

BRITISH TRIATHLON GUIDANCE

MAKING YOUR EVENT
MORE INCLUSIVE



BRITISH
TRIATHLON



Making Your Event More Inclusive

A practical guide for event organisers

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Contents

Introduction	4
Background	5
Section One: Event Planning	8
Initial Audit	9
Course Planning Considerations	10
Swim	10
Cycle	15
Run	17
Transition	18
Non-Course Planning Considerations	20
Section Two: Promotion & Further Support	23
Promotion	24
Case Studies	27
Section Three: Appendices	29
Appendix 1: Access Audit for Inclusive Events	30
Appendix 2: Swim Exit Area Organisation (Open Water)	33
Appendix 3: Additional Medical Considerations	38

Introduction

The level of interest in Paratriathlon has grown significantly over recent years with British Triathlon at the forefront of its development. With the sport set to debut in the Paralympic Games at Rio de Janeiro in 2016 its profile will be raised and it is anticipated that participation will expand rapidly, mirroring the expansion triathlon has experienced following its inception as an Olympic sport in 2000.

Not everyone will have aspirations to be a Paralympian but the foundation to future international success is continued growth and progress at club and domestic events. British Triathlon is committed to developing those opportunities by encouraging and supporting organisers, officials and volunteers to embrace Paratriathlon and share in the success.

This interim guidance focuses on making events inclusive rather than the organisation of formal Paratriathlon events which will be the subject of a wider review from Autumn 2016. For more information about Paratriathlon events please contact the British Triathlon events team on 01509 226162.

Inclusive Events

During 2015 British Triathlon undertook a disability survey of event organisers. Key findings included:

- 64% of event organisers have had direct or indirect interaction with athletes with a disability, with 61% able to make adaptations to their events to accommodate the athletes' needs
- 66% believe their events are accessible to athletes with a disability and would welcome them to be identified as such on the British Triathlon website
- 95% say they have never been unable to offer assistance to someone with a disability although 24% commented that they have never been asked to offer assistance
- Only 11% think thought that British Triathlon shouldn't do anything to encourage people with a disability to take part in the sport
- 81% believe that the main area to focus on is advice on how to modify events to make them inclusive for athletes with a disability

British Triathlon recognises that the thought of making their event more inclusive may hold fears for some organisers who may not appreciate what it entails or what help and support is available to them. This resource is aimed at guiding organisers from a "fear of the unknown" to having the confidence to recognise and promote the opportunities at their event. It provides background information, practical tips and signposts organisers to further support including case studies from events that promote inclusivity.

With approximately 20% of the population having some form of disability the reality is that many organisers are likely to already have athletes with a disability happily participating in their events without being aware of it. This may be because the athlete does not want to be treated differently and/or because they are able to participate without modifications to the course. However, some athletes do require more support and consideration. By discussing their needs and thinking through things in advance it is often possible to find a way for them to participate.

Background

Organisers are not expected to know everything about disability but a basic understanding of the range of disabilities will help understand how events can be successfully modified.

What is meant by disability?

For the sport of triathlon to be as inclusive as possible, British Triathlon has adopted a definition of disability that aims to include all variants of disabilities recognised under the UK Government.

Note: The performance element of Paratriathlon governed by the IPC (International Paralympic Committee) and the ITU (International Triathlon Union) utilise a classification system that excludes a number of impairments and disabilities.

British Triathlon has therefore decided to adopt the most appropriate definition of disability, which is within The Equality Act 2010. This definition is also adopted by the EFDS (English Federation of Disability Sport), as the most appropriate definition for sport.

Disability is:

“A physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities” (Equality Act 2010) where,

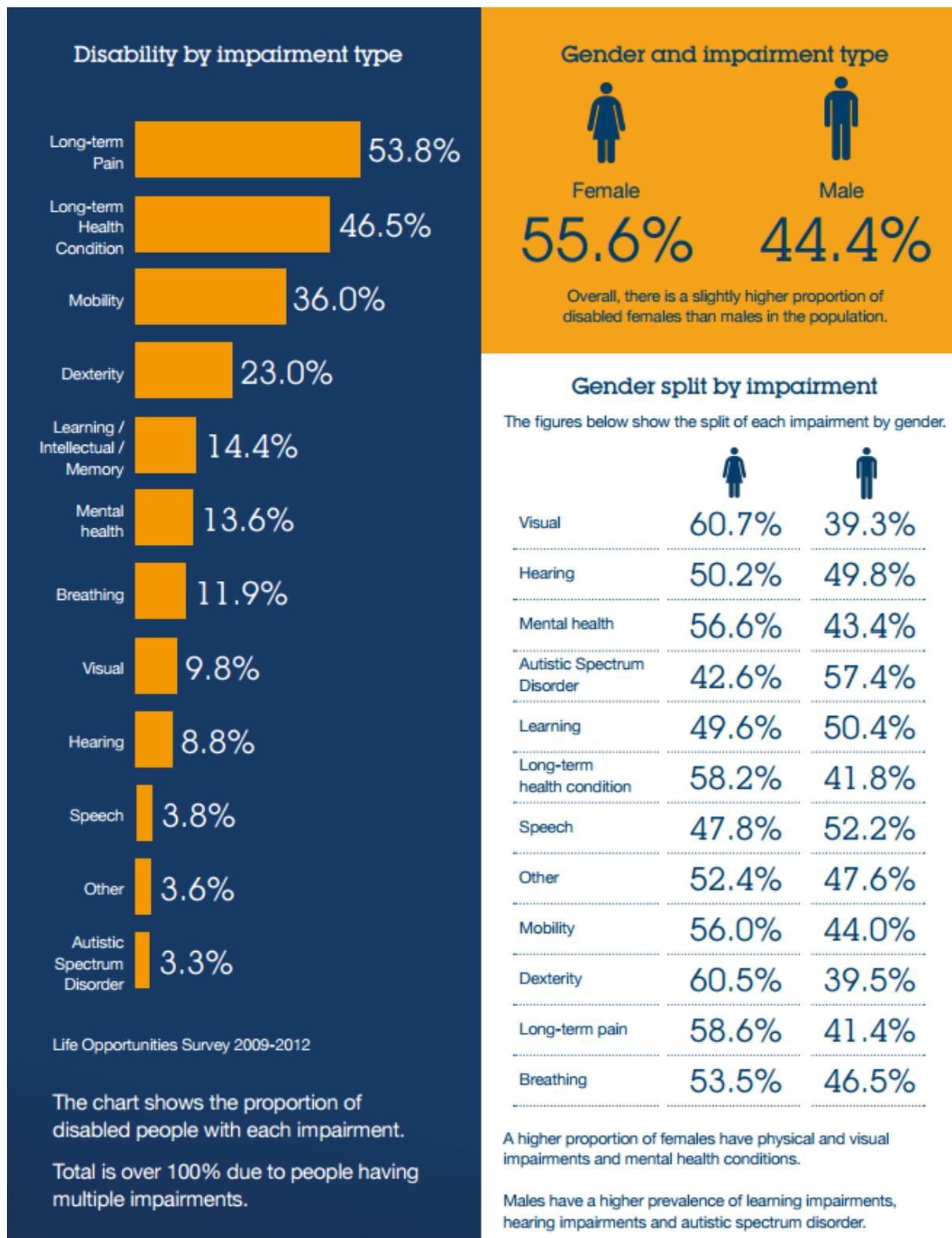
- ‘substantial’ is more than minor or trivial - e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- ‘long-term’ means 12 months or more - e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

