

# First Tri Starter Kit

SoftStart Tri · Find your first race in Florida and the Southeast · [softstarttri.com](http://softstarttri.com)

**Promise:** Use this kit to pick a beginner-friendly race, train without guesswork for 12 weeks, and pack so race morning is boring (in a good way).

## 1. Pick the right first race (5 minutes)

- Prefer **sprint** or **super-sprint** over Olympic for race #1.
- If open water scares you: choose a **pool swim** or a **duathlon** first.
- Look for SoftStart tags: relay, novice, Athena/Clydesdale, recreational wave, flat course.
- Filter races at [softstarttri.com](http://softstarttri.com) and sort by SoftStart Score (verified flags only).

## 2. 12-week couch-to-sprint outline

Three sports, three short sessions most weeks. Keep it boring and consistent. Rest when sore.

**Weeks 1–2:** Swim 20–30 min easy (pool). Bike 30–40 min flat. Run/walk 20–25 min. 1 rest day.

**Weeks 3–4:** Swim 30 min with short intervals. Bike 45 min. Run 25–30 min continuous if possible. Practice transitions at home once.

**Weeks 5–6:** Open water or longer pool set once. Bike 50–60 min. Run 30–35 min. One brick: bike 30 + run 10.

**Weeks 7–8:** Race-distance swim practice. Bike 60–75 min. Run 35–40 min. Brick: bike 40 + run 15.

**Weeks 9–10:** Peak week: swim race distance + a little more. Bike near race distance. Run near race distance. One full brick.

**Week 11:** Cut volume ~40%. Keep one short of each sport sharp.

**Week 12 (race week):** Short easy sessions Mon–Wed. Rest or 15 min shakeout Thu/Fri. Race Saturday/Sunday. Sleep and carbs matter more than hero workouts.

## 3. Race-day packing list

| Must have | Nice to have | Leave for later |
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|
|-----------|--------------|-----------------|

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| Goggles that don't leak<br>Swim cap (usually provided)<br>Bike that shifts + helmet<br>Running shoes<br>Race belt / safety pins<br>Water bottle<br>Photo ID + USAT or one-day license<br>Trisuit or swimsuit + shorts | Anti-chafe<br>Sunglasses<br>Elastic laces<br>Small towel for T1<br>Sunscreen<br>Hat/visor<br>Spare tube + CO2/pump<br>Nutrition for bike (1-2 gels) | Aero bars<br>Wetsuit (rent first if unsure)<br>Powermeter<br>Carbon race wheels<br>Extra gadgets |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Night before: lay it all out. Morning: arrive early, rack bike, walk swim entry, find exit to T1.

## 4. Open-water panic plan

- **Before the gun:** Warm up if allowed. Sight a fixed landmark every 6–8 strokes in practice.
- **If you panic:** Flip to back or tread. Raise hand for a kayak. Breathe out fully. Restart when ready. DNF is allowed; drowning is not a training goal.
- **Contact:** Draft off feet only if comfortable. Wide start line is fine.
- **Still scared?** Pick a SoftStart pool-swim race or duathlon. Confidence first, ego second.

## 5. SoftStart Score (why we built it)

We award points only for verified beginner signals (pool, try-a-tri, clinics, relays, Athena/Clydesdale, flat course notes, recreational waves, published sprint/duathlon/aquabike). Missing data shows as Unscored, not a fake zero.

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