

How do I prepare for a race?

The night before the race:

- Use a checklist to help you pack your race gear (see Appendix A).
- Have a healthy dinner including carbs.
- Set your alarm clock so that you have enough time to eat breakfast, go through your checklist one more time, get there and still have an hour before the race.
- Review race course if you have access to the course lay-out and visualize yourself racing it.
- Go to bed early!

Race Day – Before you head out to the race

- Check your bike to see if the air is still in your tires. If not, replace tubes/tires.
- Dress in layers: Swim suit/tri-suit, short-sleeved t-shirt, light sweatshirt and sweatpants. Depending on the day, it can be quite chilly in the morning and you need to keep your muscles warm.
- Eat a nice healthy simple breakfast at least two hours before the race.
- Arrive at the race at least an hour before the race begins. You will have lots of time to relax and take care of any problems without missing the event.

Race Day – Arrival at the event

- Bring your bike to the transition area find an open spot and rack your bike. Pick a spot that will be easy to remember or mark your spot with something bright (most of us are not very smart when we come out of the water!)
- Check with a TNS official at the transition area to see whether there are any designated areas for specific distances (tri-a-tri, sprint, Olympic, teams). Bikes are normally racked with the bike seat on the rack but some will hook their handlebars on the rack. Don't set up your area yet, and head to the sign in area. You will need to go through various line-ups.
 - TNS will need to confirm you are paid up with them. This is usually the area where you can place your name for draw prizes so don't skip it!
 - Registration line may be split into two: one for those who are pre-registered and another for those who are registering on race day. Do what you need to do.
 - Chip Timing. Many of the races now use chip timing so you will need to pick up your ankle chip. The timing device attaches to either of your ankles.
 - Body Marking. Most races will also mark up your arms and legs with your race number. Make sure you only go into this line up after you have your race number.
- Check whether wetsuits are allowed. The decision is made based on water temperature so it is seldom an issue in NS (with Bridgetown sometimes being the exception)
- Make sure you are drinking water while waiting for the race to begin.
- Go back to the transition area and chat with the racers around you. Everyone is nice!!
- Set up your transition spot
 - Remember, NO spectators are allowed in the transition area once it is closed.
 - Lay your towel next to your bike but be sure it doesn't overlap your neighbor's space. If possible, place it on the side of the bike that you normally walk with your bike (this avoids having to go around the bike to pick it up when you are ready to leave transition)
 - Fill up your water bucket and place it on/next to the towel (for sandy feet after the swim)
 - Neatly place the following things on your towel: bike shoes, sneakers, hat, sunglasses and anything else you might need for the bike and run. Make sure that your water bottle is on your bike.
 - Place your unbuckled bike helmet on your towel or on top of your handle bars with your sunglasses inside the helmet.
 - Pin your race number to your shirt or attach it to a race belt.
- Put the things that you don't need in your bag to cut down on the confusion and make sure it doesn't obstruct the transition zone.

- Go to the bathroom sooner than later, the longer you wait, the longer the line will be.
- Put on your wetsuit and sun screen. Get a friend to help you zip it up.
- If you decided to use some type of footwear for the jog between the swim and the transition area, place them in a spot near the water but out of the path of the racers. Try to identify a marker nearby to help you locate your shoes when you get out.
- Walk/run/jog the transition from the swim to your bike and memorize the path so it will be easier to find your bike when you get out of the water.

Race Day – Pre-race meeting

- **Attend the meeting**, it will be announced and listen for last minutes details on the course.
- **Remember that you are responsible to know where you are going.** The volunteers are there to help but won't be counting laps and may not know how to guide the tri-a-tri, sprint, Olympic racers, long-distance participants.

Race Day - Triathlon Start

- Head over to the water about 15 minutes before the start so you can get your body used to the water temperature and let your mind wrap around what you're about to do.
- Don't freak out! Talk to a fellow triathlete if you start to psyche yourself out.
- Be sure you have your wetsuit, cap and goggles on. Be sure that the wet-suit strap is where you can locate it after the swim.
- GO!!!! If you are a new triathlete or a novice swimmer, stay behind or to the outside of the main group. You can get hurt in the group if you are not a strong swimmer.