This covers a diverse range of impairments and health issues but in broad terms there are three impairment groups:

- **Physical** - this group is further broken down into **Wheelchair Users** and **Able to Walk** (also referred to as **Ambulant**)
- **Sensory** - this group is further broken down into **Visual** and **Hearing**
- **Intellectual**

It is important to remember that not all impairments are visible and some may have fluctuating, recurring, progressive or developmental effects.

The below table shows the percentage of impairment type within England:



(Mapping Disability - The Facts, Sport England, 2016)

Legal Context

The introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1995 has placed duties on service providers and requires "reasonable adjustments" to be made when providing access to goods, facilities, services and premises.

Under the DDA, the duties on service providers have been introduced in three stages:

- Since 2 December 1996 - It has been unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- Since 1 October 1999 - Service providers have had to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services.
- Since 1 October 2004 - Service providers may have to make other 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access

An awareness of the DDA is useful to organisers, particularly when considering new venues/facilities but many reasonable adjustments can simply be achieved by talking to the athletes or by seeking advice from the events team at British Triathlon.

An information guide on improving physical access for disabled people is available [here](#)

Most modifications incur little, if any, additional cost and generally improve the quality of the event for everyone.

What Is An Inclusive Event?

An **Inclusive** event is one that is open to all athletes including those with a disability. Whilst every effort may be made to include all classes of disability it may not be possible. For example, if the run course is off-road it may not be possible for wheelchair competitors to participate but ambulant competitors may still be able to run the course.

Even if a discipline is inaccessible to a particular disability or disabilities it may still be possible to offer an alternative - for example, a swim/run or a bike/run event - if the athlete(s) is interested.

Section One: Event Planning

Initial Audit

If an organiser is contemplating promoting their existing event(s) as inclusive it is recommended that they undertake an initial audit of the venue and the proposed courses to determine the extent of what may or may not be possible given their available resources.

Whilst it is possible for an organiser to undertake an audit on their own, inviting disabled athletes to get involved and share their experience can be extremely beneficial. It is worth considering inviting both a wheelchair athlete and an ambulant athlete as they will have different perspectives. If it is not possible to have a site visit even a discussion over the telephone can help address concerns.

An understanding of typical physical barriers to participation experienced by disabled athletes can help provide focus to the audit. The table below illustrates some typical barriers although it should be appreciated that whilst they may be barriers to some disabilities there may not be to others. The table below identifies some of the typical barriers an athlete with a disability can encounter; these are expanded on further in the document.

Area	Typical Barriers
Parking	No parking available close to the venue or with additional space for unloading equipment. Parking only available on grass which may become problematical particularly when wet and soft underfoot
Registration	Registration tent based on grass (when wet & soft underfoot), or in an inaccessible building e.g. with steps, steep descent
Built facilities	No accessible toilets
Pool Swim	Lanes not wide enough to accommodate swimmer with a guide No easy access/exit from the water Poolside briefing
Open Water Swim	No easy access/exit
Bike	Very steep (12% +) hill climbs Speed humps 180° “dead” turns
Run	Off-road runs Road crossings Changes of terrain Gradient of more than 5% Insufficient width Very tight turns
Transition	Grass-based transition areas Limited space Poor access route e.g. steps from swimming pool to transition

Appendix 1 provides an audit template that organisers can use/adapt for their event. The information contained in this section includes background material that will support the auditing process

Course Planning Considerations

Swim

Open Water Swims

Course Design

The design of swim courses is covered in the British Triathlon guidance for Organised Open Water Swimming which is available to download from the Event Organiser section in the British Triathlon website.

The swim course design does not require special consideration other than:

- The swim courses should ideally be single loop. Where this is not possible there should be no requirement for paratriathletes to exit the water between loops.
- The swim start should be in deep water as this gives all paratriathletes an equal start. In an event where all other athletes start on land or in shallow water, consideration should be given to a separate deep water start for paratriathletes.

The main considerations for paratriathletes focus on the entry and exit arrangements.

Swim Entry Procedures

Entering the water should be done in a safe and controlled area, either from a slipway or pontoon entering into deep water. Some athletes who use a wheelchair may require help to reach the water and this should be highlighted by them in the athlete's information document. British Triathlon has developed a safe method for helpers to carry athletes to and from the water, detailed in **Appendix 2**.

