

Race Day Advice

For a full list of what kit to bring to the race, print out a copy of the race day checklist from the website. It is a good policy to mark all your kit with your name (particularly your wetsuit) before you go to a race, as it can often get mixed up with others in transition.

Two worthwhile purchases for novices doing their first race are a number belt and elastic lock-laces for your running shoes (both around £5).

NOTE: Personal stereos are not permitted in any race and will result in a DQ (disqualification) if you are caught wearing one.

Registration

- Make sure you arrive at your race with plenty of time to prepare (one hour ahead is the minimum!).
- Always ride your bike before taking it through to racking / transition as you never know what has happened to it during transportation. Be sure to leave it in an easy gear ready for the start of the bike leg.
- Attach your race numbers to your bike and helmet in accordance with your race instructions and take your bike through to transition. A marshal will check your numbers match those on your bike and can often check your bike over too. Make sure that you have bar-ends on your handlebars, or have taped over sharp edges if they are missing, as this is one of the things they will pick up on.

Transition

- Locate your bike racking area (which corresponds to your race number) and rack your bike by hanging it from the front of the saddle with the handlebars facing out ready to be led out to the "Bike Out" exit.
- With your rack location found, take time to walk around the transition area and come up with a way of easily locating your racking spot. It is better to choose a landmark to do this, as other competitors' bikes and kit may or may not be there when you exit your swim.
- Walk from "Swim In" to your rack and then to "Bike Out". Then walk from "Bike In" to your rack to "Run Out" and make sure you are very familiar with the route you will take.
- Bring your track pump into transition so that you can fully inflate your tyres half an hour or so before the start of your race.
- Load your bike with the energy drinks you will require in the race - this is down to personal preference and will also be determined by the length of your race. Make sure you are also carrying a small saddle bag with spare tube and tyre levers, and a minipump on your bike in case you get a puncture.

- Have a bin liner for rainy days to cover your kit bag/box. You can use it to take away your wetsuit and wet kit at the end of the day.
- Lay out your kit next to your bike in transition. Make sure that there is only your kit between your bike and the next one, and the competitor next you has their kit on the other side of their bike. Move things around if necessary.
- Place a small towel on the ground to help identify your spot, and also so that you can wipe your feet if they are covered in gravel/sand on exiting the swim. On this towel, place the rest of your kit:
- Put your bike shoes at the front nearest you (if not attempting the shoes on the bike routine) with the Velcro straps undone and opened up ready to go on. Put talc or Vaseline in your shoes in the areas you think are likely to rub
- Put your number belt on top of your shoes, unless you have your number pinned to your kit and are wearing it during the swim
- Nestle your helmet upside-down on top of your shoes with the front of the helmet closest to you and the straps untangled and opened out ready to go straight on your head. Putting the helmet on your aerobars is risky as the wind or other competitors could easily knock it off while you are doing your swim leg.

REMEMBER: put your helmet on first once you have taken your wetsuit off, as you will be penalised if you remove your bike from the rack before putting your helmet on. Likewise when you return to transition, rack your bike before removing your helmet

- Place your sunglasses opened inside your helmet ready to go straight on. You may prefer to put these on last as they can steam up when you've just got out of the swim
- Put your running shoes behind your bike shoes, with laces undone (if not using elastic lock-laces which are highly recommended) and ready to go on. Again, put talc or Vaseline in your shoes in the areas you think are likely to rub
- Have a spare drink bottle in transition that you can use to hydrate before the race and during transition if need be.
- Have arm warmers / gilet / warmer layer ready in transition in case needed
- Put some gels or energy bars in your back pockets or taped to your bike for ready access during the race

The swim and T1

- Always check the swim course before your race from as many angles as possible and try and pick out objects on the shore line which will help you sight the swim exit.

NOTE that because Upton Tri+ is a downstream swim you will have to walk upstream along the river bank to your start. This means a 1500m walk or a 750m walk. Please leave enough time to get to the start!!

- When you register you will receive a numbered bag with your race number etc in it. If you don't want to walk barefoot to the start you can put your shoes in this bag before entering the swim. They will be taken back to the registration tent where you can collect them at the end of your race on presentation of your race number.
- Make sure you thoroughly warm up before the swim. Do lots of arm swings and stretches. Put your goggles on first and then your swim cap, as this will prevent your goggles getting knocked off in the rough and tumble of the mass start. If conditions are cold, then wear a second swim cap underneath your race swim cap.
- If you can get in the water before your start, then try and get in beforehand and do some swimming to elevate your heart rate ready to race.
- As you wait for the gun to go off, make sure you tread water with one arm in front and one behind ready to kick and go as soon as the gun goes off. Don't get caught napping!
- As you come to the finish of the swim, engage your leg kick more to wake up your legs and get them ready for the run into transition.
- On leaving the water, put your goggles on top of your head and locate the zip cord of your wetsuit while running towards transition. Pull back the Velcro flap with one hand while pulling down the zip with the other. Make sure it goes fully down. Once the zip is down, pull off one shoulder and then the other and then pull one arm through and then the other. Pull the suit down to your waist and keep running towards your bike rack. You can take your swim cap and goggles off while you are running.
- When you arrive at your transition spot, pull the suit down to your knees and stamp on the suit to help get it to ankle level. At this point you can use your hands to ease the suit off over your feet. Throw the suit on top of your bag or over the racking bar.
- Then it's glasses on, helmet on, number belt on, bikes shoes on, unrack your bike and go!
- Don't mount your bike till you are in the designated bike mounting area outside "Bike Out". The marshals will tell you when you can mount the bike. Make sure your race number is clearly visible on your back.

