



Athlete Smart™ – Triathlete Self-Reliance Training and Racing Tips:

Presented by Earl Walton, IRONMAN's Global Director of Training and Coaching.

"The greatest gift that IRONMAN has given me is knowing that with proper preparation, I am capable of anything" – Every IRONMAN Athlete

The following tips focus on the IRONMAN® athlete's ability to be self-reliant on race days. These are skills every athlete should possess to assure their personal safety while training and their ultimate success on race day.

Practice these skills today and repeatedly as you prepare for your event.

IN-TRAINING: BUILD SELF-RELIANCE AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR FITNESS

How do you carry nutrition?

Your long training day prep should always include the tools you will use on race day. Practice using a hydration pack or race vest on long bike and/or run days. This will limit your need to utilize each aid station out on course and give you the ability to move through the course more efficiently.

Make sure you have also practiced your nutrition plan during your long training rides/ runs so you have your it dialed-in for race day.

How well do you know your course?

Practice your planning skills so you can execute flawlessly. For training and racing, course knowledge is critical to success. The change in terrain and location of the aid stations and special needs will help you plan your day. Practice this by making similar plans for your training courses. Create time-based plans and have an "A", "B" and "C" plan. This will help you prepare nutrition needs no matter what the day throws at you.

Can you change a flat? Fix a dropped chain?

Practice changing the tube or tubular of your bike before heading to your event. Do some dry runs while at home to make sure you are 100% comfortable if you need to change a tire or a tubular tire on race day. Also make sure to bring an additional tube(s) or tire with you to carry during the event in case you have to make a change. You can also drop an extra tube or tire into your bike special needs bag.

If you are not totally comfortable with bike maintenance, have your bike tuned up by a mechanic prior to race weekend. This should include making sure your brakes are in good working condition, as well as checking your tires. If you plan to switch to a racing wheel on race day, make sure you have a mechanic check your bike with your racing wheels on.

PRE-RACE: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Nutrition: Plan well, shop early, pack right!

Pack your bags a full week ahead of race day. This assures that you arrive at the event prepared with all your nutritional needs for race day. This includes any hydration, food, or any other nutritional items you plan to use on race day. You can use this [packing list](#) as a guide and only check off the items when you place them into your race gear bags.

Racing Gear

Come to the event prepared with all your race day gear, including items such as your bike shoes, helmet, racing kit, wetsuit/ speed suit, etc. Only in an emergency should you purchase an essential race day item for use that weekend. We recommend laying out your swim, bike and run gear before you pack. Take a picture of each so you can refer back and make sure you have not forgotten anything.

Additionally, practice removing your wetsuit, simulating race conditions.

Athlete Guide: The Key to Your Schedule

The Athlete Guide is the key to your weekend – where you need to go and who you need to interact with. The IRONMAN Team are working to keep the contact points and crowds to a minimum and this is where you can find the details of these specifics for your race site. The more you know prior to arrival, the better you can plan your time. If you've raced before, don't assume the information hasn't changed from year to year or event to event.

Athlete Guide: Read it again

Make sure to read the Athlete Guide a couple of times prior to arriving on site. Pay close attention to the number and location of aid stations, location of bike and run special needs (on IRONMAN events only), as well as your designated athlete check -in time and bike and gear bag drop-off time (if applicable). Also make sure you have a parking plan for race day to limit the stress for race morning. Planning ahead of time will lead to a successful race day!

Family and Fans: A source of energy and a stress

Family is the ultimate energy giver on race day, but can also be the greatest stressor in the days leading up to the event. Don't play host all weekend. Develop a specific schedule for meals and entertaining that allows you to achieve your pre-race goals and respects the needs of all members of your entourage.

Plan ahead with your family/ supporters so you know where to meet up with them post-race. It will be best to pick a location away from the immediate finish area to avoid larger crowds.

You can also utilize the event Athlete Guide to determine a spectator friendly area along the course for family/ supporters to cheer you on during race day!

RACE DAY: NAVIGATE YOUR DAY WITH CONFIDENCE

Race day will have some operations in place to help athletes navigate physical distancing. A Self-Reliant athlete looking to limit contact points, can refer to the following key details on race day.

- 1. BIKE AND GEAR BAG CHECK-IN:** Take the extra time when packing your gear bags so that when you arrive on site for bike and gear bag check-in, you can drop off your bike and gear as efficiently as possible. Taking the extra time while packing your gear bags and checking your list twice will ensure you have everything you need for race day. Don't forget to pack sunscreen in your swim to bike and bike to run gear bags as we will not have designated sunscreen volunteers. Hint – upon arrival on the race site, lay out your bags. Place all items that belong in each bag on top of the bag. Take a picture. Refer to the picture to make sure it is packed properly.
- 2. SPECIAL NEEDS:** Take advantage of the bike and run special needs bags for IRONMAN events. This is your opportunity to refuel during the bike and run course with the items you trained and practiced with during the weeks and months leading up to event day.
- 3. STUDY THE COURSE AND VENUE:** Prior to arriving on site, make sure you review the available course and venue maps. This will help you better understand how the venue is laid out, where to access parking and how you will flow through transition on race morning. Where possible, drive the bike and run course to better understand any turns, turnaround points or out-and-back sections of the course.
- 4. PLAN YOUR MEALS AHEAD OF TIME:** Prior to arriving, make sure to check out local restaurants and eateries in the vicinity of the venue and your hotel. Make reservations far in advance. This way you can plan-out your meals ahead of time, including dinner the night before race day, and create a plan for breakfast on race morning.
- 5. RACE MORNING PREPARATION:** Make sure you arrive on site race morning with a plan to get in and out of transition as quickly as possible, limiting yourself to only the essentials while in the transition area. This includes checking your tire pressure and putting any last-minute nutrition on your bike.
- 6. FINISH LINE AND FAMILY MEET UP POST RACE:** Set a designated meet up location for family and friends post-race. Make sure they know your A, B and C plans and have a sense of where you may be at specific points of the race. To avoid crowds, set a location to meet up that is away from the finish line and allows at least 30 minutes post-race for you to recover and meet them.