

# COVID-19 GUIDANCE:

FOR SWIM,  
BIKE AND RUN  
PARTICIPANTS



9 JULY 2020

Triathlon and multisport is a great way to get active, have fun, and challenge yourself. The invigorating mix of swim, bike and run means you will never get bored and the triathlon family are very welcoming, as organisers strive to offer great experiences.

The aim of this guidance is to provide you with key information about participating in swim, bike and run activity in the current Covid-19 environment. British Triathlon want to ensure that you know how to participate safely and outline what provisions you should expect from the event organisers who are delivering any events that you participate in.



## Should you participate?

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The first thing you should think about is your own health and wellbeing. It is your responsibility that you are sufficiently fit and healthy to participate in swim, bike and run events. You should think about any pre-existing medical conditions that you may have and if you are in any doubt, we recommend that you do not participate.

Your level of fitness may have changed because of lockdown, particularly in terms of swimming, where you may have been unable to access pools. You should think about your perceived level of fitness and ensure that you feel confident to participate fully in the event you are considering.

It is yet unclear what impact Covid-19 will have on the long-term health of those who contracted the virus. As a precaution, you should consider the following:

- ! If you were hospitalised due to Covid-19, you should undergo a form of health screening prior to taking part in triathlon activity. This screening is best led by a doctor with specialist training in sports medicine. However, other doctors may feel competent to make decisions on your fitness to compete and to decide any appropriate investigations that might be required
- ! If you were not hospitalised due to Covid-19, but self-isolated after having shown symptoms at any time, you are also recommended to undergo a form of screening
- ! If you have felt entirely well during the pandemic, you are not routinely recommended to undergo health screening, but it is something to be considered as part of your normal health monitoring for the health-conscious competitor
- ! People who are shielding should not visit venues or undertake activities
- ! People who are symptomatic should self-isolate for seven days and their household members for 14 days according to NHS guidance. No one who is self-isolating should attend an outdoor sports facility/activity

Your GP should be able to guide you on what level of screening you may require, and who is the best person to assist you in the process. Again, if you are in any doubt about your health, you should not participate in triathlon activity.

## What event should you do?

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We recommend that you participate in a British Triathlon permitted event.

You can find a list of permitted triathlon events [here](#). A permitted event is one that has been reviewed by the British Triathlon team, so you can be sure that the event planning and preparation has met the British Triathlon standard and will be run according to the competition rules. You should be aware that event permits may be rescinded and/or the event permitting process suspended where local/regional/national lockdowns are imposed.

You should consider easing yourself in and participating in an event that you feel will allow you to gain confidence in your readiness for swim, bike and run activity. If you had already entered an event prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is able to progress, you should think about whether you have chosen the best distance/format for your current fitness level. You may wish to consider changing from Standard to Sprint distance, or even to consider a different format e.g. duathlon.

Some questions that you may wish to ask yourself are:

- ! When did you last swim?
- ! When did you last swim in open water?
- ! Have you used your wetsuit since you last participated in an event?
- ! When did you last cycle the distance that is equal or more than the event you are planning to enter?
- ! If you have used your bike for a lot of indoor turbo training, have you checked it or had it serviced before getting back out on the road?
- ! Have you ran much in lockdown?
- ! Have you put two elements of swim, bike and run together during your training whilst in lockdown?

If one of these questions leaves you feeling a bit nervous about a certain element of your upcoming triathlon event, this doesn't mean you shouldn't or can't participate, it just suggests that you should try to overcome your nerves and gain confidence.

Aim to ensure that you give yourself the best chance of having a great experience at your first event back, so it leaves you longing for more.

## Important changes to entry and pre-event information

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All people who are due to attend the event venue will be asked to complete and submit a pre event health questionnaire which can be shared on request with the NHS Test and Trace service.

If you had entered your event prior to lockdown, you should also be asked by the event organiser to re-declare your suitability/fitness to take part in the event as well as consider your fitness levels in light of the recent restrictions of movement.