Race Day – Transition (T1) Swim to Bike

- Walk/jog up the beach/grass/pavement and over the timing mat. You may be wobbly, no worries, it's normal.
- Begin unzipping your wet-suit. The sooner you start to unzip and take off your wetsuit, the better. Dry wetsuits are hard to peel off.
- If you brought slip-on shoes, try to find them but if you can't, just head to transition without them.
- Take off your goggles and cap and place them on your towel. Remove your wetsuit.
- Rinse off your feet in the bucket and wipe your feet on your towel.
- Put your additional riding gear if you didn't swim with it.
- If you have a race belt, put it on with the number on your back.
- Put on your socks and cycling shoes/running shoes. Socks are optional but don't try to go sock free for the first time at the race... try it beforehand during practices.
- Put on your sunglasses and helmet. **You must have your helmet on and buckled before you're your bike.**
- Walk/Jog your bike to the bike starting point by following the traffic flow as designated by the race officials.
- **Do not ride it in the transition area or you will be disqualified.**
- Get on your bike **at the mount** line and ride!! Do not block the center of the mount line if you need time to get on your bike, stay off to the side so that others coming behind you don't ride over you 😊

Race Day – Bike

- Stay to the right.
- Be careful and aware of road surfaces (potholes, loose gravel and such).
- Be careful of traffic. You may be sharing the road with vehicles and/or runners competing in the run leg of the triathlon.
- Let bikers know when you plan to pass them by yelling "to the left".
- Drink some of your water throughout the course. This is a great time to rehydrate.

- Try to keep your shoulders relaxed and use your core muscles to propel yourself forward. Relax your jaw. Try not to put a death-grip on your handlebars.
- Try and stay as aerodynamic as possible. Keep your elbows, and knees tucked in and your head down -- but still looking at the road.
- Do not draft or you will be disqualified/penalized. Drafting is when you ride too close (10 metres) to the person in front of you.
- When you approach the end of the bike course, slow down and prepare to dismount **at the dismount line**. Again, if you need time to dismount, stay to the side, don't block the mount area.

Race Day - Transition 2 (T2), Bike to Run

- Jog/walk bike inside the transition area to your bike spot.
- It is illegal to ride your bike inside the transition area.
- Put your bike on the rack **where you picked it up!**
- Remove your helmet.
- Put on your running shoes if you don't already have them on.
- Run/Jog out of the transition area.

Race Day - Triathlon Run

- GO! Your legs will feel like jelly or lead or a combination of both if that is possible. Everyone's legs feel like that! It will pass.
- Cheer people on as they pass you or you pass them and thank volunteers, if it wasn't for them, the race wouldn't happen.
- Enjoy the run, you are 75% done!
- Be careful and aware of road surfaces (i.e. potholes, gravel, etc...).
- Be careful of traffic. Most races in NS do not close down the roads and you may have to share it with vehicles or cyclists completing their bike leg.
- Drink water at stations. Stop running a few metres before you get to the water stop, this way, you won't be choking when you drink the water. Take a cup and pour it over your head if it's hot outside, it will feel great!! (but your running shoes may get wet ☺)
- Actively relax your shoulders. Be conscious that you do not clench your fists or your jaw.

Race Day - Triathlon Finish

- Remember, the finish line where the timing carpet is -- not anywhere before that! Finish the race hard so you know that you did your best to the very end!
- YAHOO, throw your hands up into the air and finish the race like the triathlete you are!
- **Savor the moment, if just for a second. It's YOUR time!**
- Most of the time an official will be waiting just after the finish line to collect the ankle timing device. Return it at that time or you'll forget.

Race Day Checklist

Paper stuff

- Race Information and packet if already picked up
- Directions to race site
- Money for fees and a photo ID and health card

Swim Stuff

- Swim Suit/Tri suit
- Goggles
- Swim Cap
- Wetsuit
- Body glide (spray on Pam works)
- Shoes to use from the swim to transition, (optional)

Bike Stuff

- Bike (be sure the tires have air)
- Helmet
- Bike shoes/socks
- Bike shorts/top or trisuit
- Sunglasses
- Water Bottle
- Pump
- Bike repair kit
- Bike gloves

Run Stuff

- Running shoes
- Sun visor/hat

Other

- Towel
- Sunscreen
- A bucket or other container for rinsing your sandy feet. (a two litre milk container cut in two works good)
- Race belt
- Heart rate monitor/sports watch/GPS (optional)
- Nutrition/gels/energy drinks, etc.
- Extra snack in case the race gets delayed for some reason (fog is a good example in NS). You don't want to start the race hungry. You may also want to bring food for after the race if you think you may want more than what is offered at the race. Most races provide food at the finish line but types and amounts vary quite a bit. Some have meals but if there are various lengths of races, it may be a while before you eat if you did a tri-a-tri and have to wait for the half-ironman distance athletes to finish their race before the crowd is fed.
- If the race offers showers, bring soap, shampoo, comfy clothes, and an extra towel and get rid of the sweat and salt 😊