Athletes should not be allowed to enter the water until the race is ready to start as certain disabilities inhibit the body's ability to control temperature and athletes can become very cold very quickly. If you are aware of any delays or are unsure about the exact start time it is safer to keep athletes out of the water and warm. The delay between the end of the warm up period and the race start should never more than five minutes.

NOTE: If there is a current, even if relatively weak, flowing under the entry pontoon it is possible that a paralysed athlete's legs can be swept under the pontoon and they will be unable to get them out without assistance.

Swim Start Procedures:

The start should be done using a horn and flag system to ensure that both Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired athletes are not at a disadvantage. When using a flag,

ensure the starter is positioned somewhere easy for all competitors to see, and make sure this place is communicated in the race briefing.

If the event has a mass swim start what considerations do you need?

Often the Swim section of a Triathlon can be the area that provides the biggest barrier to participation. As previously advised, it is often best to simply talk to an athlete, see what they feel comfortable with. They may require minimal or even no changes to be made. For example, an athlete who needs to be placed in a wheelchair or who requires assistance to move to a prosthetic limb or crutches may just require more time to get in and out of the water.

If the mass start does include athletes with a disability, consideration should be given to the number of athletes who will require assistance. If an event has 1 or 2 athletes that require assistance a simple discussion with them to agree any special arrangements, ideally including someone with a responsibility for swim safety, should suffice.

If there is a greater number of athletes with disabilities participating it may be worth considering increasing the number of waves so that the number of swimmers in each wave is reduced, creating more space and time for athletes to get in and out of the water.

When agreeing where/when athletes who require specialised equipment such as a tandem or recumbent cycle starts, the event consideration should be given to their safety and the safety of other athletes on the bike course.

Special consideration should be given to visually impaired athletes who are tethered to a guide, where there is the potential for the tether to be snagged by another swimmer.

Swim Exit

An efficient, effective & safe exit from the water is very important as it can be a relatively high risk operation which can be made much safer by proper training for both the water handlers and the athletes. Only appropriately trained or accredited (and briefed) people should be allowed at the swim exit.

Ideally only trained water handlers should be used at the swim exit. Personal handlers, especially if inexperienced or untrained, should not assist and should wait in transition to avoid injury to themselves, their athlete or other athletes. This may require careful and sensitive management as it is quite possible that personal handlers believe that they know the best way to support their athlete.

The requirements at the swim exit vary depending on the nature of the disability as well as individual but broadly:

- Wheelchair athletes will need to be carried out of the water and placed in their wheelchair. They may need assistance with wetsuit removal and it may be necessary to do this before they are lowered into their wheelchair. The distance that water handlers are required to carry an athlete should be kept to a minimum.
- Athletes with severe leg impairments (including amputees) may use crutches to move from the water to transition or they may need to put on an artificial leg (prosthesis) as soon as they leave the water. Therefore, there should be provision for prosthetic limbs, crutches etc to be stored as close as possible to the swim exit without causing a hazard to other competitors. This area is sometimes referred to as 'pre transition'.

NOTE: On safety grounds leg amputees should not be allowed to hop into transition, even if it is only a short distance. Hopping can lead to long term damage of knee, hip & spine and a fall at swim exit is dangerous to both the athletes and to those behind them.

- Athletes with Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy and Cerebral Palsy or with impairment in upper limbs may need support to regain their balance as they come out of the water, especially if cold water has caused muscle spasms.
- Visually impaired athletes are usually tethered to a guide and they exit the swim together. The guide can support their athlete but sometimes it may be necessary to assist or steady the guide.

Disability Identification

a) Swim Hats

Different coloured swim hats provide an easy and quick way of identifying athletes with differing degrees of disability. This is essential for both the water safety team providing safety cover in the water and for the handlers at the swim exit.

It is common to use the following hat colours:

- Red hats to identify competitors who need to be lifted from the swim exit to the wetsuit removal area.
- Blue hats to identify competitors who need to be supported to walk/run from the swim exit to the wetsuit removal area.
- White hats to identify competitors who do not need any assistance at the swim exit (this includes visually impaired athletes and their guides).

Utilising different colours is perfectly acceptable provided that the event team, water safety and helpers clearly understand what each colour represents.

b) Race numbers

In events where there may be several wheelchair competitors the provision of additional race numbers to assist the identification of wheelchairs at the swim exit can be helpful.

Transition

The route from the swim exit to Transition should be well swept particularly bearing in mind any single-legged athlete stepping on underfoot hazards.

Athletes should only remove their wetsuits in Transition with the possible exception of wheelchair athletes who may need to remove their wetsuit prior to transfer to their wheelchair.

Water Temperature & Use of Wetsuits

With some disabilities impacting on the ability to control body temperature, wetsuit parameters for paratriathlon vary considerably to triathlon.

Wetsuit use is determined by the chart below:

Swim Length	Wetsuits Mandatory Below:	Maximum Stay In Water:
750m	18°C	45 mins
1500m	18°C	1h 10 mins
3000m	18°C	1h 40 mins
4000m	18°C	2h 15 mins

NOTES:

- If any swimmer has not completed the swim course within these time limits and they are more than 100m short of the finish line they should be removed immediately from the water. Event organisers may need to consider this when planning the swimmer safety resources so that there are sufficient resources to fulfil this requirement without compromising the safety of the other swimmers should it prove necessary.
- Although unlikely to occur in the UK, wetsuit use is not permitted when the water temperature is 28°C or above.
- The swim section should be cancelled if the water temperature is below 15°C (or above 32°C). However, the swim can be cancelled at higher water temperatures if the air temperature is lower than 16°C) based on the following table:

		Air Temperature					
		16 °C	15 °C	14 °C	13 °C	12 °C	11 °C
Water Temperature	22 °C	21.5 °C	21.0 °C	20.5 °C	20.0 °C	19.5 °C	19.0 °C
	21 °C	21.0 °C	20.5 °C	20.0 °C	19.5 °C	19.0 °C	18.5 °C
	20 °C	18.0 °C	17.5 °C	17.0 °C	16.5 °C	16.0 °C	15.5 °C
	19 °C	17.5 °C	17.0 °C	16.5 °C	16.0 °C	15.5 °C	15.0 °C
	18 °C	17.0 °C	16.5 °C	16.0 °C	15.5 °C	15.0 °C	Cancel
	17 °C	16.5 °C	16.0 °C	15.5 °C	15.0 °C	Cancel	Cancel
	16 °C	16.0 °C	15.5 °C	15.0 °C	Cancel	Cancel	Cancel

- Blankets/Space blankets should be available as should be the means to cool down on a hot day.

