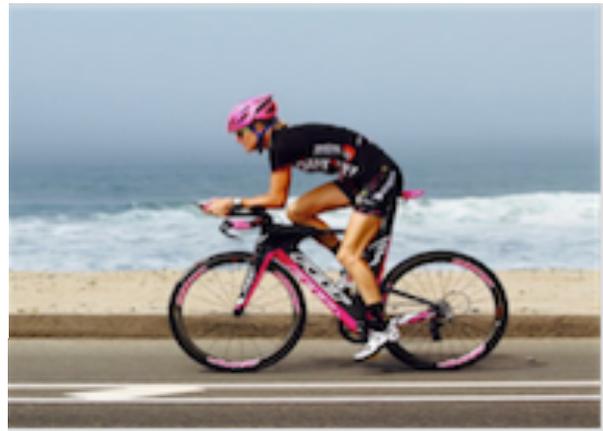




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Warm up to be better prepared on race day

It's race day. The gear checklist has been checked and double checked. You had enough sleep, ate breakfast, and have everything ready to go after setting up in transition. Or do you really?

Often, triathletes take care of the tasks mentioned above without taking care of themselves completely the morning of their race. How so? We visit with teammates, friends and family who came to spectate, and let pre-race nerves take over. We don't think about warming up! Instead, we position ourselves in our waves at the swim start, check that GPS HR watch, then push our bodies into race mode once the horn goes off. Why not warm up like you do for training sessions?

According to Michellie, the warmup has two primary purposes – to prepare you for the physical demands of competition and improve your muscles'

dynamics to be less prone to injury. The amount and intensity of the warmup depends on race distance and fitness level. "Warmups should be more intense for shorter races such as sprint triathlons or 5Ks, but less intense for longer races such as 70.3 and Iron distance. It should be similar to the routine you have during training," Coach MJ said. In addition, climate and conditions need to be considered. The warmup should be shorter in warmer temperatures to keep your core temperature down, while in colder climates, it's important to stay as warm as possible before competition.

The challenge of warmups at a race venue is that you may be limited to what you can perform. For example, your bike is most likely already checked in. Coach MJ has suggestions to make it possible, no matter the location. If anything, you can definitely have a run warmup.

Swim – The most important warmup you shouldn't neglect; many athletes get panicked by going out too hard and then be quickly out of breath. Keep it simple. Easy swim for 2-3 minutes, then add some accelerations, such as 4x20 strokes hard, 20 strokes easy. If you can't get into the water prior to the start, dry land drills with swim cords can be very beneficial, such as single-arm freestyle and/or butterfly pull throughs. Investing in swim cords is highly recommended.

Bike – Riding your bike to the event is a great way to warm up and do a last-minute mechanical check. You can include some high-cadence spinning and even 2-3 minute tempo builds to race pace. Consider getting out on the course, if possible. Just get the blood flowing.

Run – Complete a light jog, do stretches and drills. You can include high

knees, skipping, karaokes, as well as neck and shoulder rolls. If it's warm, keep the jog at 2-5 minutes, then drills in the shade. If it's cold or raining, consider doing so at home/hotel, then once you arrive at the race, you may need a 5-15 minute jog with accelerations for muscles to be truly warmed up.

Coach MJ said there can be a difference between a triathlete who actively warms up versus one who doesn't, in terms of injury prevention as well. "Once you get your blood flowing, you start to feel so much better. Remember, the brain loves routine and consistency, so look at your warmup routine as a treat for your brain," Michellie said. She added it's a great way to keep your mind off those pre-race jitters and achieve your best in competition.

-By Kathy English, Michellie Jones Coaching