

# Concept

*a powerful, intriguing, inspiring, or perhaps odd idea distilled to its essential elements*

## The Art of the Transition

**Keep your head down, but don't forget to look up and ahead.**



By Jim Elsenheimer

Arms and legs churn the water to froth around me. Bright-orange swim caps pop into view as I lift my head every few strokes to sight the beach. Although I have 50 meters to go, I'm already thinking about getting out of the water, unzipping my wetsuit, running to the transition area, putting on my cycling shoes and helmet, and making a break for the bike course.

I'm up to my eyeballs in the multitasking, performance-oriented world of triathlons.

While on the bike, I recruit different muscle groups to handle the demands of the new environment. Head down and arms extended, I slice through the wind with a blur of spinning legs. Miles later, my mind jumps ahead again to the upcoming transition. I mentally trace the route to my spot on the rack, then drill myself on the next steps: helmet and cycling shoes off, running shoes on, grab a water bottle, and head to the run course.

I make sure my shoes are snug the first time, then ease into the run, trying to relax my legs as they make the shift from cycling to running. Rookies tend to panic at the sensation of cement quads, but a seasoned veteran like myself knows that the legs will come around and feel more comfortable in short order.

In no time, I'm able to pick up my pace and hit my stride.

Triathlon is a series of distinct challenges all strung together into a single event. To the untrained eye, it looks like a race of swimming, cycling, and running. But there's more to it than that; there are transitions that are just as critical to your results. It's your skill at the hidden art of the transition that can make the difference in your ultimate success.

As lifelong learners, we constantly explore new ideas and make connections that add meaning and value to our work, lives, and being.

Here are some triathlon transition tips you might want to try.

- Look ahead and plan for the next transition.
- Mentally prepare for the transition as you get nearer to it.
- Embrace the change, and adopt the new skills and tools.
- Don't get flustered; smooth and calm win the day.
- Give yourself time to get up-to-speed in the new phase.

**Jim Elsenheimer** is a training and performance specialist with Pearson Performance Solutions, and a competitive runner and triathlete; [jim.elsenheimer@pearson.com](mailto:jim.elsenheimer@pearson.com).