

# **HERT**

## **Getting started – how to do it right!**

It's ok to be a beginner! But getting started can be an overwhelming experience, both and adventurous and intimidating with so many options and experts all to do with which events to do, how to train, joining a club, selecting a coach, choosing equipment do I need now and what can I get later.

We've helped countless fitness enthusiasts and recreational athletes get started in triathlon know the pathways that give the best experiences and results. There are five basic areas to pay attention when getting started and they help provide valuable information and enjoyment within your needs.



### **1. Sign up for an event you can manage**

As a sport triathlon is a swim, cycle and run event performed in that sequence. When it comes to events they differ in the lengths of each component (swim, cycle and run). We recommend beginners start out initially competing in an event that caters for beginners such as a club event or a recreational event such as BRW. These events are shorter in duration and you don't need specialised equipment and the training and nutritional demands will not exceed your capacity. Typically they will be between 30 minutes and 90 minutes for a beginner.

### **3. Train smart and stay injury free**

Training for your first event is a great way to get fit. Focus on the three disciplines of triathlon such as swimming, cycling and running and also some general strength and stretching to keep balanced – consistent injury free training is the key. As a rule check the event distances of each leg and practice doing that distance in a single session. For example if the swim is 400m long then work up to being able to swim 400m continuously before the event. One of the main mistakes beginners make is trying to do too much take your time to build up and ask questions.

It is also a good idea to perform what are called "brick sessions". These sessions are a combination sessions. For example you may do a 10km bike ride followed by a 2km run. Remember you are starting out so the idea is not to go as fast as possible; the goal is to pace yourself and finish. It is a good idea to do a brick session before a race as running alone is different to running after cycle because you're legs will be tired.

There is a difference between skill and fitness. You may be really fit but still a beginner so an experienced triathlete with less fitness may often beat you due to skill – fitness is easy but learning skill can make you even faster.

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### **3. Keep equipment simple**

Triathlon is a great way to have fun, get fit, meet new people and enjoy the outdoors. Best of all you don't need specialised race bikes, wetsuits etc to get started. All you need is a basic bike, ideally with gears, a helmet, swim gear and running shoes. If you have these you are ready to go training.

**Bike:** Ideally use slick tires as they roll faster and it makes riding easier. A road bike is helpful as you'll have gearing more suitable to riding on the road and saving energy. If you need advice an experienced athlete or coach is ideal and will save you money in the long run.

**Helmet -** One area to spend on, even as a beginner is your helmet. The better the helmet the safer it is and you may only get one chance in an accident. Choose a helmet with a good strap, plastic around the entire helmet and also a secure and adjustable locking system around the back of the helmet.

Once you have done a few events you will know how much you are going to enjoy the sport and how regularly you will train for them. This will help you make choose the more specialised equipment such as wetsuits, race bikes and race wheels.

### **4. Join a club**

As a beginner it's good to join a club that has experience with beginners and an active program catering to beginners needs so you get the attention you need to gain experience in training, improve and feel comfortable. You may find you are training closer to work so join a club that works for you. Some clubs offer training some are formally coached, others are informal group sessions.



### **5. Set goals and achieve them**

Motivation, challenge and fun will stretch you and ensure you achieve more. Beginners are not about setting records to begin with. You want to enjoy the sport, improve your fitness and have fun without compromising your family, friends or work but you still want and need to improve and challenge yourself.

When you are tired finding the fun can be challenging so a good coach will make things fun, interesting and manage the training so you don't get too tired or injured and keep things in perspective – it can be easy to get drawn into the sport.

A good coach will ensure you can achieve this and still enjoy the rest of your life. It is important to select a coach or program that is compatible with your goals and lifestyle, if the program does not match this then it won't be of much value. We always say triathlon should enrich your life not define it and we provide advice around this.

Finally congratulations on making a start, everything gets easier from here. Join our newsletter today to receive regular "how to tips". We'd love to see you join our club, attend a workshop or come and train at squad and are waiting to hear from you.