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"I'M A RUNNER!"

FULL MARATHON

Be Respectful! It's the Marathon:

The Marathon has its own unique position in the history of long distance running. For some, running just one marathon can be a major objective. For others it could be running "Boston"; completing one in every state, every province, every continent etc. But regardless of your goals running a race of 42.2 km/ 26.2 miles should not be taken lightly. The Marathon is a serious endeavor and can have adverse consequences if one is not properly prepared.

Read how to show your respect:

This article was written by a very experienced elite marathoner. Terry McCluskey (M61 at the time of writing) has participated in 75 marathons, most recently finished first in the M60-64 age group at the 2010 Boston Marathon in 2 hours 51 minutes.

Among Terry's other accomplishment are: 2005 USATF Masters Age Division 55-59 Runner of the Year. 2006, 2008, and 2009 USATF Age Division Marathon Champion….Run Ohio Grandmaster of the Year 2007, 2008 and 2009….Western Pennsylvania Track Club Athlete of the Year 2006, 2007 and 2008. Terry is also the current record holder of the Steamtown Marathon Masters course record of 2:31:35 set in 1997 at the age of 49.

We thank Terry for providing this superb input to our web site.

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CAUTION: MARATHON IN PROGRESS:

The Full 26.2 Mile (42.2 km) Marathon is a pilgrimage to the "Holy Land" of running…..a search for the runner's "Holy Grail"…. a mystical and magical experience. And you will never be the same afterward!

To get to the finish line, you will need to prepare yourself with a comprehensive training program that will include the mental and emotional, as well as the physical challenges that lay before you. This is what makes this distance, this race, so unique and different from shorter distances.

I have run 75 marathons and have accumulated a "book of knowledge" through the school of hard knocks…through trial and error and error and error and I would like to tell you what I have learned and hopefully you will become one of the special runners who can put the words "fun" and "marathon" in the same sentence.

Training Tips:

1. Always respect the marathon. It never gets easier.
2. Not all 26.2 miles (42.2 km) are equal. Pick your marathons wisely. There are so many to choose from now. Some are flat. Some fast and downhill. And some are steep and uphill. And some are all three in one.
3. Allow enough time to prepare. 16 to 24 weeks (or 4 to 6 months) is good.
4. Use a running log book or calendar to plan your proposed training schedule and record what you actually did. Set weekly mileage goals and for a long run. Build up slowly from your base adding 10% per week. Your weekly mileage and long run should keep increasing until about 2 weeks before the marathon date.
5. Use a running log book or calendar to plan your proposed training schedule and record what you actually did. Set weekly mileage goals and for a long run. Build up slowly from your base adding 10% per week. Your weekly mileage and long run should keep increasing until about 2 weeks before the marathon date.
6. You should taper the last two weeks pre-race down to 50 to 75% mileage two weeks pre-race and about 18-20 miles (28- 32 km) race week. Race week should be about half faster tempo and speed work.
7. The weekly totals in miles might look something like this: 30; 35; 35; 40; 40; 45; 50; 55; 60; 60; 65; 65; 70; 70; 45; and 18. (Convert to km by X 1.6).
8. REST, REST and REST. Get your full amount of rest each day and night. You are training hard!

9. Allow flexibility in your schedule. If you don't have it on that day, don't force it…..rest and move that hard work out to a day when you're fresh.

10. Even for the marathon you need to run a mix of speed work, tempos and long runs every week. You will want the marathon pace to feel comfortable and running a faster pace during harder work outs will help.

11. No matter what type of marathon terrain you have chosen, you will want to train on a mix of up and down hills and on flat stretches. Don't believe the elevation charts……no course is without elevation changes.

12. Have you sent in your money yet? Have you booked your hotel? What are you waiting for? Even with a qualifying time Boston fills their quota early. After all this sweat, you don't want to be left out.

13. BE CONSISTENT! Don't go up and down with your mileage because you had to miss a few days for injury or illness. The body needs to adjust to changes. It is better to go into a marathon with a few less training days rather than being tired and exhausted because you tried to catch up in the last 2-3 weeks. LESS is MORE in that situation.

14. Train ABOVE the neck! Paavo Nurmi said: "Mind is everything……muscles just pieces of rubber. All that I am, I am because of my mind." Read running books: "Born to Run"; "Secrets"; "The Last Lecture" etc. Two other great books, both by Michael Tymn are "Running on Third Wind" and "The Articulate Dead".

15. Don't train injured. Sounds simple enough…but it's hard to do. Get it diagnosed if necessary or rest and wait for it to heal. Here's your chance to cross train, get some running in the pool or stationary bike. WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T IGNORE INJURY.

16. Get a few good training partners for your long runs. They should be able to run at your pace and the full distance you have scheduled. The training is so much easier and the miles go by quicker with a partner.

