

Racing: in the cold and wet



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1. Be prepared

Triathlons take place in all conditions. They're often associated with extreme heat but it's more likely, especially in the UK, that you'll have to deal with cold and wet weather.

The most important aspect of dealing with the weather is to **BE PREPARED**.

- Look at the weather forecast ... **but don't trust it**
- Plan for all eventualities
- Know and understand the **rules** (minimum water/air temperatures)

Rain nearly always means cold. Keeping warm uses up energy – energy that you really need to use for racing.



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2. Stay warm before the start

- Plan for the worst and take warm and waterproof clothing to every race.
- When it is cold keep clothing on until the last possible minute, even during the line up - dry robes and hats/gloves are great here - [see Non below in Edmonton 2016 one of the coldest recent WTS events](#)
- If you can, find somewhere inside to change into your race kit. If not, and it is raining, make sure your helper has an umbrella!
- Keep your dry clothes dry, especially the things that you are going to put on after the race. Pack your wet and dry things in separate polythene bags.



Racing: in the cold and wet

3. Warm up thoroughly



Wagner Arujo ITU

- Get warm! Put your wetsuit on early and do a run warm up and any stretching with your wetsuit on, wear extra clothing if need be - [see Jonny above also in Edmonton 2016](#).
- Once warmed up layer up again with additional clothing over your wetsuit
- Don't warm up in the water if it's really cold, you will get very cold waiting to start.
- Instead use swim bands for warming up your arms, shoulders and upper body.

Racing: in the cold and wet

4. Swimming in Cold Water

- Wear a neoprene hat (under your swim cap). Normally these will have a chin strap but are now starting to be made without too - [see picture of Flora Duffy and those of hats below](#)
- You can put some extra Vaseline on your forehead, the back of your neck, exposed skin around your ankles and on the backs of your hands and feet.
- You can also do similar with warming oil too. This feels a little odd first time and you would certainly want to practice this before racing
- The more you swim in cold water the easier it gets. If you haven't done much cold water swimming breathing control is critical. Some athletes may find cold water takes their breath away. Control your breathing with your normal swim breathing pattern and avoid any urge you may have to breath more shallowly then normal.



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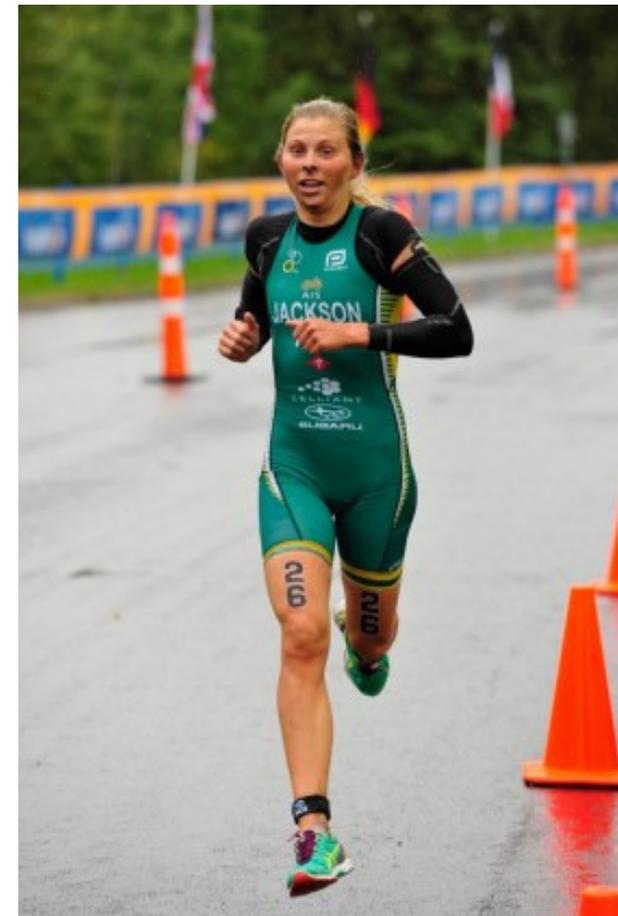


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5. Race Clothing

You are somewhat limited by what you can wear under your wetsuit and the need to go through T1 fast. It's very difficult to put anything on. Here are few things that you can do:

- Wear a rash vest or similar tight lycra long or short sleeved top. You can wear them under or over a tri suit and importantly under your wetsuit too. They provide extra protection for your chest, back & shoulders. If you wear one under your trisuit you have to wear it for the run. If you wear it over your trisuit you can take it off in T2.
- Arm warmers can also be used under a wetsuit if they are a good tight fit - you will need to practice here prior to ensure they don't come off with your wetsuit! [See Emma Jackson racing in short sleeved lycra top and arm warmers](#)
- Wear toe covers on your cycling shoes. You will have cold feet but these can prevent them getting even colder. Because you can fit them to your shoes before the start there is no time penalty.



Racing: in the cold and wet

6. Transitions

- If you want dryer shoes to run in leave them upside down in transition so that they don't fill up with rain. Or put them in a polythene bag – it only takes a few milliseconds to get them out during the race.
- If raining heavily and you want dry cycling shoes consider not using elastic bands to hold them up on your bike for T1 as they may fill with water.
- If you have to rack your bike a long time before the race (the night before or several hours) cover it with a plastic sheet. Just before the start go and remove the sheet (and lubricate the chain and check the gears and the tyre pressures).

7. Food and Drink

- You can buy insulated drinks bottles – so you could easily have a warm drink on your bike. [See picture.](#)
- You use more energy in the cold – so for any race longer than supersprint you may need an energy drink or an energy gel. Drinking and/or feeding on the bike will require practice prior to the race to ensure you don't feel sick running.



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8. After the race

- Make sure that you can get warm and dry immediately on finishing and put plenty of clothes on. See [Javier Gomez on the podium in Edmonton 2016](#)
- Make sure that you have suitable food and a warm drink available at the finish.



Final Thoughts

- Most everything discussed is easy to facilitate if planned for and thought about beforehand. Arriving unprepared may mean you are likely to think more about how cold and wet you are than about your race.
- Planning ahead, and being flexible and adaptable at the same time, is important in this sport; weather conditions can change rapidly and ensuring you have covered all eventualities will help you to prepare and stand on the start line in the best frame of mind to take the race on whatever the conditions.
- A link to the ITU rules on minimum water and air temperature can be found [here](#) (page 27)