

Duathlon's for Beginners FAQ

Provided by: Wisconsin Duathlon Series

Duathlon events are wonderful for experienced multisport and beginner athletes alike. This FAQ article was written for beginner participants to help overcome any questions or nerves going into a duathlon event. As your reading through this article keep one thing in my, ANYONE can #DOtheDU, all you need is some motivation, a bit of dedication and a never quite attitude. Remember, this is for FUN!



- **What is a duathlon?**

A duathlon is a multisport event that combines running and biking into one event. The most common format for a duathlon event is a run, bike and run combo.

Run #1 + Transition to Bike + Bike + Transition to run + Run #2 = DUATHLON FINISH



- **What is the “normal” distance for a duathlon?**

There is not technically a “normal” distance for each segment of a duathlon but for a reference most of the Wisconsin Duathlon Series events consist of a run between 1 and 4 miles, a bike between 10 and 20+ miles and another run between 1 and 4 miles. The exact distance for each event can be found on the event website with course maps also available for your reference. (We recommend that you look at the course maps for each event before it starts so you know the course)

- **Is everyone who races really good and serious?**

The great thing about duathlons is that EVERYONE is welcome regardless of ability without the limitation of needing to know how to swim. ANYONE can Run/Walk and Bike to finish a duathlon event. With that being said yes just like a local 5k/10k event some people are really good and take the sport seriously/competitively. Also just like a local 5k/10k event some people are very beginners and are just out to enjoy the event and not worry about their finishing time.

- **Are mountain or commuter bikes OK or do I need a fancy and expensive road or tri bike?**

The answer to this question is very similar to the above question. EVERYONE is welcomed without the need for an expensive bike. Long answer short, yes, mountain, fat tire or commuter bikes are welcome. As long as the bike uses your legs as means to move it (or arms for the handicapped) and not an external power source you're set.

- **What do I wear when I compete in a duathlon event?**

Your choice of clothing for a duathlon event varies greatly on the expected weather on race day and the amount you want to spend on “multisport specific” clothing. Duathlon events can happen at ANY time of the year with many happening in the spring and fall months. If it is warm, then shorts and a shirt will work fine. If it is chilly or darn right cold, a jacket, long fingered gloves, and even long tights may be your best option. KEY TIP, practice what you are planning on wearing for the race BEFORE the race. This will make sure that your clothing choice is A comfortable and B practical for the event.



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We highly recommend talking to your local multisport specialty store or an experienced multisport athlete for details on this subject but below are some tips.

Lower Body: First, we'll address the article of clothing that brings up the most questions.....shorts! While **running shorts** work great for running they have no padding for the bike and have lots of wind *drag* while riding your bike. For another perspective **bike shorts** are more aerodynamic and the padding is certainly nice when you are riding your bike for what could be an hour or more. BUT if you have ever run in a pair of bike shorts, the feeling can only be described as what a baby must feel like when walking around with a diaper on. As you may be able to tell both will work fine but a great alternative to either of them is a pair of **duathlon shorts** but better known as "**Tri Shorts**" These shorts are similar to a bike short, except they have slightly shorter legs, and a thinner pad that will not bother you when running.

Upper Body: This is really up to your preference with the similar guidelines as above, a Jog bra, a tank top, or a shirt etc. The one thing to keep in mind is that you will not only be running in this article of clothing - you will be biking in it as well, and you do not want to be dressed in a sail when you are biking. Often a short sleeved or sleeveless bike jersey works best, and the zippered front will allow you to cool down if the temperatures rise before the second run.

Again we recommend you talk to a specialty dealer such as Endurance House but know that most anything will work well it's just a matter of figuring out what will be the most comfortable for you on race day.

- **How do I train for "Multisport event" such as a Duathlon?**

This is an inevitable question that anyone getting into the sport will have, how do I train for this duathlon? Just like many of the answers above it all depends on your goals and objectives of competing in a duathlon event. Whether it's to simply finish the event with a smile on your face, go XX amount of time or place XX in the event your training should be modified accordingly. Long answer short no matter your goals or objectives is 2 basic things, RUNNING and BIKEING, how exciting is that!! ☺

Lucky for you we are so excited to help you join us at the next Duathlon event we have designed a few different training programs for you to choose from. Just Click Here!

- **What do I do with my bike while I am out doing the running portions of the event?**

While you are out enjoying the running portions of the duathlon you will need to place your bike in what is called the **transition** area. This is an area surrounded by fencing of some kind that contains bike racks for all competitors in the race. More often than not bike racks will hold around 8 bikes each and ether assigned individually or in "bib number" ranges. Once you select a spot on the bike racks, this will be "*your*" transition spot. When you finish the first run, you will come to this spot and retrieve your bike. When you finish the bike ride, you will return it to the exact same spot on the bike racks and begin your run. After the race is finished, you can return to your transition spot and reclaim your bike.

- **Explain how this "Transition Area" works?**

Once you have picked out a spot for your bike, lay out a towel on the ground beside your bike, being careful not to take the space of your neighbor. It is rude to set up a huge spot in transition, make sure everyone has room. Bringing coolers, foot baths, and other large gear into transition is not needed.

In your "transition spot" lay out your bike shoes (if you use them), bike helmet, sunglasses, gloves, food or whatever else you may need during the race onto your towel. *The rules, however, state that no glass, pets, friends, or family are allowed into the transition area.* For the safety and security of your gear, the transition area is reserved for **athletes only**.