Pool Based Swims

For pool-based swims the main considerations are:

Swim entry and exit

- Is there specialist equipment available e.g. pool hoist or ramp access for wheelchair users?
- Are there adequate support staff/volunteers available (number available and whether trained/briefed)?

Lane Width

- Are the lanes wide enough to accommodate visually impaired swimmers tethered to a guide if requested? If not, can a double-width lane be used?
NOTE: The majority of visually impaired swimmers do not use a guide swimmer but have a “tapper” positioned at the end of the lane. The tapper holds a long pole with a soft ball on the end which they use to tap the swimmer on the head when they are a stroke away from the wall.

Route to Transition Area

- Is the route to transition free from obstructions?
- Is the whole route wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs?
- Does the route avoid steps, changes in surface/difficult terrain?
- If there are issues with the route for some disabilities is there a more suitable alternative route available?
- If the route is not suitable for wheelchair users is it possible to carry the athlete safely to the Transition Area (with the athlete’s permission and with appropriately trained helpers)?
NOTE: This would need to be carefully risk assessed e.g. helpers slipping on poolside and manual handling of a heavy weight

Cycle

The requirements for the bike section do not differ significantly to those for non-disabled competitors. Depending on the disability there are a range of different cycles that may be used:

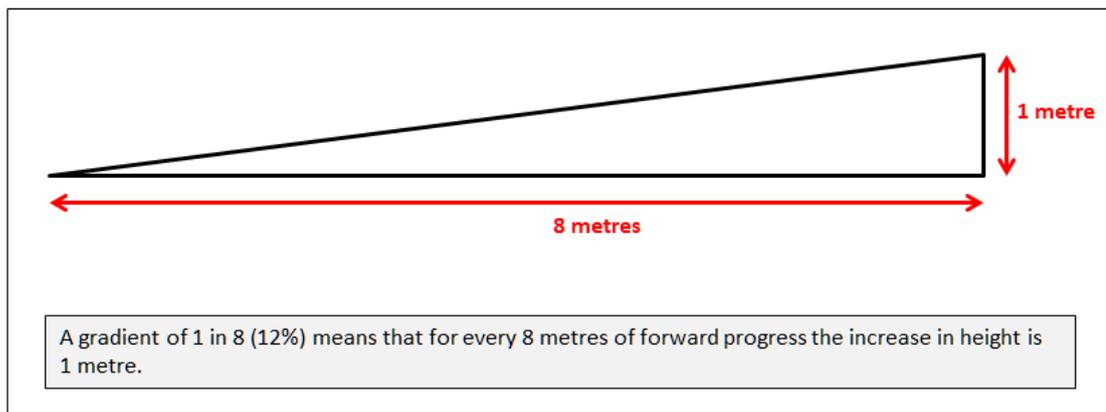


- Standard bicycle
- Tandem
- Tricycle
- Recumbent cycle - although a recumbent cycle with only two wheels is not allowed
- Hand Cycle
- Bespoke adaptations depending on the impairment

The majority of rules applying to the cycle section are technical and refer to the design of the bike. Athletes might request to use a specially adapted, bespoke bike - if an organiser has any concerns in relation to safety and/or fairness this can be checked with the British Triathlon events team prior to giving approval.

From a course design perspective the main considerations are:

- The gradient on the race course should not be more than 12% at the steepest section (1 in 8 approximately). It is recommended that this maximum gradient is also applied to inclusive events with wheelchair competitors particularly as they may be less experienced athletes.



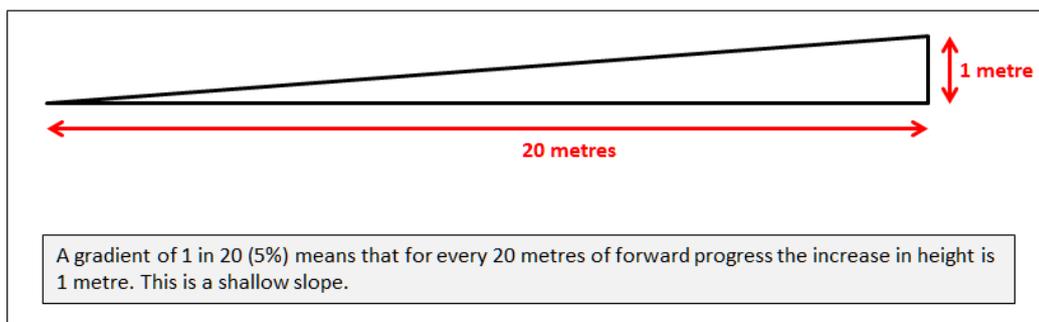
- Speed bumps pose a particular problem for recumbent handcycles which are very low to the ground and should be avoided as far as possible (where it is not possible to avoid speed bumps they should be clearly signed with prior warning for recumbent handcycles).
- It is desirable to avoid/fill potholes for any cycle course but they can be a particular problem for recumbent handcycles because the low position of the cyclist means that they cannot see potholes easily.
- The course should be suitable width for all the different machines to overtake safely.
- 180° /dead turns should be avoided if possible as they can be particularly difficult for handcycles and tandems to negotiate.
- All marshals should be briefed as to the presence of specialist cycles and the possible problems they could encounter. This is particularly important for handcycles and recumbent cycles where they are lower to the ground and often more difficult to see, marshals should remain alert to these.
- Recumbent Cycles should have a flag when used on an open road so that they are more visible to marshals, competitors and other road users.
- All other athletes participating at the event should also be made aware of the presence of different types of cycle.

