

STARTING OUT IN TRIATHLONS

THE RUN



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About the Author

With 30 years' experience in cycling and triathlon, Colin Leeson is a leading authority in affordable, quality performance components for the cycling and triathlon industry.

Colin is the owner and manager of the brand **TLR Performance** which supplies a broad range of Cycling, Running and Triathlon products. He has a passion for sport and loves competing in triathlons and sharing his knowledge with others.

Introduction

Triathlon is a unique sport combining the three disciplines of Swimming, Cycling and Running. Triathlons come in a variety of sizes and difficulties ranging from introductory events for first timers, through the sprint distance events and up to the ultimate endurance event the "Ironman Triathlon".

Many people come to the sport of Triathlon having previously focused on one of the three sports. In my case this was both cycling and running where, as a teenager I was a very competitive runner and keen recreational cyclist. It wasn't until I was in my mid 20's that triathlons started to become more well-known and after being invited to come watch a friend at this Australian event called "Noosa Triathlon" I decided to form a team and have a go for myself. Well I went in the event and was immediately hooked and have been doing triathlons ever since.

Starting the TLR Performance brand gave me the fantastic opportunity to contribute to, and make a living out of a sport that I love.

In the "**Starting out in Triathlons**" series of eBooks I will share my experiences and take you through the basics of triathlon and cover topics which will help you understand how a triathlon event works, the equipment you will need including where best to spend your money, some of the Gotcha's you may come across, training programs and a multitude of tips.

I hope you get some real value from this series and hope to see you in a triathlon event somewhere, sometime.

Colin Leeson

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Cover: The author, Colin Leeson finishing the inaugural 2013 Sunshine Coast 70.3 at Mooloolaba, QLD, Australia.

The Triathlon Run Leg

The swim and bike legs are done, you have been through transition twice and now the only thing between you and the cheering crowds at the finish line is a run.

By this stage in most triathlons it is starting to get pretty hot so one of the biggest things you have to worry about now is keeping as cool and hydrated as you can. Other than that though, it's basically all about putting one foot after another until you finish.

In this eBook we will focus on the triathlon run leg and cover how to prepare for the run, what to expect during the race and talk about some ways of improving your time in this leg.

Check out the other eBooks in the "Starting out in Triathlons" series to get a more in-depth description on other specific topics.

Preparation

Preparation for the triathlon run leg isn't too complicated. There will be a few considerations you have already dealt with about running shoes in particular and your transition will need to be set up to both make your change quick plus ensure you remember everything.

We will cover these topics in moderate detail in this eBook.

Run Gear

At the end of the bike ride you will be wearing your tri suit (or bike shorts and a singlet if you haven't yet purchased a tri suit), your sunglasses, your race timing chip and some type of race timing and heart rate measuring watch if you have one. To move to the run leg all you need to do is add your running shoes, your race number and probably a hat.

Shoes

Shoes are another one of those personal preference subjects with many brands and types available. Of course my advice is to shop around and find a shoe that works well for you.

It has taken me a while to get into this position but now I have two pairs of good running shoes both of which are Mizuno brand.

- My main running shoes are Mizuno Wave Rider 16's. They are a good trainer shoe because they are cushioned enough for long runs. I use these for most of my training and for races ½ Marathon and longer. They weigh 298 grams each.
- My second set of running shoes are Mizuno Wave Ronin 5's. These shoes are very light race shoes and are intended for shorter events say 10k or less due to the minimal cushioning in the shoes. I haven't yet but may use them in a ½ marathon if my feet are feeling really good. They weigh 214 grams each and feel much lighter on my feet.

You can comprehend the benefit of the weight difference when you consider you are lifting almost 100 grams extra every step you take.

Just think every 11 steps wearing the heavier of my two shoes means lifting an additional kilogram and in a 10k run where you are likely to do somewhere between 8000 and 10000 steps you will lift an additional 800+ kg's over the course of the run because of the shoe on the end of your foot!!!

This shows very clearly the value in getting a light set of race shoes. Even if you do have to wait until you have the money spare to spend on them like I did, it is something put on your list of things to get at some stage.