17. I don't use a GPS and never have. They do have their worshipers and can be helpful to learn pace and to be sure the distance is reached. A GPS does not belong on your wrist in the marathon if your intentions are competition and PRs.

18. Set target times for mile or 5k splits. Memorize them and during the race, use them to predict hitting your final goal and to make adjustments accordingly. See yourself hitting your 5k split goal. See yourself passing all the mile markers running free and easy to the finish. Visualize the time on the digital clock. NICE RUN!

19. Three things will help if you are competing. Know the course. Know your competitors. Race them and not their legend. And lastly' know yourself. If you did your homework you should sleep well the night before the race.

20. Get to the starting line! Don't sleep in and plan on getting that last bus. Get up and get the first bus! This might be the best advice I can give anyone. To understand why I say this, listen to fellow runners stories.

MARATHON RACE TIPS

1. Stay off your feet and legs the day before and morning of the race until it's time to warm up.

2. Stretch about 1 hour before. Jog about 5 to 8 minutes.

3. Be sure to go to the toilet for a final bowel movement.

4. Wear only what is absolutely necessary. Don't over dress. You should be cold at the start. Wear throw away tops, gloves and hat. A garbage bag is universal for wet or cold starts.

5. Wear running shoes that are light and well cushioned and have very few miles on them. Shoes that have been used just 6 to 13.1 miles (10 to 20 km) are perfect.

6. Vaseline on your arms, legs and face is a great substitute for heavy clothing on a cool day.

7. Wrap band aids around any blisters, jagged toe nails and of course, nipples.

8. Put your name or personal logo or whatever on your shirt for crowd support and motivation. They will get you to the promised land……I promise. (Of course……solid training and a smart pace won't hurt).

9. Line up at the start where you belong. Sign up to run with a pace team if they have them. Otherwise use the pace/ mile signs along the corrals. This way you can hook up with runners of like ability and they will help you through the course.

10. Take a plastic cup to the starting line in case you need a last nervous pee!

11. Take fluids at every water stop, even if it's just a few sips. On hot days pour water over your head. Keep pace to avoid collisions with other runners.

12. Run tangents, i.e. as straight line as possible but be very careful not to cut off other runners.

13. Run your pre-planned race strategy…..hitting your 5k splits…running equal 13.1 miles at as close as possible to the same times will keep you from that pain and agony from having gone out too fast.

14. Take an energy pack just before the start; at 9-10 miles (15 km); and 17-20 miles (20 km). I like GU but whatever you use will help.

15. If you get a cramp, stop and work it out and get back running as soon as possible. Especially on cold days you can tighten up fast.

16. If "it's not your day" for whatever reason, cut your loses and save yourself for another day or backup marathon. You will only risk aggravating an injury by being stubborn. (I should be reading this one).

17. Of course, take nice photos. That means look up and smile. Don't look at your watch. Those photos are too expensive not to have a good one. A nice photo will help forget the pain and remember the accomplishment.

18. Post race: rehydrate and refuel as soon as possible. Take a cool or even cold shower. Hot showers may feel good but cold is better for recovery. The next morning take a nice gentle jog of 40 to 50 minutes to work out the soreness and lactic acid in your muscles.

OK….YOU'VE FINISHED THIS ONE. HOW FAR APART SHOULD YOUR NEXT ONE BE?

Good question. I've done marathons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 weeks apart. What I've found is 1 month minimum and ideally, 2 to 3 months apart is best. But I do think you will find it easier to stay in condition rather than backing off too much for too long. Don't waste all those months of hard training, just to start over from scratch again.

Final thought: Good luck and after a little time you might ask this question……"How much faster can I run if I did……?"

PART 2:

A PLAN THAT INCLUDES BREAKS.

Before the 2010 Twin Cities Marathon a good friend and experienced runner called me and said he was running his last marathon at age 70.

He had been training regularly at about 50 miles (80 km) per week. He said his goal was something under 4 hours. He also said he would accomplish this by a simple plan:

RUN 4 MILES; WALK 1 MINUTE; RUN 4 MILES; ETC or (Run 6 km walk 1 minute; Run 6 km; walk 1 minute etc.)

His actual time was 3 hours 52 minutes and he finished second in the 70 to 74 age class. Importantly, his split times were perfectly flat with the last part actually slightly faster because he could skip the last walk.

Now compare that to another runner whose splits I happened to calculate. They were about 8:00; 9:00; 10:00 and 11:00+ minutes per mile (or 5; 6; 7; 8 minutes per km).

Whoever said walking wasn't macho?

AVOIDING THE BONK: RUNNING A MARATHON SCIENTIFICALLY.

Simply one of the best articles ever written on "Metabolic Factors Limiting (Running) Performance…".

Unfortunately, you might need a PhD to understand the entire article. But fortunately, getting the key points doesn't.

http://www.ploscompbio.org/mirror/article/pcbi.1000960.html