Run

The majority of athletes will not require additional equipment however some may require wheelchairs (day chair or race chair), crutches or walking poles. As athletes should be self-propelled during the run section handcycles or anything with chains/gears are not allowed.

The main considerations for the run course are:

- Ideally the course will be fully wheelchair accessible with no steps and ramps to address any changes in level
- The width should be sufficient to accommodate overtaking particularly if there are wheelchair athletes. The path should be wide enough for a guide and athlete to run side by side.
- Tight turns should be avoided or kept to a minimum. Where tight turns cannot be avoided the athletes should be appropriately briefed
- A hard surface is preferable - or a hard surface alternative if the main route goes off-road
- The gradient should be no more than 1 in 20 (5%) at the steepest section if wheelchair users are competing. At steep gradients wheelchairs can become unstable and liable to tip backwards.



- Speed bumps should be avoided or kept to a minimum (and signed as well in advance).
- Allowing additional run off at the finish line if any athletes are using racing wheelchairs which can travel at high speeds and do not have a braking system. It is recommended that a minimum of 10 metres should be allowed.
- Ensuring that there is a suitable route (surface/width/gradient etc) to exit the finish area.

- All other athletes participating at the event should be made aware of the presence of racing wheel chairs and visually impaired athletes tethered to their guide in particular.

Transition

General Considerations

The surface of the Transition Area should ideally be even/level hard-standing concrete or tarmac. Where this is not possible matting can provide a workable alternative.

There should be sufficient space allowed to accommodate both equipment requirements and/or handlers. For example, wheelchair athletes have a lot of equipment (wheelchair, handcycle, racing wheelchair) and typically need two helpers so they are likely to require at least two metres. Similarly visually impaired athletes will require additional space for their tandem.

If there isn't sufficient space on the racking to accommodate the tandem then consideration could be given to allow the athlete to lean their tandem against a transition barrier. It is also important to bear in mind that tandems and wheelchairs require additional space for turning within transitions.



Chairs should be provided unless requested otherwise.

Signage should be positioned at a suitable height (head height) for wheelchair athletes and clear enough for athletes with a visual impairment.

Positioning

Athletes who use prostheses or crutches should generally be positioned as close to the swim entry gate as possible whilst there can be more flexibility for wheelchair athletes

and visually impaired athletes - the amount of space they need for their equipment often dictates where they can be most easily accommodated. A pre transition area may need to be considered if the swim exit is great distance from the main transition area.

Handlers

All handlers should be provided with some form of accreditation to identify them. This could be a high visibility tabard, a T-shirt and/or a race number.

The number of handlers required is usually:

- Wheelchair athletes -two handlers
- Visually Impaired - None (they are accompanied by a guide throughout the event)
- All other classes - one handler

Handlers should be made aware of their responsibility to not impede other athletes. They should remain close to their athlete's position. Normally the athlete will provide their own handler however they may contact an event organiser and ask if they are able to provide a volunteer handler.

Non-Course Planning Considerations

The overall event experience is influenced by many factors other than course design. The following points cover some of the main things to consider.

Entry Fee

Do not penalise athletes who require additional support to be able to compete. For example, consider Visually Impaired athletes and their guide as a single athlete and do not charge an increased or double entry fee.

Start Time

Some paratriathletes have to bring paid helpers with them to fulfil their personal needs. It can be difficult (and expensive) to find helpers prepared to provide support for very early starts - particularly bearing in mind that some paratriathletes may require significantly more time to get ready than able-bodied athletes. Later starts can make a difference and should be considered if they can be safely accommodated.

Car Parking

More disabled car parking spaces than usual may be needed for the event and ideally they should be as close to the venue as possible. Wheelchair athletes, in particular, will have more kit than other competitors e.g. a handcycle and racing wheelchair as well as the day chair, wetsuit, etc. If temporary car parking is necessary for the event grass or sloping surfaces may not be suitable for disabled athletes. Passes for designated spaces can help ensure that disabled athletes are able to park as close to the venue as possible.

Access Routes

Access between venues / swim and transition should be as easy as possible, avoiding grass or gravel, using hard standing or covered by matting.

Changing facilities & Toilets

Accessible changing facilities and toilets will be needed near the race venue. If temporary facilities are required it should be noted that standard portaloos are not suitable so disabled portaloos will be required.

Registration

Registration should be easy to reach and consideration given to the layout of the area to ensure that it is accessible.

Race Briefing

Consider having a separate quiet room/area for briefing that is large enough to accommodate both the athletes and their helpers.

Note: Consider having briefing available in different formats e.g. to accommodate visually impaired and hearing impaired athletes.

Results & Prize Giving

Ensure that the results are posted in an accessible place and that the prize giving ceremony is also accessible.

Give careful thought to any medal or prize presentation. Your entry conditions and prize categories should be clear within the race information.

If you are going to provide prizes for paratriathletes consider recognising the role played by an athlete's guide/helper(s) - without their support the athlete would not have achieved their success.

Feedback

Seek feedback after the event from paratriathletes, helpers, event staff and officials. What went well, what didn't go so well, are there any steps that could be taken to improve the event for them in the future?

Medical

For the vast majority of inclusive events it is unlikely that additional medical facilities will be required over and above those provided for the non-disabled athletes. Paratriathletes are just as likely to get the same injuries as anyone else; road rash, broken bones, dehydration etc

However, there are some extra injuries/conditions that may affect some paratriathletes so the event organiser should make the medical provider aware if any disabled athletes are participating in advance of the event and be satisfied that they are appropriately equipped and experienced to deal with potential incidents.

Appendix 3 highlights additional medical considerations for some disabled athletes- this is to support organisers' discussions with medical providers as part of a risk assessment process.

Risk Assessment

The process of risk assessing an inclusive event is no different to that of a triathlon event. (The British Triathlon guidance on how to undertake and record a risk assessment can be downloaded from the Event Organisers System on the British Triathlon website). The aim is to manage risks to an acceptable level - it is neither necessary nor possible to make the activity completely risk-free.