Elastic Laces

Elastic shoe laces are a must for triathlons and are a very cheap and effective way of reducing time in a triathlon transition. They are beneficial both because they are very quick to put on and that you won't have the problem of laces coming undone during a race.

Race Number Belt

A race number belt is simply an elastic strap with clips on the end to buckle it together and some elastic "toggles" used to fasten a race number. These belts are very quick to put on and mean you don't have to pin race numbers to shirts in any type of running event.

Transition setup

The run part of your transition normally only contains your shoes, race number and a hat if you choose to wear one.

I did the Hell of the West Triathlon in Feb 2013 which is the middle of summer in Australia. The event is close to ½ Ironman length with a 20km run late in the morning. I forgot to grab my hat as I ran out of transition and suffered terribly in the heat and wished for every second that I had remembered my hat.

Now I focus on placement of my run items to make sure I remember to put them on.

You can see in the picture my hat is on top with the race number upside down ready to strap around my waist and the shoes last.



Incidentally in a longer event like the Hell of the West you would likely be picking up some more nutritional items like Gels as well in this transition. This is just what I was doing when I missed the hat. The lesson here is if you do something different like add stocking up on nutrition to the transition process, do it in a way that won't confuse you and practice it.

It's time to get on the run course!!!

So it's time to wrap this thing up in this triathlon. You have completed the swim and ride and had two smooth visits through transition and you are heading out for the run. This is when the race starts to feel good. You get a kick of adrenalin as the crowd cheers for you as you head out on the run. You soon move away from the crowds and find your legs feel heavy and it's getting very hot. It's time to focus for a little longer and keep moving towards the finish.

Rules

There isn't really a need for rules in the run. Basically your torso has to be covered, you need to wear the race number and you have to run without assistance. There are rules about outside coaching and pace setting which are more relevant for an elite triathlete.

Pace

As you start the run your legs will feel heavy and somewhat lifeless. This is due to the way the muscles are being used differently from how they just were on the bike. Triathletes train for running after riding to get used to this. As you start your run, be aware that this will happen and keep pushing through it. Within 5-10 mins your legs should start to feel pretty much normal again and you can go on to finish the race. During this time you will feel like you are running really slow but the feeling can be deceiving and you will find you are running better than you thought.

I use a Garmin 910 XT wrist device to assist on the run. It records and gives readouts of many things but these are the items I use to manage my pace during a run:

- The heart rate monitor to keep an eye on my heart rate. After training with the watch I know the heart rate number at which I begin to fatigue quickly and try to stay under it.
- The running pace value. This gives a live figure on the mins / km pace I am running at.
- An alert every km to display the time for that last km.
- A 10 min repeating timer for my nutrition program. (continuing from the bike)
- Total time. If I am trying to achieve a time goal I keep an eye on this.

The remainder of the data is uploaded to a website after the event and can be used to diagnose my performance.

Devices like these are also an expensive investment costing \$400 - \$500 but they are very worthwhile.

Finish

It's a great feeling as you come closer to the finish on any lap of the race, but as you approach it for the last time you feel ecstatic. Of course the longer and tougher the event the better this feels. The finish of the Ironman after 12 hours and 20 minutes is a feeling that I will never forget.

As you finish you will run down a finish chute and under the finish banner where the electronic timer will register you as finished. Try to remember to listen for the person on the PA system to call out your name because it's pretty cool to hear.

If you have family and friends go and greet them because they will be proud of your achievement and excited for you.

Post-race

After the race you will go to the recovery area where you can have a drink to get rehydrated and usually some fruit etc. to eat. Rehydrating is important and you will feel thirsty for a while afterwards so drink what you can.

I like to go back to the edge of the course as quickly as I can to see all my friends finish their races.

Note. You may be keen to get your bike from the transition area and leave. You need to be aware that transition stays closed until after the last competitor has finished the ride so you can't get your bike till then. Sometimes this can be quite a wait if you are in an early starting wave.

For more advanced information look for the other eBooks in the "Starting out in Triathlons" series.