The bike and T2

Make sure that you are familiar with the bike course and if it is multiple laps, come up with a failsafe plan for counting your laps.

Upton triathlon is a non-drafting event which means only single file riding is allowed and you must be at least 7m behind the bike in front unless you are overtaking (see next point). If you take shelter behind or beside another competitor or motor vehicle you will be penalised.

The draft zone is a rectangle measuring seven (7) metres long by three (3) metres wide which surrounds every cycle on the cycle course. The front edge of the front wheel defines the centre of the leading three (3) metre edge of the rectangle. A competitor may enter the draft zone of another competitor but must be seen to be progressing through that zone. A maximum of 15 seconds is allowed to progress through the draft zone of another competitor. If an overtaking manoeuvre is not completed within 15 seconds, the overtaking cyclist must drop back. When a competitor is passed by other competitors, it is his/her responsibility to move out of the draft zone of the overtaking competitor. A competitor is passed when another competitor's front wheel is ahead of his/hers.

If you puncture on the bike, your first priority is to find somewhere safe and hassle free to stop and change your tyre. Make it a clear patch of ground so you can put things down and not lose things if dropped. If it's the back wheel you should spin the wheel and click into the small rear cog before you release the brake calliper and take the wheel off. This will make it easier to get it back on in the right gear later.

REMEMBER: You should practice changing an inner tube before race day, so that you are familiar with how to do it. Try to stay calm while you change the tube.

As you finish the bike course, make sure you dismount the bike in the designated dismount area, and run through to your racking spot. **DO NOT REMOVE YOUR HELMET UNTIL YOU HAVE RACKED YOUR BIKE.**

Rack your bike this time by the handlebars, facing away from you. Then take your helmet off and remove your bike shoes (if you haven't left them on the bike during dismount).

Get your running shoes on and start running to the "Run Out" area. Slide your number belt round so that your number is on your front before you exit transition. If the marshals can't see your number, be ready to call it out to them.

The run

Make sure that you are familiar with the run course and if it is multiple laps, come up with a failsafe plan for counting your laps. Know where the water stations are before you race.

Run like a demon and finish the race !

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to buy a wetsuit? For most open water swims in Britain you will need a wetsuit, or you will find it very cold indeed. They are compulsory if the temperature is below 14°C. For most swimmers with poor technique, a wetsuit will actually improve your swimming times, as the added buoyancy will put your body in a much more stream-lined position.

How do I get my wetsuit on and off quickly? Getting your suit on can be greatly assisted by wearing socks on your feet to help them slide through. Many suit suppliers also give you a pair of gloves to wear which will prevent your finger nails damaging and perforating the neoprene. Baby oil on your arms and legs also helps the suit slide on without destroying the rubber (Vaseline tends to damage the neoprene). Once on, don't forget to smear baby oil or ky jelly around the neck to prevent chaffing. To get it off while racing - on leaving the water, locate the zip cord while running toward transition, pull back the velcro flap with one hand while pulling down the zip. Make sure it goes fully down. Once the zip is down pull off one shoulder, then the other, and pull one arm out, then the other. Pull the suit down to your waist. When you arrive at your transition spot, pull the suit down to your knees and stamp on the suit to help get it to ankle level. At this point you can use your hands to ease the suit off over your feet.

Should I wear my race number in the water? Race numbers are water proof, so there is no reason why you shouldn't pin them to your clothing under your wetsuit. However, if you are doing a pool swim or putting on additional clothing in T1, then it is best to put your race number on in T1. You can get a race belt rather than pushing safety pins through the technical fabric of your tri top. A race belt is a piece of elastic with attachments for your race number and it gives you the advantage of being able to position your number where you want it (generally, on your back for the bike and your front for the run). Be careful, as you can be penalised for not displaying your number, so be ready to shout your number to officials.

If I get a puncture in the race do I fix it myself? Yes, you are not allowed outside assistance. Some people give up if they puncture, but you can replace an inner tube within a couple of minutes with practice, so don't overlook this and make sure you know how! To do this you need to carry a spare tube, tyre levers and either a mini-pump or compressed gas pump. If in doubt as to whether to quit or fix it, try and assess how disappointed you will feel if you don't finish the race, versus a minute or two time delay.

Do I need to buy triathlon specific clothing to race in? It is certainly well worth doing so for the comfort it affords. Most tri-specific gear is made from fast-drying, wicking, technical fabrics that greatly enhance your comfort in the race. Tri-

specific shorts will also have a small degree of padding which is sufficient to make the bike section a good deal more comfortable.

How much should I eat or drink during the race? This is down to personal preference, and you should always find out what works for you in training before trying it for the first time in a race! Once you are racing it is easy to forget to drink and eat, but in a couple of hours of racing you definitely need to drink. It is also worth making sure you are properly fuelled and hydrated before the start of the race. Carry some energy drink on the bike so that you can refuel as you race, and taking a gel after 15 minutes on the bike and again 15 minutes before the end should be sufficient to see you through a standard distance event (remember to hydrate when consuming gels). There are normally drinks stations on the run, so find out where these are before you race.