

Triathlon Frequently Asked Questions

(and Answers!)

We have lots of first timers in our shorter races, so we put together a list of answers to the questions we get most often, from those of you that are new to the sport. If you have questions that aren't answered below, please contact us!

Am I the only person who feels like I don't know what I'm doing?

NO! At sprint and short distance triathlons, a huge number of athletes are doing this for the first time and all of them are nervous about competing in their first triathlon. Our race staff and the experienced triathletes are thrilled to see new people taking on the sport, and we are all here to support you and help in any way that we can. So, don't worry—have fun!

How does the swim work?

The Race For Sight swim is held in an indoor pool. Everyone will be lined up according to his or her 400 yd swim time (so make sure you time yourself before you come!) – you will place yourself in line according the swim time you are comfortable with. Beginning with the fastest swimmer, each person will enter the pool, in order, in 5-15 second increments. You will swim the length of the first lane, then duck under the lane rope and swim the next lane in the opposite direction. You will do this until you have swum the length of each lane. If you need to pass, simply tap the swimmer in front of you on the toes. If you are tapped, stand up until the swimmer behind has passed, then begin swimming again. You can do any stroke you choose, but we recommend freestyle. If you do not feel comfortable with the swim portion, find a member of the race staff at packet pick-up, and we'll go through it with you. And remember, unless you swim 400 yards in under 5 minutes, you'll get to watch several people do it before you!

The Octomax and Quartermax swims are in a lake. These races are held at a private resort, so the lake is very clean and quiet. You will start in your swim wave (usually each swim wave is made up people in the same age group or groups) at the assigned time – most swim waves are between 5 and 10 minutes apart. You will all start on the beach at the same time. If you feel uncomfortable starting with 25-100 people, you can start on the outside (you may swim a little farther, but it will be more comfortable for you), or hang back on the beach until the crowd has moved ahead. You will swim the course, which is marked with buoys, out into the lake, make a turn, and come back. You just need to put your head up and look at the buoys every 5-10 strokes, to stay on the course. You can swim any stroke you like. We will have boats and lifeguards along the entire course.

Will I be able to change after the swim?

Before the bike and run portions, you will be able to “change” into anything you place by your bike (in the transition area). However, the transition area is in no way protected (ie you're in full view of everyone) so you'll want to make sure you exit the swim wearing at least your base layer of clothing.

What should I wear?

We recommend that you swim in the outfit you plan to wear for the duration of the race. Special shorts are made that are ideal for both swimming (tri shorts that fit tight to the skin) and biking (lightly padded for comfort). You can also buy a “running singlet” which is made of a tight fitting material that is easy to swim in and dries quickly. If you prefer, you can put shorts or a shirt on over your swim clothes when you get to the transition area (beware of cotton—it dries slowly and chafes!). We do not recommend trying to pull lycra-type shorts/shirts on over a wet body. The main thing to remember is—the more drying off and getting dressed you do, the slower your transition (and overall race) time is! **TIP** If you go into a triathlon store/call an online store, they should be able to point you in the right direction.

How do I get from the pool/lake to the bike and the bike to the run?

For RFS, you will exit the pool, head out a door and run down a short slope to the Transition Area. At Quartermax/Octomax, you will exit the swim, run across the beach, and up a slight hill into the Transition Area. You will then change any clothes/shoes that you'd like, run/walk your bike to the Bike Mount area, and ride out onto the course. After the bike, you will ride to the Dismount Area, then run/walk your bike to its rack, change if necessary, and run out onto the run course (in Quartermax/Octomax you will exit, on your bike, up a decent hill – if you need to take an extra moment to get your lugs under you before starting, do so).. All in/out doors and mount/dismount areas will be clearly marked. Transition Area volunteers will also be there to help direct you.

What should I have in the transition area?

Most Important: Your bike of course! You'll want your running shoes and, if you have them, biking shoes. You'll also need your bike helmet, your run number, water/sports drink bottles (for your bike), any gel/food that you need, and pants or a jacket in case its cool outside. In addition, it's good to have a towel for a quick dry off after the swim. Remember, you are not allowed to have outside help at any time during the race, so make sure EVERYTHING you need to race is in the transition area before the race starts. You will choose a spot to rack your bike, and you will put your bike back in that same spot when you return for the run portion; no one can take your spot – SO you will have your "own" rack position in the Transition Area.

Do you provide water, or should I bring my own?

There will be aid stations on the Octomax and Quartermax bike courses. There will be aid stations on the run course for Race For Sight, Octomox and Quartermax (~ every mile). We will not have a bike aid station at Race For Sight, so make sure you have a bike bottle cage and water bottle on your bike (or drink some water right before you leave the Transition Area).

Aid Stations will have water and sports drink (in bottles on the bike/in cups on the run), and will be manned by volunteers that will had the bottle/cup to you. You can bring your own water/sports drink and skip the aid stations, if you want to save some time or are nervous about taking a hand-off from volunteers. Just make sure, whether you bring your own or use the aid stations, that you get enough fluids.

How long should it take me to complete the triathlon?

There is no set time that you should shoot for. Goal finish times are different for everyone and you should decide, based on your training and current ability level, a finish time that you can be proud of. If you still have some training time and want to train with certain goals in mind, you can check the results from previous years (available on the websites @ ultramaxtri.com) to see what kinds of times most people in your age group got. Just remember to listen to your body and stay within your comfort zone.

How would you rate these courses?

These courses are moderately difficult. The RFS swim is easy, because you are not in open water jockeying for positions – the lake swim can be a little scarier for first-timers, but as stated above, you can take yourself out of the crowd. The bike courses have a couple of nice hills, and are gently rolling in nature most of the way through. The RFS run has some rolling hills. The Octomax and Quartermax run courses are hilly and will be challenging. Don't worry about it – thousands have completed the courses with smiles on their faces – just make sure that you do some hill-repeat workouts (find a good hill and run up and down it for 25-45 minutes) – doing this for a month or so before the race will help get you ready.

Rules and Regulations:

All USAT rules apply (usatriathlon.com).