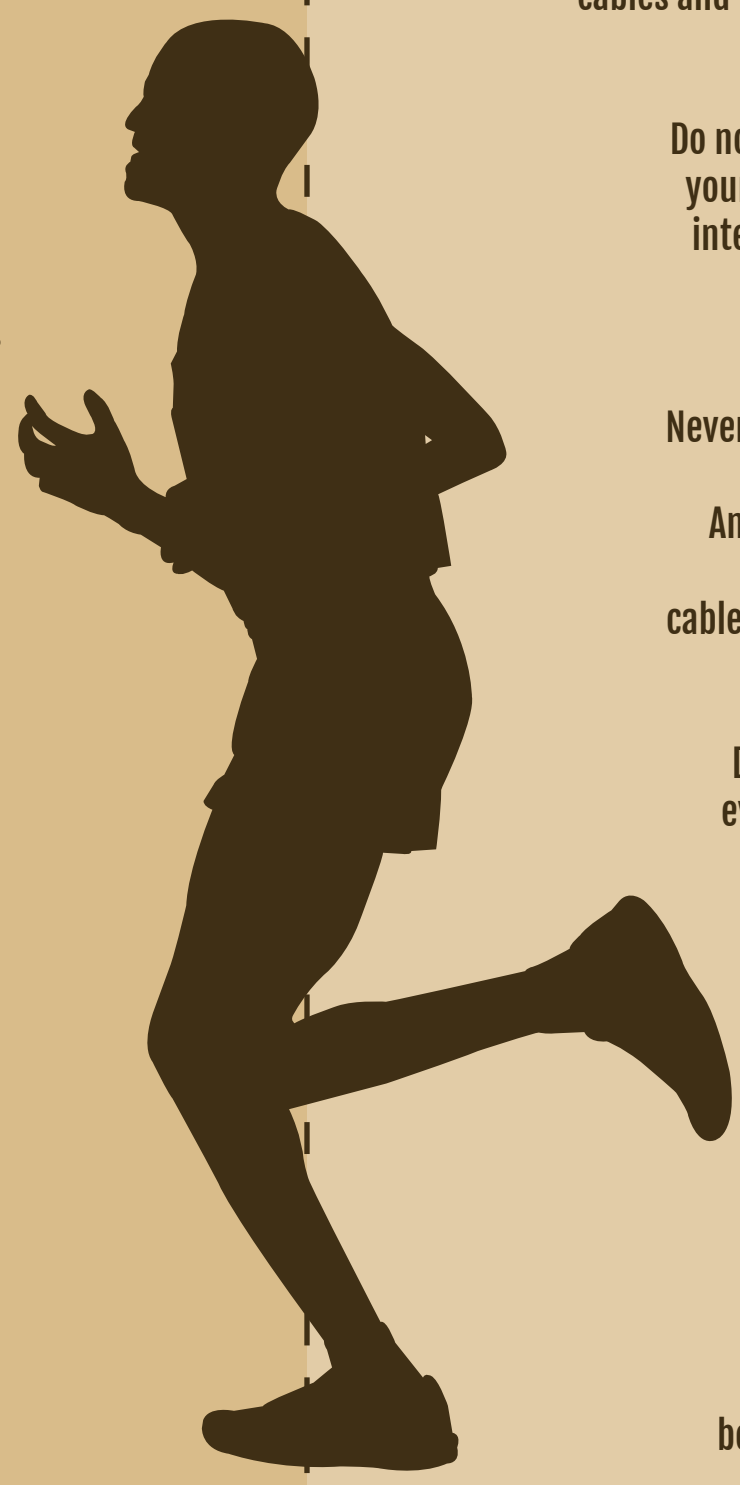
THE DOs & DONTs of RACE TIMING

Around the world, timing races with RFID technology has become an increasingly popular profession.
RFID can take your typical manually timed 5k and turn it into a technically efficient racing and social experience!

DOs

- Plan ahead and thoroughly test your equipment, even if it is brand new.
- Have a race day checklist (and use it!)
- Bring spares (e.g., antenna, cable, reader, etc.) in case of equipment failure.
- Know the ins and outs of your RFID system.
- Inspect your cables prior to race day. Cables could potentially have been damaged in transportation.
- Build a battery backup system, or use an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) or battery backup to support your equipment in case of power loss.
- Use high quality cables.
- Train others to run your system in case you need an extra hand.
- Communicate with other race timers. The success of RFID-based race timing is dependent on networks of experienced race timers sharing ideas to improve the industry.
- Test the field limits for each antenna to ensure it covers your expected read zones.
- Test the placement of tags on the runner based on the read zone of the antenna.
- Adjust your software to ignore multiple tag reads. Capture the first read and ignore duplicate data.
- Charge and power up all equipment BEFORE an event.
- Show participants how to appropriately apply the RFID tag to ensure you capture as many reads as possible.
- Bring or coordinate volunteers to help you on race day.
- Use a manual timing system (or stopwatch) as a backup in case the RFID timing system goes down.



DONTs

- Never fold your cables. This will damage the cables and lessen or eliminate their ability to transmit a signal to your reader.
- Do not run other cables in proximity to your antenna cables. Electromagnetic interference can greatly increase the signal loss in your cables and antennas.
- Never let your RFID equipment get wet.
- Anyone who isn't trained should not set up your hardware. Damaging cables and equipment is possible if you don't know what you are doing.
- Do not wait until the day before an event to get your equipment ready. Clean, test, and prep your system for the next event immediately after the last one.
- Do not depend on the venue to supply power - bring your own.
- Do not leave cables in the open. Cover them to avoid tripping participants and volunteers.
- Do not leave weather to chance; be prepared with a tent or covering if rain is expected.
- Do not use an improper enclosure for readers or antennas. Metal reflects RF energy and sufficient cooling is necessary for these devices.

These timing experts lent us a hand in providing these common DOs and DONTs for a successful race day: Carlos Perez with Bike Monkey Inc., Eric Cobb with Back 40 Events, Timothy Styler with NJ Races, Brian Agee with Agee Timing, and Joe Lugiano!

Any Tips You Want to Add?

Don't hesitate to add your own tips in the comments section below!