To keep your time on the event site as low as possible in order to reduce the risks, British Triathlon have suggested that online videos or written event briefings should be sent in advance of the event meaning that at the event, briefings will not take place unless new or critical information needs to be shared with you. Event organisers will aim to ensure that race information is sent out sufficiently in advance to allow you to ask any questions and receive a response before event day. They may also use FAQs on the website to help answer your questions and make you feel prepared for event day, so look out for these.

British Triathlon have suggested that event organisers only allow online pre-entry to events, with no on the day entry allowed. This will allow them to deliver the event in the safest way possible.

## What Equipment Do You Need?

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You should use your own clearly marked equipment and only take the minimum amount of equipment that you need to participate safely.

It is likely to be a while since you participated, or this could be your first time. Think about getting your equipment and clothing ready the night before your event and laying it out so you can check that you have everything you need.

### Remember the usual equipment of:

- ✓ Wetsuit (if swimming open water, remember for all open water swimming below 20C, the wearing of a full body wetsuit is recommended.)
- ✓ Swimming costume
- ✓ Goggles
- ✓ Towel
- ✓ Trisuit (or cycle shorts and t-shirt)
- ✓ Bike helmet
- ✓ Cycling gloves
- ✓ Cycle shoes
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ Running trainers
- ✓ Water and nutrition

### Additional items due to the Covid-19 environment:

- ✓ Hand sanitiser
- ✓ Additional water / drinks, as there will possibly be no aid stations on the course
- ✓ Warm clothes to change into

- ✓ Anti-viral wipes
- ✓ Soft-sided bag for your items at the event – you will be allowed to have this in your space in transition

We suggest you use toilet facilities at home before you leave. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving home and as often as possible at the venue or use an alcohol gel if washing hands is not possible. Aim to arrive changed and ready to participate.

Do not forget to cover cuts and abrasions, however minor, with sticking plasters. Do not swim if you have deep cuts or open wounds as the infection risk is higher, including the risk of contracting Weil's disease.



When on the event site, you should ensure that you remember the following throughout your event day experience:

- ! Where it is possible to keep 2 metres apart you should. Where it is not, you should keep a social distance of 'one metre plus', meaning you should remain one metre apart while taking mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission from the person you are swimming with (unless from your own household). Think about how this may be affected by other participants and volunteers.
- ! Maintain good hygiene. Use hand sanitiser throughout your event experience and try not to touch public areas such as hand railings, door handles, tables and ropes unless necessary

The event organiser is likely to be delivering the event in time slots, so aim to make it as smooth as you can for them by arriving at your allocated time. On arrival, park in the car park (if travelling by car) as directed. Before leaving the car, think about where you are going to next and when you exit the car, aim to maintain social distancing at all times. Remember, you are likely to be excited and a bit nervous, so just take your time and try to stay calm.

If your event is taking place at a leisure centre, a park, or cycle circuit, we advise you to take a moment to familiarise yourself with the Covid-19 layout of the facility and any instructions that the operator may have put in place for your safety and welfare.

At this time, we are discouraging spectators from attending events to support social distancing requirements. However, it is acknowledged that in some instances you may need someone to accompany you e.g. to drive you to the event. If there is the need for this, you

should not attend with more than one spectator, who must maintain social distancing from other people at all times and refrain from being in high traffic areas such as registration.

Registration is likely to be a bit different to normal. It is likely that the only functions that registration will carry out is checking British Triathlon Home Nation membership cards, the issuing of day membership and the provision of your race packs. It is likely that events will not accept cash.

Event organisers will aim to provide as much space as possible in transition to allow for social distancing. They will provide 2 metres of space where it is possible to do so and where it is not, they will provide 1 metre of space per participant with additional mitigation to reduce the risk of transmission, for example adjusting the transition flow to avoid close contact.

It is likely that the event organiser will limit the amount of time that participants are allowed to rack their bikes and set up their equipment to ensure you spend as little time as possible in the enclosed transition area. You should be allowed to take all of the items that you require for the event, as well as a soft-sided bag into transition. It is likely that changing tents will not be available to minimise touchpoints in public spaces, hence the suggestion to arrive already changed.

