

Swimming, Cycling and Running Tips

26 Top Tips from Iron Man Competitors

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We asked 19 Iron Man competitors for their top swimming, cycling and running tips. If you are training for an event, looking to maintain a level of fitness or just wanting to improve your swimming, cycling or running then there will be at least one useful tip here for you.

Swimming

1. Slower is better. Take long, slow relaxed strokes and make sure to finish the stroke.
2. Imagining scooping water past your hip or 'zipping up an imaginary pocket' helps.
3. The breath out is as important as the breath in - exhale powerfully underwater.
4. Swim 'on your chest' or as if swimming 'downhill'. This helps to streamline the body and keep the legs up; dragging low legs behind causes 'drag' and thus is what will slow down and ultimately exhaust you.
5. Kick from the hips not the knees.
6. Swimming is a technique sport so will need to be practiced regularly for progress.
7. Great for toning the body - works chest and triceps really well.
8. Concentrate on technique drills over distance.
9. Never open water swim alone, preferably have someone with a kayak with you.
10. Check tide and currents where you want to swim.
11. Know your limitations.

Cycling

1. Great for aerobic and anaerobic endurance.
2. Similar principles as kayaking in keeping that upper body stable for long periods.
3. Heel down when pedalling.
4. Kick toes forward as if repeatedly kicking an imaginary wall when pushing forward.
5. Mix up long and shorter more intense sessions.
6. Ride as short or long or as fast as you want but ride as often as you can so your body adapts to bike.
7. Be prepared for weather conditions and stick to your planned route.
8. Carry a repair kit and make sure your bike is readily serviced.
9. If cycling alone then always take a mobile phone.

Running

1. Get a nice pair of trainers and away you go.
2. Run long **OR** fast but not both unless racing.
3. Wear appropriate clothing especially good footwear on coast path.
4. Take sufficient water and nutrition with you if running long distance, a fuel belt is advised.
5. Don't run with an injury.
6. Running for Ironman is more about training off the bike rather than too many long runs.

For all three - recovery sessions must be super easy. They're done for recovery and are not a "half training/ half recovery session" like many consider them to be.

The most common advice was;

“Get a plan and stick to it, also sort your diet out!”