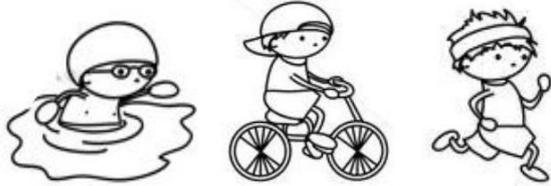


Somerset Try-a-Tri



*“The perfect
beginner’s triathlon!”*

TIPS Pt.5 – Those tricky transitions...

We always think of Triathlon as being a combination of 3 disciplines, but really there are 4 – in addition to swimming, cycling and running you have to transition between sports, and that transition process is timed and included in your final result for the race. So, it pays to give it some thought and make sure you’re prepared for those transition phases just as you are for the swim/bike/run.

The first thing you need to get clear about is your setup, the part that takes place before the race start where you rack your bike and lay out your kit on/under it. How you do this will depend on the kit you are using, so I have included details of two different setups in the pictures on the next few pages. Here’s a shot of the Try-a-Tri Transition area a couple of years ago, showing the bike racks (bikes are racked with the nose of the saddle resting on the bar).



If you have taken part in, or watched, a Triathlon before you may remember seeing people using boxes or backpacks to store their kit in transition, but a recent rule change from the British Triathlon Federation means that NO BOXES OR LARGE BAGS can be left in Transition. Your kit has to be laid out alongside, or on, your bike – most people lay it out on a towel or have items resting on the bike itself as shown below:



Once the race is underway you come into the Transition Area twice – firstly, after the swim (this transition is called T1) and then after you have finished the bike section (that's called T2).

I'm going to run through both with you, showing 2 different scenarios – one for someone with "all the gear" (bike with clip-in pedals, proper cycling shoes, Tri suit & Tri belt) and the other for someone using more basic equipment (bike with flat pedals, aiming to swim in trunks/costume then pull on a tee shirt for the other sections).

For both scenarios I'll explain how to arrange your kit before the start, then how to get through T1 and T2 ☺

ALL-THE-GEAR TRANSITION:



If you've got a Tri-Suit and clip-in shoes, you don't need extra clothing (unless the weather looks bad in which case have a gilet/jacket stashed on your bike) and you can rack your bike with the shoes already clipped in. As you can see from the pics above, rubber bands can be used to hold your shoes horizontal so they don't drag on the ground when you push the bike out of T1. In the setup above I've got a single race number attached to a triathlon belt and I've got that placed on my tri bars, under my bike helmet, so the number doesn't blow away. On the towel alongside the bike are the things I need for the run phase – cap and trainers (with elastic laces).

T1 – when you exit the swim, find your bike and stash your swim cap & goggles on the towel alongside your running kit. Put on your helmet first, then your triathlon belt with the number facing to the rear. Un-rack your bike and push it out of Transition and up to the Cyclists Mount Here sign – don't get on until you have passed the sign. Then you can pedal a bit with your feet simply resting on the pedals (the rubber bands will just break and ping off) before reaching down to ease your feet one at a time into the shoes and then pull the straps tight. That's it – T1 done!

T2 – when you return from the ride, ease your feet back out of your shoes so that you are riding with your feet resting on top of the shoes for the last 100m or so. Dismount before you pass the Cyclists Dismount Here sign, push your bike into Transition and re-rack it in the same spot that it was stored in before. Then remove and stow your helmet (on your towel or hanging from the Tri bars) and pull on your running shoes (and cap if required). As you head out of Transition to start the run section, slide your race number round from your back to your front so it is displayed on your front for the whole run. That's it – T2 complete.

BASIC GEAR TRANSITION:



This is Transition for someone planning to swim in shorts or swimming costume then pull a Tee shirt on over the top for the cycling and running. The bike is not an ideal Triathlon machine but it's perfectly fine for the Try-a-Tri and the owner has sensibly swapped the standard chunky mountain bike tyres for slick road tyres – a cheap way to make it faster on the road. Unlike the owner of the Tri Bike, Tri Suit and Tri Belt, this athlete is only going to need one pair of shoes for the whole race – their running trainers. They will need a race number displayed on both their back and front though, so these are pre-pinned to their tee shirt in advance (long sleeve top if weather looks cool).

T1 – after stashing your swim cap and goggles on the towel, pull on your tee shirt then put on your helmet. Last come the trainers – once you have these on you are ready to push the bike out of T1. Remember not to mount the bike until you pass the Cyclists Mount Here sign. You don't have the complication of having to get your feet into your shoes while riding that the owner of clip-in shoes has, so in some ways the T1 process is simpler.

T2 – returning from the ride, dismount before you pass the Cyclists Dismount Here sign then push your bike into Transition, storing it in the same spot on the rack that you took it from (nose of the saddle hanging over the bar, as before). Then you can remove your helmet, stowing it on the towel or hanging off the handlebars, before pulling on your cap (if required) and running out of Transition. The fact that you don't have to change your shoes makes things nice and simple.

TRANSITION TIPS:

*It's good to have talcum powder or Vaseline in your shoes to help with getting your feet in easily (especially with wet feet!).

*[Elastic laces](#) save lots of time.

*[Triathlon Belts](#) (aka Race Number Belts) are well worth having.

*Memorise your transition routine and repeat it to yourself as you approach T1 and T2 – in my case when I'm jogging out of the swim section towards T1 I'm saying "glasses, helmet, number, bike" to remind myself of the order I have to do things in.

*That reminds me – if you wear glasses, the easiest thing is probably to stow them in your bike helmet and put them on before you do anything else in T1. Same goes for sunglasses if you want to ride/run wearing them.

*Stashing your gear on a towel makes it easy to see what's what (compared to it being laid out in the grass) and by standing on the towel you can dry your feet a bit before you have to get them into your shoes.

*Read our other Try-a-Tri Tips about kit, clothing and Triathlon Rules as these all affect what you have to do in Transition.

*Bikes have about 60cm of space each in the Try-a-Tri. The standard for a Triathlon is usually 50cm. Bear this in mind when setting up your kit in practice and on race day – 60cm is not a lot!

*Practice Transition. Don't make race day the first time you try it.

Remember to get in touch if you have any questions at all about Transition. Your Race Director will be very busy on Race Day so he's more than happy to answer emails with questions beforehand ☺.

GOOD LUCK!

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