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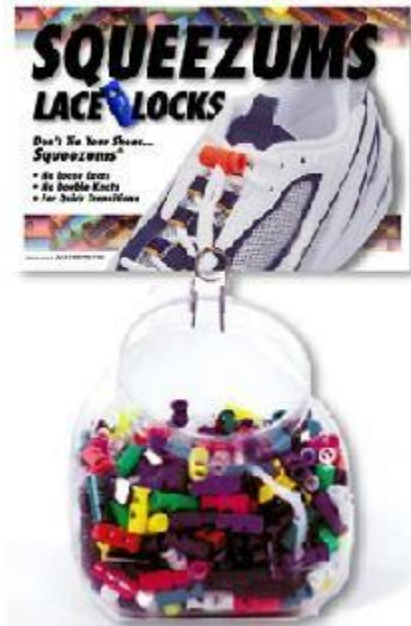
Lace Locks: \$6.99

If you want to decrease your triathlon time, one area that you could pay more attention to, is your time in transition. Any experienced athlete or coach will tell you that. It is far easier to cut 30 seconds from the time spent changing shoes, clothes, etc. than to shave 30 seconds from your 5 K run or half mile swim. Probably the least expensive and more useful transition equipment that you can buy are lace locks (\$1.50 per pair) or elastic laces (\$4.99-\$6.99 per pair).

For those who are just getting into the sport, lace locks (also called Squeezums, which is the most popular model), are little spring loaded locks that allows the shoe laces to move freely through its holes when its two parts are pressed together, but lock them in place when released, thus eliminating the need to tie the laces. Elastic laces are exactly that...elastic shoe laces that normally come with a locking mechanism and are designed to replace the existing non stretching shoe laces. Unlike the lace locks, where the locks are actually made to allow the user to move it along the laces while pressed, locking them and unlocking them in the desired place, the locking mechanism in the elastic laces, remain locked. It's the elasticity of the laces that allow the user to pull the shoe open while getting the foot inside, and then closes it in place when the shoe tongue is released.

If you talk to different athletes, you will find that there is a lot of personal preference s involved in choosing the right one for you. For me however, it depends on the type and distance of race. I found that for sprint races, elastic laces are the way to go, as it is quicker to slide my feet in the running shoes and not have to worry about moving the locking mechanism along the laces. The downside of the elastic laces is that if you get them tight enough so that your foot doesn't move around in your shoes (especially going down hills), then it becomes really difficult to get your feet in the shoes. On the other hand, if you leave them somewhat loose, so that's easy to get your foot in the shoes, there will be some foot movement that can cause some friction (and thus blisters). You can try to adjust between these two extremes, but I choose to err toward the second option, as for me quick transitions are the key. Plus, in most sprint races I'm only running a 5K so comfort takes a back seat...I can tolerate some foot movement in a short run. We sell the **EasyLaces** and the **Yankz**, and they both do the job adequately. The **Yankz** cost a couple of dollars more but include a little extra clip for each shoe, which makes it easier to deal with the excess laces.

On Half Ironman and Ironman races, quick transitions are less important than comfort during the run. Consequently, I use lace locks. It may take me a few extra seconds to get the locks and laces positioned the way I like, but once it's done, I don't have to worry about excessive movement (that can cause blisters) or the annoyance of laces coming untied.



Triathlon