

Medical Advice

The intention of this page is to help you enjoy the day and remain fit and well. We take your welfare extremely seriously and there will be a contingent of St John Ambulance first-aiders, two ambulances on the course and two emergency trained doctors with defibrillators available if needed. The course is fully marshalled with radio-communications, so if you get into difficulties or see someone else with problems please inform the nearest marshal, they all carry space blankets in case of emergency and can arrange transport back to the start/finish area if a competitor is unable to proceed.

Training

Remember the principle of training is to gradually increase the intensity (e.g. number of hills or speed) and duration (e.g. distance) making sure that you have a recovery or rest time in order for the body to recover. Increase training gradually so that you do not suffer excessive fatigue; make sure you build in rest days and try and not have a sudden increase in intensity or duration of your runs. There is a training schedule at the end which you may find helpful as a general guide.

Muscular aches and pains occur most commonly after an increase in training.

If you have flu, a fever, or a tummy bug, avoid training until fully recovered. Training or racing while you have a temperature or the flu can put you at risk from heart inflammation which may be irreversible. Rest until you are better then start at a lower mileage and intensity and build up gradually. It can be counterproductive to try and catch up on lost mileage because it may cause further problems.

To reduce risk of injury train on soft flat surfaces whenever you can (parklands, footpaths, fields etc.) and vary routes and cambers.

Injury. Do not attempt to train if you are carrying an injury. Seek advice from your doctor or a sports medicine practitioner. Replace running with biking or swimming if possible while you recover.

If you cannot run 10 miles comfortably before Half Marathon or 20 miles before the Full Marathon, then you may not be fit enough to enjoy or manage the distance in safety.

Diet

Eat what suits you.

Large doses of supplementary vitamins and minerals (such as iron) are not essential and produce no benefit if you are on a good mixed diet, but additional vitamin C in small doses is reasonable when fresh fruit and vegetables are in short supply.

Training helps you to sustain a high level of muscle glycogen. Before the competition, decrease the intake of protein (meat) and increase your intake of carbohydrates (pasta, bread, potatoes, cereal, rice, and sweet things), especially for the last three days immediately prior to the event, which is when you should be reducing your mileage and resting. Unless you reduce the protein you will not eat enough carbohydrate.

Carbohydrate (glycogen) depletion and then loading does not help all runners and can make your muscles feel very heavy because water is retained with each molecule of glycogen.

Fluids

The recommendations on fluid replacement have changed considerably over the last few years. Although you need to replace fluids lost in sweat there is a well recognised danger of drinking too much fluids which may reduce your blood sodium levels and make you unwell. This problem is more likely to occur if you are running for more than 4 hours so unlikely in this particular race, if you take on more fluid than you lose, are female with relatively little experience of endurance competing or if you are taking none steroidal anti-inflammatory tablets.

Aim to drink no more than 400 ml/hour during the race which should supply the fluid needs taking into account the distance and climatic conditions for this particular race.

Try and train to drink while you run - quite a difficult art without choking!!!

The sports drinks with 6% carbohydrate concentrations are designed to provide calories in a form that can be absorbed with a decent proportion of fluid. You will need to experiment to find one that suits you.

Alcohol is dehydrating. A pint of beer produces more than a pint of urine and spirits have an even worse effect. Drink non-alcoholic drinks before you train and immediately afterwards. Do not drink too much; your body is designed to cope with a degree of dehydration.

Clothing

When training in the dark, be seen. Wear white clothing and reflective flashes or bandoleers and face on-coming traffic.

February and March can be cold (as we found out a few years ago when it snowed during the race) so wear appropriate clothing for the weather. On a winter's day you can become very cold if you slow down or walk; a hat and gloves prevent heat loss and can be carried if not worn. Vaseline applied to areas prone to friction, i.e. nipples and groin area, can prevent much pain later!

Wear comfortable clothing. Natural fibres such as wool and cotton are kinder to the skin than artificial fibres. Trendy shorts with sewn-on trimmings can rub your groins until they bleed.

Find shoes that are comfortable over long distances. Remember the shock absorbency of your shoes will diminish as they get older. Beware of high heel-tabs rubbing your Achilles tendon. Try alternating between more than one pair of running shoes.

If in doubt about your shoes or clothing seek advice from a reputable specialist sports shop such as The Runners Centre, Sportslink or Pilch who are all in Norwich.

On the day

Do not run if you feel unwell, have a fever, have had diarrhoea, vomiting or chest pain within the previous 48 hrs. Most medical emergencies occur in people who have been unwell and who do not wish to miss the start. You will certainly not perform well and you will put yourself and your future running at risk as well as being a problem for your family and the medical and first aid support staff.

If you have a medical problem which may lead to an emergency, such as fits, diabetes, asthma or if you are on any medication e.g. blood pressure tablets put a cross on the front of your number and write the details on the reverse of your number, together with your medication.

Wear appropriate clothing for the weather. On a cold, wet day you can become very cold if you slow down or walk; a hat and gloves prevent heat loss and can be carried if not worn.

At the Finish

Do not stand about as this will certainly make your blood pressure go low and you are likely to faint. Keep walking or sit down for a few minutes. You will tend to get cold once your muscles stop working especially in the cold British climate, so go to the baggage storage area or wherever your clothes are stored and change into warm, dry clothing.

Drink as soon as you can because your body will be short of water and sugar; sports drinks, cereal bars, or your favourite post training snack. There will be plenty on sale in the finish area.

If you feel faint lie down. Medical Aid.

Train sensibly and follow this simple advice and you will have done a lot to avoid the need for medical aid.

If you drop out make for next marshal who will arrange for you to be ferried back to the finish. St. John Ambulance Brigade supported by an experienced medical team of doctors will be in attendance.

Dr Tim Morton

Bungay Black Dog Running Club