

# Attack of the Killer T-Shirts

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Remember your first road race? The excitement of picking up your number at the registration table; that nervous feeling in your stomach as you waited for the starting gun to fire; the crowds cheering you through the fatigue.

But what was the best part--the most tangible memory of the great event? Surely it wasn't the burning sensation in your lungs, or the nasty blood blisters. No, it was the T-shirt the volunteer at the registration table handed you before the race, wasn't it? And that battered remnant of 50/50 cotton-poly blend is something you'll cherish forever. (And I do mean forever!) Problem is, that piece of faded glory ain't the only one. If you're like me, you have dozens (scores?) of these memories taking up valuable space in every room of your house. After a few years you begin to give them to friends and relatives, turn them into quilts, car-washing rags and donations to the Goodwill box. And still they spill from over-crammed drawers like ever-advancing multi-colored glaciers.

Why do we keep so many race T's? Probably because there are so many different categories of "must keep" shirts. Of course you have to keep that first race shirt, but there are also:

**PR shirts.** T-shirts that memorialize your personal bests for all distances. You'll always cherish those 10K and Marathon PR shirts, but do you really have to hold onto that hideous orange thing you got when you did your best 4.2-miler?

**Status shirts.** I'll never throw away my Olympic Trials shirts, and you've got a keeper if you've ever run Boston, but is your 1991 Crescent City Classic shirt really a status symbol?

**Pretty shirts.** That rare shirt nice enough to wear in mixed company. Most aren't, and these occasions are rare, so there's no need to keep 20 "dress" shirts to wear to the grocery store. Two or three will do.

**Unusual event shirts.** I haven't worn my 1985 2nd annual St. Croix Triathlon shirt in the past ten years, but I'll never throw it away since it's the only Tri I've ever done. And maybe there's a strong case for keeping your 1989 Dykes on Bikes Ride for Gay Pride T-shirt\*, but if you have one for each of the past 10 rides, are they really all that unusual?

**Long-sleeve shirts.** It's great to have a few long-sleeve shirts for winter training, but I've never thrown one away. There just aren't enough cold days in Mobile to justify keeping more than four or five Delchamps or Turkey 10 shirts.

**Cut-offs and singlets.** Yes, you're justified in keeping a number of lightweight, sleeveless shirts for training in our April-November summers, but my pile of summer training shirts numbers in the three to four dozen range. Unless you only get to the laundry monthly, it may be time to think about thinning out the ranks.

But once you've made the decision to reduce your inventory, what do you do with all the throw-aways? The Goodwill box is a good idea, but there are others. I've recently begun using them as landfill in the front yard. If you have any small sinkholes or depressions on your property simply dig them out, fill the hole with old T-shirts, then cover over with the dug-out dirt and grass. T-shirts also make great pet bedding. Shred them for small mammals, leave them as-is for dogs. Cooling and heating bills too high? Forget the fiberglass. Line the

attic with your T's for cheap and easy insulation. Or maybe you'd prefer to reincarnate them as car seat covers.

Whatever you decide to do with those old shirts, do something. And do it soon before the advancing mass completely takes over, feeding on those old shoes you're equally reluctant to throw away. But fear not: There are definitely more of both on the way.

[\*Sorry, that was unnecessary. I've acted inappropriately, and hurt my family, my club and my country, and for that I'm deeply, deeply sorry....]

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