

Swim Start Positioning Tip

Where you position yourself in the swim start will often determine what kind of swim you will have. If you are a fast swimmer, get up to the front so you don't have to swim over people. Slower swimmers or those that might stop for breaks should stay more towards the outside - farther from the buoy line. Following the buoy line will give you the shortest swim, but remember that faster swimmers often have no reservations about swimming right over slower swimmers.

The Swim

The triathlon is an individual sport, so swim *your* race. You will bump into others and they will bump into you. Do your best to ignore them and just find the clearest and most direct path towards the swim finish. No need to apologize if you bump into someone - it's the nature of the sport. Similarly, don't get frustrated or angry if someone bumps into you. That's just wasted energy that you'll wish you saved once you are on the run!



A wave swim start.

During the swim you will need to sight (lift your head and focus on some object) to make sure you are swimming in the general direction you are supposed to. There

will often be kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, or people on other water craft monitoring the swim and they will point you in the right direction if you get too far off course. It is important in the swim to stay relaxed. If you need to take a break, you will be able to rest on a kayak. Just let them know you will be grabbing on and make certain that they don't help you make any forward progress or you could get disqualified.

Swim towards the swim finish until your hand hits bottom. Take a couple more strokes and then stand. Next you should put the goggles on your forehead. If you take them off, you lose a hand to help take your wetsuit off - assuming it's a wetsuit swim. Open the Velcro, find your zipper pull, unzip, then take the wetsuit down to your waist. Some people can pull off the goggles and swim cap before stripping off one of the arms so that the goggles and cap stay in the sleeve of the wetsuit. If you try this, make sure to practice it before race day, and of course it will only work if your wetsuit has sleeves.

Follow the path to transition. Unless you are the first out of the water, it shouldn't be too hard to find. Expect your heart rate to shoot through the roof, and your legs will likely feel a little awkward since you just spent some amount of time horizontal. Walk, jog, or run to transition - whatever you feel will work for you.

Tips for Open Water Swimming

- ✓ Get in open water before your race if at all possible.
- ✓ Know the type of start the race will have (beach start, shallow water, deep water, or dock) and be prepared for it.
- ✓ Position yourself according to your ability.
- ✓ Sight as often as you need but realize the more you sight, the slower you will swim.
- ✓ Draft if you can because it's legal and will save you energy.
- ✓ Wear earplugs if you often get dizzy or disoriented when exiting the water. They can also help if the water is cold by keeping it out of your ears.
- ✓ Wear a second swim cap under your race-issued cap if the water temps are cool. If it is really cold, wear a neoprene cap under the race cap.

Here are some [tips for practicing open water swimming](#) even if you can't get into open water before your race.