

Marathon Preparation Tips

Two days to go

- Aim to go for a light 10-15 minutes jog and practice wearing the race day kit.
- Maintain a good level of hydration throughout the day. A good guideline is to have a glass of water every time you eat.
- 70% of your nutrition intake should consist of slow burning carbohydrates; for example porridge, brown rice, quinoa and whole grain pasta.
- Aim to eat a piece of fruit at every meal, however limit the intake of cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower etc) which can upset the stomach ahead of running a marathon.
- Eat small amounts frequently throughout the day. A typical days' nutrition may look like this:
 - Breakfast - Porridge (made with semi-skimmed milk/water) and raisins. Bowl of fruit salad with plain yogurt. Cup of green tea and glass of pure orange juice.
 - Snack – Two pieces of wholegrain toast with peanut butter/honey. Glass of water.
 - Lunch – Wholegrain rice with grilled chicken, avocado and cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil or balsamic vinegar. Glass of water.
 - Snack – Handful of almonds with a sliced apple. Cup of green tea.
 - Dinner – Grilled salmon and wholegrain pasta with pesto, olives and garlic. Glass of water.
 - Dessert/Snack – Rice pudding.

One day to go

- Follow the same nutrition guidelines as above.
- Relaxation is very important. Limit any stressful situations and avoid standing still for prolonged periods of time.
- Go for a light 10-15 minute jog at a very relaxed pace.
- Ensure that you are all set with your race day plans. Mentally go through how you hope the race day will go – from the minute you wake up to the finish line of the race.
- Try and get to bed early, however avoid having sleeping for too long or you may feel sluggish in the morning.
- It can be beneficial to have a light sports massage to improve blood flow to the muscles. A sports massage can help you relax as well if you're getting stressed ahead of the big day.

Race Day

Here are ten tips from our team to manage the panic and do the best you can.

1. Get there early

Be informed about the race. This means knowing where it starts and finishes and making the necessary arrangements for transport. Give yourself at least an hour to warm up and get comfortable with the surroundings.

2. Eat no later than an hour before the start

You can't run without fuel but eating too close to starting time will only cause cramps. Try to eat a carbohydrate-rich meal no later than one hour before the race.

3. For longer distances, have a hydration plan

For races over 10km many people will want to have a drink to stay hydrated. Do you prefer to run with a bottle? Or are you okay with taking drinks at water stations? Decide what you're going to do, and train in the same way.

4. Decide how you are going to run the race

It is impossible to know how any race will go but that doesn't mean you don't need a plan. Try not to let the behaviour of other runners influence you into changing your plan. For beginners we suggest

to avoid running fast at the start of a race. Passing those overenthusiastic people in the second half will make you feel much better!

5. Dress smart

Check out the weather forecast for the day and dress appropriately. Race day isn't for experiments, so wear your tried and trusted gear - not something new.

6. Use other runners to keep yourself going

When you're feeling tired it helps to use the pace of other runners around you to keep going. Another useful tactic is to pick out someone not too far ahead of you and try to catch them, or just maintain the same distance between you.

7. Divide the course

In a longer race, it can be useful to mentally divide up the course in sections. So for a marathon, you run four times 10km, taking one section at a time. This also works by running to points within view (for example lamp posts or street corners). It makes the distance less daunting and you take the pressure off.

8. Relax

While you might need some adrenaline you need, being tense will make you less efficient. Try to do a mental check-over every now and then during the race. Ask yourself: how am I doing? How do I feel? Make an effort to relax your hands and shoulders and your breathing. This will all help you to run easier.

9. Bring support

Run the race with a buddy or ask friends and family to come along and support you. Knowing someone is cheering you on will really give you a boost when you're tiring. It's also easier to run when there is someone at the finish line to share the moment with.

10. No matter if it's your first or 101st race: enjoy it!

Running is to be enjoyed. Don't worry if you don't achieve a specific time goal; feel proud that you have completed the distance. Running a marathon is an amazing achievement – just think how far you've come!

For more information go to www.mattroberts.co.uk or for fitness advice and tips follow @exercisematt on twitter