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For people who LOVE triathlon

IRONMAN

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SOUTH AFRICA



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Get to know the world's greatest endurance athlete – he's homegrown!



TRI-SUITS REVIEWED

One of the most important features of race day is your suit. Read on to find the one that's made for you. **BY ADRIAN MORRIS**



The ultimate testing ground, Adrian testing the best on Kona's hallowed ground.

While you can change clothes at each transition, a tri-suit will take you from swim, to bike, to run, to post-race pizza. Tri-suits have come a long way since they were first introduced to triathlon almost 30 years ago. Back then select manufacturers pieced together a few panels of Lycra, fixed in a nominal slice of padding and perhaps experimented with some cleverly shaped panels. Today, an ever-increasing number of manufacturers piece together several exotic fabrics in innovative ways to accommodate just about every shape and pocket. So, it's important to know what you're looking for, or what to look for. The tri-suit you choose is important from both a performance and comfort point of view. An ill-fitting, slow-drying and poorly constructed tri-suit can leave you feeling slow, cold and sore. Over the past 10 years of training for and racing IRONMAN I've tried and tested many different brands over thousands of hours of swimming, cycling and running. Here are a few that have stood out...

THE KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A TRI-SUIT:
PADDING: a comfortable pad that dries quickly and is unnoticeable on the run is essential
STORAGE: long events require fuel storage pockets that are easy to reach and don't spill their contents
FABRICS: technical fabrics offer comfort, breathability, compression and moisture-removing qualities
AERODYNAMICS: less drag saves energy
GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS: arm and leg openings shouldn't move around, and access should be simple



2XU LD CORE SUPPORT TRI-SUIT R3 599 | www.2xu.co.za

Founded about 10 years ago, 2XU has its roots in triathlon. They have since expanded into other sports including sailing and snowboarding.

- » **PADDING:** Italian made memory foam provides ample support and cushioning on the bike, while the slim design ensures that it doesn't get in the way on the run.
- » **STORAGE:** Three rear holster pockets provide ample fuel storage.
- » **FABRICS:** The material is soft and dense and provides UPF 50 protection. The high-density yarn, which is incorporated into the core and leg panels, reduces vibration, provides compression and aids muscle stability.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** The smooth fabric and the flat seams reduce aerodynamic drag.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The leg openings have elastic grippers. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want bare shoulders and a more dense fabric, which provides compression and warmth.

DON'T: You prefer sleeves and a lightweight suit.

FIRST ASCENT SPEED TRI-SUIT R1 149 | www.firstascent.co.za

First Ascent was founded in Cape Town about 25 years ago and has its roots in outdoor gear. The one-piece Speed tri-suit is suitable for training and racing.

- » **PADDING:** The simple pad is remarkably comfortable on the bike and barely noticeable on the run.
- » **STORAGE:** Two rear envelope pockets provide ample fuel storage. A third leg envelope pocket provides additional, but minimal storage.
- » **FABRICS:** Aqua-Pro water repellent fabric is quick drying. The mesh fabric that is incorporated into the back allows heat to dissipate.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** The fabric is smooth and the fit is snug, which reduces drag. However, the seams aren't flat enough and large areas of the shoulders are exposed.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The leg openings have elastic grippers. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want bare shoulders and a simple, durable everyday one-piece tri-suit.

DON'T: You prefer a lightweight suit and less skin on your shoulders and back exposed.



**ZOOT ULTRA TRIATHLON
AERO SKINSUIT**

R3 411 | Not Available in SA | www.zootsports.com

Easily recognisable by their Hawaiian-inspired patterns, Zoot was founded in Kona, Hawaii more than 30 years ago. As pioneers of the tri-suit, Zoot has a wealth of experience.

- » **PADDING:** Minimal padding with carbon-fibre incorporated to help it dry quickly.
- » **STORAGE:** Two hip and two back holster pockets provide ample fuel storage.
- » **FABRICS:** Coldblack® heat-reflection technology manages temperature and provides UPF 30 protection. Mesh panels under the arms enhance breathability. The stitch construction is comfortable on the skin, minimises chafing and stretches with the fabric. The warp of the fabric in the legs provides compression.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** The textured fabric on the shoulders reduces aerodynamic drag.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The arm and leg openings have integrated grippers, which ensure a snug and aerodynamic fit. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want a sleeved one-piece tri-suit, which is infused with years of know-how and an attention to detail.

DON'T: You prefer to buy something available in South Africa.



**CASTELLI FREE SANREMO
TRI-SUIT SS**

R2 503 | www.castelli-cycling.com

Castelli's Body Paint tri-suits are essentially seamless, apart from a single seam on the inside of each leg and one from the zipper to the pad.

- » **PADDING:** Its proprietary KISS tri-padding is a slimmed-down version of the cycling pad – comfortable on the bike and not uncomfortable on the run.
- » **STORAGE:** Two generous envelope pockets on the back provide maximum fuel storage, but can turn inside out when removing items.
- » **FABRICS:** The near seamless construction reduces risk of chafing, and the highly elastic fabric fits snugly but still allows you full range of motion.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** Near seamless construction means that there aren't any seams or folds that may cause aerodynamic drag.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The leg grippers are integrated and broad, allowing for a comfortable fit and preventing the legs from rotating or sliding up. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want bare shoulders, you're a loyal Castelli fan and love their body paint cycling shorts.