Next, take a walk through the transition area. Find the entrance where you will come in after the first run, and make sure you can quickly locate your bike. At every race, there are a handful of racers who frantically search for their bikes following the first run. A practice walk from the transition entrance to your bike will help you to



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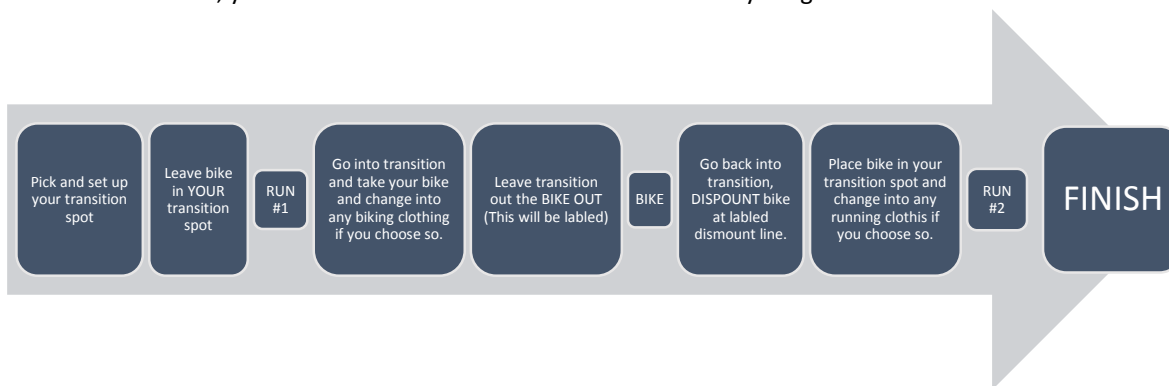


avoid this problem. Likewise, you will want to find the exit you will use to start the bike, the entrance you will use when you finish the bike, and the exit you will use when you start the final run. *The RunIn/Out and BikeIn/Out will be labeled accordingly.*

You may NOT ride your bike in transition, you will have to walk/run to the mount line just outside the transition area which will be labeled before you may get onto your bike. When you finish the bike ride, you must dismount at or before the dismount line and run/walk your bike back to your transition spot.

You will rack your bike in exactly the same spot where you racked it before the race. If you use a brightly or uniquely colored towel to mark your spot, it will make it easier to find after cycling.

After the race, you can return to the transition area to reclaim your gear.



- **What time should I show up for the race?**

We usually recommend 60 to 90 minutes before the race start. You will have to pick up your race number (if you did not do this before at early packet pick up the day before), go to the bathroom, warm-up and stretch, and unlike a single sport event like running, multisport racing requires you to stage your gear (in transition). If this is your first multisport event you are bound to have some questions so leave some room to have those answered. After a few races you will become more efficient, understand how everything goes and can modify your arrival time accordingly.

- **How are these Duathlon races timed?**

Tick Tock Timing times all the Wisconsin Duathlon Series events and use multisport timing straps. Each participant will receive an ankle strap that is used to determine your time. You must fasten the strap to your ankle prior to the start of the event. NO chip = NO time. This timing strap will automatically register your time as you start/finish each leg of the race, and when you cross the finish line.

Participants will also receive a paper bib number that must be worn on the front of the shirt, or on a race belt, with the number visible on the front when entering/exiting transition. In select races, you may also receive a bike frame number which must be affixed to your bike frame prior to the start of the race.



- **What are some duathlon rules that I need to know?**

There are a few rules to the sport of duathlon, and they are all enforced for athlete safety and to keep the race fair.

- You must start in the wave that you have been assigned to. In order to keep the course relatively uncrowded, racers begin the race in groups or waves, separated by a few minutes. Waves are typically assigned based on age group or category such as relay teams. Starting in your pre-assigned wave is mandatory.
- You must know and complete the entire course, this includes entering and exiting the transition area at the proper place.



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- No cycling in the transition area, you must run or walk your bike out of transition and past the Mount line before getting onto your bike.
- Anytime you are on the bike, including before and after the race, you are required to wear a helmet and have it buckled. Any competitor who unbuckles his/her helmet while on the bike, or who mounts his/her bike with an unbuckled helmet will be disqualified. A good rule of thumb is to buckle your helmet before you take your bike off the rack, and when you finish cycling, wait until you rack your bike before you unbuckle your helmet.
- Drafting, or cycling directly behind or alongside another competitor, is strictly prohibited, as it provides an unfair advantage in an individual sport. You must leave at least 3 bike lengths between your front wheel and the rear wheel of the bike in front of you. If you choose to pass another cyclist, you must pass on the left, and you have 15 seconds to get your front wheel past the front wheel of the person you are passing. The person being passed must then fall back 3 bike lengths before trying to re-pass you. This way, two cyclists won't be riding side by side going back and forth for miles.
- You must ride to the right side of the road, so that a passing cyclist can pass on the left. Riding on the left side of your lane is called blocking, and carries a time penalty for the offender.
- No crossing the center line of the road, even to pass.
- You must dismount your bike before the dismount line just outside of the transition area and run or walk your bike into the transition zone.
- Other rules include no glass, pets, friends, family, or nudity in the transition area, and no pets, baby joggers, ipods, or outside assistance allowed during the race.

- **Can I wear my iPod?**

NO, they make a race very unsafe. Most races are contested on roads that are open to traffic. An iPod limits your ability to hear cars, other participants, and the instructions of race officials. Wearing an iPod in a race will result in either a time penalty or disqualification at any multisport event held anywhere. Please leave your iPod in your car or transition area.

- **How do relay teams work?**

Duathlon relay teams are composed of 2 team members. One person is the runner, the other is the biker. The runner will begin in a starting wave with the other relay teams and complete the entire run course. The runner then runs through the transition area and transfers the timing chip and ankle strap to the ankle of his biker teammate. The biker then completes the entire bike course, and transfers the timing chip and ankle strap back the runner. The runner now completes the second run course, crossing the same finish line as the solo racers.



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