However, where the level of risk cannot be managed to an acceptable level, within available resources, for a particular disability/ies then the event **MUST** be closed to that disability on safety grounds.

Good practice:

- **Don't over-complicate the process. Focus on the main hazards and document the findings in an easy to understand format**
- **Don't undertake the risk assessment as a purely "desk top exercise". It should be informed by a detailed site visit(s)**
- **Only include control measures that will be implemented - don't include measures to make the risk assessment look more impressive e.g. to satisfy permission givers, if you do not intend or are not able to implement them**
- **Regularly monitor and review the risk assessment so that it remains current**
- **Record any changes up to and including the day of the event**

The risk assessment should consider any hazards posed by:

- The athletes' impairments e.g. in relation to the demands of the event, the requirements of the handlers, any medical issues
- Any specialist equipment
- The course

Section Two: Promotion & Further Support

Promotion

If the decision has been taken to actively promote an event to disabled competitors thought should be given to how to reach the target audience.

Imagery

The photographs/images that are used in promotional event material and websites will instantly create a perception of the event. The use of appropriate images can convey accessibility, inclusivity and how welcoming an event is.

Care should be taken not use inappropriate images that convey misleading messages - for example, do not include images of wheelchair competitors for an event that is not wheelchair accessible. For first-time events, British Triathlon has a selection of paratriathlon images that can be freely accessed. For further information contact the British Triathlon Events Team.

Web Information

Posting photos/video of your bike and run course to either your website or to Youtube would be extremely helpful for paratriathletes to gauge the suitability of your course

There are a wide range of options for free advertising. Web-based promotional opportunities include:

British Triathlon (www.britishtriathlon.org) - upon registering an event there is the option to highlight whether the event will be inclusive or not. At a regional level the Regional Manager and regional committee are able to help promote inclusive events. British Triathlon now also has a role designated to promoting disability triathlon at grass roots level. Contact info@britishtriathlon.org for their contact details.

English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) (www.efds.co.uk) - the regional pages of this website are a great way of promoting to local disabled athletes. Also post your event on their event pages.

Parasport (www.parasport.org.uk) - the Parasport website has been designed to inspire, educate, inform and signpost people with a disability, and those interested in disability sport, to high quality opportunities.

Inclusive Club Hub (www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk) - A tool created to help clubs include more disabled people in their activities.

National Disability Sports Organisations

British Blind Sport - www.britishblindsport.org.uk

Cerebral Palsy Sport - www.cpsport.org

Dwarf Sports Association UK - www.dsauk.org

English Learning Disability Sport Alliance (ELDSA) - [Mencap Sport](#) and [Special Olympics](#)

LimbPower - www.limbpower.com
UK Deaf Sport - www.ukdeafsport.org.uk
WheelPower - www.wheelpower.org.uk/WPower

British Cycling - www.britishcycling.org.uk

British Athletics - www.britishathletics.org.uk

British Swimming - www.swimming.org

Handcycling UK - www.handcyclinguk.org.uk

Wheelchair Racing UK - www.bwra.co.uk

Entry Form

The entry form needs to contain certain information and questions regarding disability; the benefits to this are:

1. It increases the athletes' confidence that they have the ability to enter and take part and that the event is going to be suitably organised to fit their needs.
2. It increases the knowledge of what measures you may be required to put in place.

On a standard entry form this doesn't need to be any more than a small section, highlighting the inclusive nature of the event and asking whether an athlete has an impairment rather than a disability. This is a softer approach and research suggests wording the question in this way increases the likelihood of it being answered accurately. See example question below.

If the initial entry information indicates that an athlete has an impairment further information should be obtained to be able to plan effectively. If the athlete(s) is local, it may be worth inviting them to visit the venue/course and discuss it with them in person.

Example question on entry form

We believe our event is inclusive to all participants. So we can understand if you require any additional support, please answer the following question:

Do you have a long term illness, health problem or impairment that limits your daily activities? Yes, No, or Prefer not to say.

If yes, seek further information directly from the athlete.

Assistants/Volunteers

As well as offering a free event listing service, the Parasport website (www.parasport.org.uk) also provides a volunteering service for event organisers (or clubs) struggling to find trained volunteers/handlers and/or extra support for transition and throughout the day.

It is important to ensure that the athlete understands that the provision of volunteers/helpers is to support their participation in the event and not to assist with their personal needs e.g. changing, toileting. Athletes are expected to provide their own support to meet their personal needs.

Volunteers from triathlon clubs can be especially helpful because they understand the sport and the demands of competition.

British Triathlon has a growing number of trained water exit handlers. For further information contact the British Triathlon events team.

Equipment Hire/Borrowing

Some of the equipment used by paratriathletes e.g. racing wheelchairs, handcycles can be very expensive and a barrier to participation. There are a number of organisations that may be able to provide some assistance by either hiring/lending equipment. It is worth contacting the local authority sports development team or the appropriate County Sports Partnership as they are likely to have contact details for local organisations that may be able to help.

Other organisations to approach include:

Cycling Projects - www.cycling.org.uk

England Athletics - www.englandathletics.org

Case Studies

Making an event inclusive does not often require significant changes or incur additional costs. British Triathlon would like to thank Bex Stubbings of Arctic One for her support in the development of this document and providing the following examples of some simple adjustments made at their events:

1. At one of the Arctic One races, the run section is mainly on tarmac, however part of the course does go through a gravel farm track. Due to this the course is unsuitable for tri 1 athletes (athletes using a wheelchair or racing chair).
All other tri categories are fine on this surface, but it would also be dependent on each individual and their own abilities. Arctic One makes it clear in its race information and website that there is a gravel track which is not suitable for wheelchair users. They open the opportunity to discuss this with any athletes who are unsure.
2. Arctic One is often contacted by athletes who would like to race but are unsure if they can due to equipment restraints. This could be as simple as not having a race-chair. This can be overcome by allowing the competitor to race with the equipment they have (day chair for example) providing the course is suitable and it is safe to do so.
3. Talking to the athletes is key! Arctic One organises an aquathlon which has a very tricky cross country route which they feared would not be possible to accommodate many disabilities. However, after talking to some leg amputees, it became clear that whilst it would be hard due to no ankle flexibility, it would be manageable. Rather than discounting the athletes Arctic One worked with them to review the course. Communication and sharing of information is key; course maps with surface and gradient indications can help an athlete decide if a course is suitable for them.
4. One of the biggest changes that Arctic One had to make was with reference to the number of swim safety craft and staff. Much more than the recommended levels are required as some of the para athletes are very slow so the spread of athletes becomes greater. If there was only 1 or 2 para athletes in the race, it should be considered having 1 canoe per person for those who are new to the sport. They don't have to be right next to the person, but the safety crew are then only looking after that one person. This is not necessary for all para athletes. Again, talking to the athlete is the best option, understand the level of support they would require and make informed decisions from there.
5. Swim Entry and Exit - At Dorney lake, Arctic One are at the start end (away from the boat house) so there are no concrete ramps for access - as a result Arctic One had to spend a lot of time working out which route to take on the swim to ensure the exit and entrance is as easy as possible (there is a small slope on each side so that was also a consideration).
They found that entrance and exit from the same place was easiest and their handlers

had to be able to help athletes down into the water and be around for placing prosthetics back in the pre-transition area. Whilst some athletes accessed the water themselves by sliding down the slope on their bottoms, a couple of others require assistance and handlers worked with the athletes to enable safe entrance using the same technique as exit.

6. Swim exit- in the first year Arctic One were very nervous about the slope for the exit (which in reality is only 5 m long) but with confident handlers who had lots of practice, there was no problem at all. They used some carpet and matting to make the exit as easy as possible.

Transition - Changes were made to the transition layout to accommodate the turning of the tandems and wheelchairs - what is fine for a normal bike, it too small for others.

7. Bike - one of the Arctic One events is all on tarmac, but includes a steep downhill (12%). The climb back up is long but not more than 5% so would be ok, but the downhill also needs to be considered especially with turns and open roads. It would be too steep for wheelchair athletes as the run off at the bottom is not enough to sufficiently allow them time to slow down for the turn. Downhill should also be considered when assessing course suitability.

Section Three: Appendices

Appendix 1: Access Audit for Inclusive Events

SUBJECT AREA		YES	NO	COMMENTS	OVERALL SUITABILITY											
					Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual							
Parking	Marked disabled bays															
	Tarmac surface															
	Grass surface															
	Other surface															
	Flat															
	Uneven															
	Close to event areas															
Built Facilities	Accessible toilets															
	Wheelchair friendly															
	Well lit															
	Tactile signage															
	Hearing loop															
	Briefing room(s)															

Tick one box for each disability category;

- Not suitable – not able to address within available resources
- Suitable with reasonable adjustments
- Suitable

Temporary Structures	On tarmac				OVERALL SUITABILITY														
	On grass				Wheelchair			Ambulant			Visually Impaired			Hearing Impaired			Intellectual		
	Easily accessed				Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
Transition	Grass based				OVERALL SUITABILITY														
	Tarmac based				Wheelchair			Ambulant			Visually Impaired			Hearing Impaired			Intellectual		
	Other based				Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
	Sufficient space to accommodate specialist equipment & handlers																		
Swim (Pool)	Specialist equipment e.g. pool hoist, ramp				OVERALL SUITABILITY														
	Space for handlers				Wheelchair			Ambulant			Visually Impaired			Hearing Impaired			Intellectual		
	Lane width sufficient to accommodate swimmer & guide				Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
	Route to transition: Changes in level e.g. steps																		
	Route to transition: Hard surface																		
Swim (Open Water)	Water temperature expected to be 16+°C				OVERALL SUITABILITY														
	Single Loop				Wheelchair			Ambulant			Visually Impaired			Hearing Impaired			Intellectual		
	Deep Water Start				Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
	Slipway/Pontoon entry & exit																		

	Swim Exit Area: Sufficient space for handlers																			
Bike	Max. gradient no more than 12%				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">OVERALL SUITABILITY</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Wheelchair</th> <th>Ambulant</th> <th>Visually Impaired</th> <th>Hearing Impaired</th> <th>Intellectual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	OVERALL SUITABILITY					Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual					
	OVERALL SUITABILITY																			
	Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired		Intellectual														
Speed bumps																				
Good road surface - few potholes, sunken drain covers etc																				
Dead turns (180°)																				
Run	Max. gradient 5%				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">OVERALL SUITABILITY</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Wheelchair</th> <th>Ambulant</th> <th>Visually Impaired</th> <th>Hearing Impaired</th> <th>Intellectual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	OVERALL SUITABILITY					Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual					
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	Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired		Intellectual														
	Hard surface																			
	Width of path sufficient to accommodating wheelchair overtaking																			
Tight/Dead turns																				
Speed bumps																				
Finish	Run off after the finish line to accommodate racing wheelchairs				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">OVERALL SUITABILITY</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Wheelchair</th> <th>Ambulant</th> <th>Visually Impaired</th> <th>Hearing Impaired</th> <th>Intellectual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	OVERALL SUITABILITY					Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual					
	OVERALL SUITABILITY																			
Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual																
Suitable route (surface, gradient etc) to exit finish area																				
Awards Area	Accessible area (surface, steps etc)				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">OVERALL SUITABILITY</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Wheelchair</th> <th>Ambulant</th> <th>Visually Impaired</th> <th>Hearing Impaired</th> <th>Intellectual</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	OVERALL SUITABILITY					Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual					
	OVERALL SUITABILITY																			
Wheelchair	Ambulant	Visually Impaired	Hearing Impaired	Intellectual																
Accessible podium																				

Appendix 2: Swim Exit Area Organisation (Open Water)

Best Practice

Exiting the water can be a relatively high risk operation which can be made much safer by proper training, briefing and, where possible, rehearsing for both the water handlers and the athletes. No two swim exits are the same so practice will help solve potential problems before the event starts.

