ability to use it!)
- **Goggles, swim cap** (caps are usually supplied by the race organisers, you can wear your own underneath)



Key triathlon rule – no nudity in transition!

## ....and the less essentials

- **Tri belt** – some races only give one number and you need it on your back for the bike and front for the run. You can make your own with elastic
- **Tri laces** – saves fumbling round in transition, especially useful if you are wearing bike shoes and so you'll have to change shoes twice
- **Towel** – to dry yourself off before the bike
- **Glasses** – for the bike/ run
- **Suncream, talc** (talc for your shoes and socks, to speed up transition, wetsuit lube – to stop it rubbing on your neck, and on arms and ankles to make removal faster)
- **Power meter, head unit etc** (all charged and paired).



## On the day

**The day before** - pack your kit and check your bike over to make sure everything is working ok.

**On the day** - get there early so you've got plenty of time to set up in transition. Rack your bike and set up somewhere you'll be able to find again in a rush, ideally near to an obvious landmark. Set out your stuff (on a distinctively coloured towel!) in the order you'll need them and facing the right way. Know where the run in/out and bike in/out are and practice finding your place from each. And leave time for the toilet queues!



Know where your place is among the sea of bikes!

**The race itself** - if you've got an open water start then get your face down as soon as you get in, it will be cold, but better to get acclimatised before the race starts. At T1 (first transition) put your helmet on before touching your bike and don't get on your bike til the mount line. Coming back in to T2 make sure you dismount before the line, and don't remove your helmet until you've racked your bike (back at the same place you started from).

## Other prep

**Know the course** – study the course map, know where the hills are, and the feed/water stations. Are there multiple laps? How will you count these (it's very easy to lose count!).

**Know the rules** - Some races are stricter than other. Main ones to be aware of – no drafting on the bike, helmet must meet ASA standards, bike handle bars must have stoppers etc.

For more tips see:

<http://feelfitwithlucy.co.uk/2014/05/15/first-triathlon-what-to-wear/>  
<http://feelfitwithlucy.co.uk/2014/05/16/first-triathlon-pre-race-prep/>  
<http://feelfitwithlucy.co.uk/2015/03/23/top10marathontips/>

**Feel Fit with Lucy:** 1 to 1 triathlon coaching and bespoke training plans to help you meet new challenges and achieve your potential. For more information contact Lucy on 07966 969 335 or [feelfitwithlucy@gmail.com](mailto:feelfitwithlucy@gmail.com)