When you are setting up your things in transition, take a minute to go through the event in your mind and to plan your route from each discipline into and out of transition, setting out the flow/path that you will need to take. This will help your transition experience go as smooth as possible and to reduce the risk of you getting too close to other participants.

Whatever the format of your event, you will be following a rolling start/time trial start system, meaning that you will be set off individually with a time gap between you and the person before and after you. The start order will be determined by the event organiser. Please aim to keep to the timings that your event organiser has provided you, as this is important for the smooth running of a Covid Secure event.

Whilst you are waiting for your start time, please ensure you remember to maintain social distancing, especially if you are waiting in the assembly area or the start holding area.

**If swimming in open water, when you enter the water, think about the following to acclimatise:**

- ! Immerse yourself slowly
- ! Put your face in the water
- ! Take some deep breaths
- ! Gently tread water, slowly moving your legs and arms
- ! If you become nervous or uncomfortable, it is recommended that you roll onto your back and float, breathing deeply until you regain control. Your wetsuit and your tow float will help keep you buoyant
- ! Avoid touching your face

Throughout your event, try to remember to maintain social distancing where possible, and remember to follow the event instructions that have been provided by your event organiser

in terms of overtaking, flows/directions, and what to do if you are involved in an incident or have an injury.

During the event, you should try to think carefully about the aerosol effect whilst participating. Aerobic activity such as running and cycling will cause a person to expel air and therefore droplets behind them. All events will be non-drafting/draft illegal, meaning that on the bike course, you should stay a minimum of 10 metres behind the bike in front and only be closer if you are overtaking. When you are on the run course, try not to closely follow another participant and either try to run alongside, overtake, or drop back slightly to maintain at least a 2-metre gap. Remember to bring additional bottles of water for the bike and to carry on the run with you as there may not be aid stations due to minimising touchpoints.

At the finish, it is possible you will be asked to remove your own timing chip, if being used, and put it in a provided bucket. Please proceed through the post-finish area to minimise crowding at the finish.

Until public indoor pools have been open for six weeks, all British Triathlon permitted events will be participation, not competition based, meaning that there will be no prizes for placings and any results should be provided in alphabetical order, not time ranked. Please take this into consideration during the event. For your first event back, take it calmly and do not push too hard. Allow yourself to enjoy swim, bike and run and aim to have a great experience.



## Recovery – reheat plan and nutrition

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Once you have finished your event, clean your hands with at least 60% alcohol gel and then you need to dry off and dress immediately. It is advisable to put on warm clothes, including a hat and gloves. This is to reduce the risk of you suffering from the “after drop”, which is the lowering of your core temperature.

In warm weather, if you are feeling hot, you may need to sit in the shallows (if possible) before leaving to help reduce your body temperature.

If possible, it is advised to get into a sheltered spot so you are protected from any wind or chill. This could be your car. Again, ensure you maintain social distancing when you have finished the event. To limit contact with other participants and surfaces, it is our current recommendation to prepare to leave site as soon as you have completed your event.

You may also be low on energy, so refuel with something sugary too. Before you eat or drink, wash your hands using sterilizing wipes or gels.

Do not congregate with others and be sure to adhere to social distancing rules. No extra-curricular or social activity should take place.

## Cleaning Yourself and Equipment

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When you return home, shower in fresh water at the earliest opportunity and again put on lots of warm clothes. This will remove all microbes, many of which are able to survive on the skin's surface for long periods.

Rinse and wash all your kit in fresh water before drying thoroughly, including wetsuit, goggles, tow float, water bottle and swimming costume.

If you feel ill, seek medical advice by calling 111. This includes rashes for up to three weeks following your swim. Highlight that you have been swimming in open water and tell the operator the location that you swam in.

## Leave it as you found it

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Many of the places that you may participate in triathlon activity at are beautiful locations and we want to keep them that way. Ensure you take all your belongings and leave the location as you found it. Take any litter with you and dispose when you are back at home.

Now that you have finished your event, don't forget to plan the next step in your swim, bike and run journey and remember that you can find all of the British Triathlon permitted events [here](#).