Apart from the athletes, only appropriately trained or accredited (and briefed) people should be allowed in the Swim Exit Area.

Wetsuits should NOT be removed in the swim exit area (i.e. at the top of the ramp or leading off the pontoon). There may be an area away from the water where wet suits can be removed and the leg amputees can put their artificial limbs (protheses) on.

Check with the athlete what they need to have available at the swim exit (e.g. crutches, wheelchair, prosthesis) & make sure they are positioned safely away from the water's edge but within easy reach. Ensure that the handlers and athletes know what belongs to whom and where they are.

Wheelchair Athletes



This method of carrying the athlete should be avoided as there is a high risk that the handlers' grip will slip under the athlete's legs. The athlete will automatically hold on tighter with his arms, choking the handlers and potentially causing them to fall backwards.

The preferred, safe method utilises a Patient Handling Sling and is carried out by trained water handlers. This method is described in greater detail below but can also be seen demonstrated on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0j8ZXaiCXsA> (Paratriathlon Water Handler Exit Technique).

The preferred method of carrying is illustrated in the following two pictures - the first taken from behind the water handlers and the second taken from in front of the water handlers.



The handlers and athlete are locked together: because the handlers' shoulders are fixed in the athlete's armpits he can't fall forward.

The athlete's arms are down their backs (but not grabbing on) and the handlers are holding him behind his back so he can't fall backwards.

The handlers have carried him out of deep water, (they did not need to lift him) taking his weight as the water gets shallower.

Steps

1. The handlers stand in chest high water facing the shore, holding the Patient Handling Sling between them.
2. As the athlete approaches they turn around, away from the shore and float onto the sling until it is positioned well under their thighs.
3. All three lock into position with shoulders into armpits, handler's arms around the athlete's back and the athlete's arms down the handler's back.



4. One of the handlers checks that the athlete and the other handler are both ready, only then does he give the signal to move.



5. The handlers walk out of the water and lower the athlete into the wheelchair.



NOTE: High level paraplegics (paralysed from the chest down) will not have trunk control and a third person may be needed in the water to push them onto the sling.

It is possible that the athlete could suffer a spasm in the form of uncontrollable shaking. This can be counteracted by placing the foot on the footplate of the wheelchair and applying firm but gentle pressure downwards on the knee.



Key Points

The handlers' safety comes first, if they aren't safe the athlete isn't either.

- Always have the wheelchair brakes on
- The athlete should never put their arms around the handlers' necks
- The handlers do not lift; they carry the athlete out of the water gradually taking the weight
- Athletes are never lowered to the ground, only into a wheelchair, bending the knees not the back to lower them.
- Handlers should ideally be of similar height so that they take the weight evenly, it is also more comfortable for the athlete

- Practice with the athletes if there is a swim practice before an event - the more practice the safer and faster it will be during the event
- If there is a third handler in the water to help position the athlete he/she should co-ordinate the lift by checking that all 3 are ready, if not; one of the sling handlers must check
- The slings sink so should be tethered to one handler

Athletes Requiring Support

The handler offers their right hand to the athlete's right hand (& vice versa) and supports under the elbow with their other hand.



The athlete pushes down and uses the handler like a walking stick. If they are very unsteady the handler can close in so their body gives added support.



Important Safety Points for Water Handlers

- Safety comes first and speed second
- Wear shoes that will protect from sharp underwater obstacles and won't slip on mud
- If your hands are likely to get cold and lose grip use dive gloves or even marigolds

Appendix 3: Additional Medical Considerations

Athletes with spinal cord injury

Damage to the spinal cord can lead to impaired regulation of heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature, as well as loss of movement and sensation. These athletes are unable to control body temperature efficiently, they only sweat above the level of lesion so can overheat or dehydrate more easily. They can also become chilled more easily.

Autonomic dysreflexia

This is a serious life threatening condition that occurs in a high percentage of individuals with a lesion at or above T6 (thoracic vertebra). It occurs when there is an irritating stimulus below the level of the lesion and leads to a significant rise in blood pressure. Under normal circumstances a tetraplegic person may have a low blood pressure (e.g. 90/60mm.Hg). Rising to a “normal” level of 120/80mmHg. may represent a significant elevation.

A blocked or kinked catheter or overfull bladder can cause autonomic dysreflexia as well as accidental injury.

Prompt action is necessary to identify the cause and lower blood pressure. Medical help is essential.

Symptoms:

- Pounding headache
- Feeling of doom, anxiety & apprehension
- Profuse sweating
- Tightness in chest.

Signs:

- Flushing and/or blotching above level of cord lesion
- Hypertension and bradycardia
- Pupillary dilatation
- Cardiac dysrhythmia

Above lesion:

- Pallor initially
- Flushing head and neck
- Sweating in area above and around the lesion

Below lesion:

- Cold peripheries
- Pilo erection
- Contraction of bladder and bowel
- Penile erection & seminal fluid emission

Action

Immediately sit the patient up to lower BP. Remember until bladder or abdominal distention is alleviated, sitting up to 90 degrees could cause further pressure & so make symptoms worse.

Summon medical help.

Check catheter and tubing for kinks or empty the leg bag, check for bladder and lower bowel distension.

Check for tight clothing, abdominal strap, leg bag strap, shoe, brace etc.

Give medication of choice if patient normally takes this.

- May be sublingual Nifedipine 5 mg pierced, bitten or chewed. Treatment may be repeated up to four doses (40mg) over one hour.
- GTN Spray

If possible, monitor blood pressure every five minutes during the episode

Athletes with increased muscle tone (spasticity)

This may be due to spinal cord lesion, MS or cerebral palsy and will be worsened by fatigue or cold. Use of ice packs to treat soft tissue injury should be avoided.

Athletes with leg amputation

Skin chafing and blisters can occur when running for long distances, especially if the stump is sweaty or wet. Blisters should not be burst and the athlete should not put the prosthesis (artificial leg) back on.