

Introduction to Triathlon

What is a triathlon or duathlon?

Triathlon, simply put, is a race where you complete three (two in duathlon) disciplines in one outing. The standard sequence for a triathlon is typically Swim, Bike, and Run. For a duathlon it is usually Run, Bike Run.

Can anybody complete a triathlon?

As long as you are willing to make a commitment to train, you can compete in the sport of triathlon. With all the different race distances triathlons are for just about anyone. As with any strenuous activity, you should check with your doctor to determine if you are physically fit enough to attempt a triathlon. Although we truly believe that anyone can complete a triathlon, it does require a commitment to a regular training regimen. No matter what your fitness level is, every triathlete has days where they question why they are out there. You need to be able to answer that question.

What will you need?

Triathlon can be an expensive sport. You'll need a few key things that can range greatly in price. You can borrow or use items you already have to get started. Below is a list of the bare minimum items you will need. If you decide to stick with triathlons you will have a chance to make all kinds of upgrades to your equipment.

The Swim - You need a swimsuit, goggles, and a place to swim. Any swimsuit will work to get you started. Once you have been swimming for a while you will know what attire works best for you. Any type of swimming goggle will work. You will also need a pool to practice in. It can be at a gym or a public pool however a pool that is at least 25 yards in length is recommended. A shorter/smaller pool can work but as your swim skills improve you will probably want to find an Olympic size pool to train in. A good option is to join a local master's swimmers group. There is usually a coach to give you some technique pointers as well as workout buddies. Don't let the "Masters" title intimidate you. Masters is just a formal designation for swim training groups of individuals over the age of 18.

The Bike- you will need some type of bike. For your first few races just use what you have or can borrow. Although you can use a mountain bike for an on road triathlon, try and locate a road bike if you can. You will also need a helmet. This is one area you cannot skimp on. Your bike helmet must be ANSI, Snell or ASTM certified (label will be on the helmet) to compete in most races. You can purchase an acceptable helmet for

under \$50. You will also need some workout cloths to ride in. Use what you have to begin. Bike specific clothing with wicking material and padded bike shorts will make your time in the saddle more comfortable.

The Run- You can run in just about any type of clothing buy make sure to invest in a good pair of running specific shoes. Visit one of our running sponsors and they can help you choose the proper shoe for your running style.

The mental side of the sport

The mental aspect of triathlon is something a lot of people over look. It may seem trivial, but being aware of and managing your emotions during a race is important when things don't go the way you thought they would and can ruin months of work and training. For most of us, racing against ourselves or the clock should be the focus, not other competitors. Yes, once you get a little more experienced being able to push yourself will come in handy but trying to keep up with the sixty year old female that's passing you on the bike could ruin your entire race. And trust us gentlemen; you will be passed by a sixty year old female. For your first couple of races, just concentrate on finishing the race and feeling good about it. Set a personal standard and then, if you want, work to beat those times. One of the great things about our sport is there are three different disciplines and not many people excel in all of them. Race your own race and you will have a good day.

Where can you get help?

Most of the triathletes you will meet will be happy to help you discover the ins and outs of our sport. If you have a question just ask. One unwritten rule while cycling is that if you ever see someone on the side of the road, just ask if they need anything. The first time you are forty miles into a Saturday morning bike ride and on your third flat tire you will come to understand this rule.

Triathlon – It's not just an Ironman

Although some races can vary in distance there is usually a set distance. Races can last for a little over an hour all the way up the seventeen hour Ironman cut off. The distances below are typical of the different triathlon races

Sprint - 400-800 yard swim, 12 mile bike, 3.1 mile fun

Olympic or International - .9 mile swim, 24 mile bike, 6.2 mile run

Half Ironman - 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike, 13.1 mile run

Ironman - 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, and 26.2 mile run