

Faster Transitions = Faster Race

By David Glover

“Our life is frittered away by detail...Simplify, simplify.”

- Henry David Thoreau

The time spent in transition counts toward clock time. The simple truth is that if you can reduce your transition time, you will finish that much faster – all other things being equal.

Not surprisingly, the fastest athletes overall also tend to have the fastest transition times.



Photo: Brady DeHoust at Reston Triathlon '06 by Aaron Schwartzbard

You're probably thinking, “OK, I get the point. How do I speed up my transitions?”

There are three areas to focus on:

1. **Simplify:** By simplify, I mean that you should reduce the number of “things” being transitioned from one leg of the race to the next. For example, wear your tri jersey and bike shorts under your wetsuit during the swim, on the bike and during the run rather than change into fresh clothing each leg. Also, ask yourself, “Do I really need to wear socks during the bike and run?” I wear socks for on the race for any run longer than a 10km but otherwise will take my chances with blisters. Finally, be wary of shortcuts like pre-clipping your shoes to your pedals or taking a running jump when mounting your bike. True, these efforts may shave a few seconds off your transition time but you run the risk of dropping a shoe once you are on your bike or landing on a sore spot when mounting.
2. **Order:** Lay out your gear in the order in which you plan to use it. Visualization of each transition helps here. I walk through each transition in my mind and the order in which I drop off and pick up my gear. I then set up my gear as appropriately. If during the race, I find something out of place, I change it for the next time.
3. **Practice:** This one is self-explanatory. I will set up a mock transition area in my driveway and practice transitioning between each leg. Practicing also helps me optimize how to best set up my gear.

Faster transitions are free speed without any additional training. Take advantage of them!