DON'T: If you're frustrated by finicky pockets.



HUUB DS LONG COURSE TRI-SUIT

R4 750 | www.huubdesign.com

HUUB developed this suit in collaboration with six-time IRONMAN world champion Dave Scott. This well-conceived design guarantees exceptional all-day comfort and performance.

- » **PADDING:** The low-density pad is cleverly rotated slightly forward to match the open hip position setup of a triathlon bike.
- » **STORAGE:** Two envelope rear pockets ensure that the contents don't spill out and are easy to access while cycling or running.
- » **FABRICS:** Coldblack® heat-reflection technology manages temperature and provides UPF 30 protection. Mesh panels located along the spine and lower back allow heat to dissipate. The fabric has a soft feel and wicks sweat away. The sleeves provide compression, which reduces bicep muscle oscillation on the bike.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** Sleeves and a snug fit, as well as envelope-style rear pockets, improve aerodynamics on the bike.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The arm and leg openings have no grippers or seams, but fit snugly and don't move around. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want a sleeved, body hugging one-piece tri-suit, which is soft and featherweight.

DON'T: You prefer bare shoulders.



ORCA RS1 DREAM KONA AERO

R4 990 | www.fluidlines.co.za

RS1 is Orca's premium triathlon apparel range. 2014 IRONMAN world champion Sebastian Kienle wore this suit which is now available to the general public.

- » **PADDING:** An innovative 2-5mm thick floating pad with all-way stretch allows total freedom of movement with an excellent fit.
- » **STORAGE:** This suit has no storage pockets.
- » **FABRICS:** Oxygen fabric with Coldblack® heat-reflection technology manages temperature and provides UPF 30 protection. The arms are constructed of a mesh-like fabric to provide breathability. The fully bonded seams also improve comfort. The sleeves provide compression, which reduces bicep muscle oscillation on the bike. The legs also provide some compression.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** AeroSkin fabric on the front panel improves aerodynamics on the bike. The fully bonded seams make the silhouette of the suit smooth and all joins are out of the wind when riding on the aerobars. The mesh-like fabric on the sleeves creates a textured surface, which reduces aerodynamic drag.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** The arm and leg openings have integrated grippers, which ensure a snug and aerodynamic fit. The long front zip allows cooling on the run and easy access.

BUY IT: You want a sleeved, body hugging one-piece tri-suit, with a low-cut neck.

DON'T: You prefer in-garment storage pockets and bare shoulders.



SPEEDO TRI-SUIT

R1 950 (one-piece) / R1 200 (two-piece) |
www.speedo.co.za

Speedo is one of the biggest names in swimming so it's no surprise that its tri-suit excels in non-wetsuit swims.

- » **PADDING:** Exceptionally light and neat – a real plus of this suit, it felt non-existent on the run. Effective sports bra.
- » **STORAGE:** Two deep pockets designed to store a big bar or gel sachets in each yet no perceivable drag in water or turbulence on the bike.
- » **FABRIC:** A thicker Jet Mesh fabric is very comfortable, especially for those who prefer the warmth and additional anti-chafe layer than no-skin-feel suits provide. Additional strategically positioned layers ensure less revealing show through and provide comfort.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** The sleeveless vest style top suits non-wetsuit swims and ventilation is limited which reduces flapping. Ergonomically designed panels provide comfort and contoured fit.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** Power compression cuffs are very firm ensuring zero water flow or sliding up on the bike. These can be too tight on bigger quads so must be trial-fitted before purchasing.



BUY IT: If you like a thicker, vest style suit.



DON'T: You're looking for lightweight or if you don't like tight cuffs.



COMPRESSPORT T3 TRIATHLON AERO TOP & BRUTAL SHORT

Aero TR3 Top R1 660 & TR3 Brutal Shorts R2 000 |
www.compressport.com

Compressport say the T3 Aero Top and Brutal Short are designed using medical technologies and know-how and then adapted to suit the needs of athletes.

- » **PADDING:** Marginally thicker than some chamois, this high quality pad offers excellent padding over longer distance rides without being noticeable or having drying issues on the run.
- » **STORAGE:** The most storage space of the suits tested. The low positioned top and side access storage pockets allow very easy access on the bike and the run. The switch from previously front positioned shorts storage to the back is a great move – four pockets in total.
- » **FABRIC:** The on/off wicking, compression-based, seamless fabric remains a unique aspect of Compressport's range. Unlike Lycra and skin-feel alternatives this fabric should be felt in person – some testers feel it's the most effective compression available. The 3D designed material is cooler than its predecessors and appeals to those who enjoy super tech.
- » **AERODYNAMICS:** Sleeved top remains in place at all times and tops are low cut to avoid riding up so no flapping issues here. The ultra-light sleeves combined with compression and seamless body offer breathability in the right places. The thicker feel wicks moisture quickly.
- » **GRIPPERS & ZIPPERS:** Another standout feature of this new range is the welded feel zipper, skin-feel arm cuffs and foldover shorts band offering excellent comfort. The external sticky saddle grip is designed to offer stability in set TT positions. ⚙



BUY IT: If you love com-pression garments and high-tech fabrics. Note: personal fitting is crucial but Compressport do provide for varying quad sizes.



DON'T: The compression fabric feel isn't for everyone. Try before you buy.