

Marathon chat

Hi all of you who are planning to run a marathon this spring, whether it's your first time or just one of many attempts to conquer this challenging distance we can always learn from each other's experience.

The Runners World web site offers training schedules and you can find one to suit you depending on the time you are hoping to achieve, and there are no end of books and web sites you can find with information and training plans.

One sure thing is that you have got to train, there really are no short cuts to achieve your target without enduring disappointment and pain, other than to put probably three months hard work in to your goal. You may have to make sacrifices, a few early nights when you could be out with friends, avoiding people with colds and bugs. Rest is as big a part of your training as running, as you can't run well when you are tired!!

You will probably get through at least 2 pairs of shoes in your quest for finding "The Shoe", socks are another understated piece of your kit that can be disastrous if you choose the wrong ones.

There are of course rewards too, a new slim line you, a medal that shouts out your success, and the knowledge that you have conquered the distance.

Our coaches Alan Newman and Richard Elliott are more than happy to offer you advice as both have coaching skills and experience of running the distance.

We have no coaching qualifications but with Pete having completed 14 and Fiona 13 Marathons we certainly know most of what not to do, examples of what not to do, are drinking half a pint of fresh orange juice 30 minutes before the start and from Pete, (not a marathon but a 20 miler granted), looking down at the start line only to see that 40 miles from home he had odd shoes on, yep really!!

We wont be able to attend all of the long runs, but we are putting together a collection of Saturday / Sunday long runs ranging from 13 - 21 miles and hopefully a few of us can arrange to get together regularly to cover the distance, routes include the Paddock Wood half route, Groombridge Rail line, and Tonbridge to Penshurst, please let us know if this would be of interest to you. Please note that we are all training and will do so at different speeds, therefore it is important that you team up with someone of your own pace, who can come along with you, or always be aware of the route we are taking. If you have a route that you would like to share with others please do, there are some hidden gems on our doorsteps...

Don't forget that the weekly training sessions at the club are perfect for speed training, which is an invaluable training structure for all distances including the marathon as it conditions the body for speed endurance, and will make your marathon pace (far slower in comparison) that much easier.

The cross countries are also a good strengtheners, and help with speed endurance, as well as racing experience.

There are also a number of half marathons and 20 miles races on the calendar that will help you gauge where you are at.

Canterbury 10 miler, Tunbridge Wells ½ marathon, Deal ½ marathon, Thanet 20 – Worthing 20. And our own PWAC half is at the perfect time for testing your fitness, just three weeks before the big day, so a chance to fine tune your marathon race pace – **Runners world web site has a comprehensive list of races and our own web site has an events section to keep you informed.**

Here are a few shall we say non – discussed possible side effects, but not to worry if these things happen and our advice on how to avoid or keep to a minimum:

- a) Runners tummy – for those that have not been to a race before this is something that all runners suffer from and not the most pleasant of side effects, you need to find something to eat and drink which keeps this to a controllable minimum – unfortunately this can only be done by experimenting with different foods / drinks, but best experimented for long training runs rather than races. Try keeping a diary of what you eat before a long run, then you can eliminate troublesome food groups. You might want to look at using diarrhoea medication if you really are experiencing problems, maybe chat to a pharmacist or GP for more info.
- b) Runners nipple / chaffing – there are plenty of substances on the market, but our preferred choice is Vaseline – surely you don't need us to expand
- c) Cramps – again this is a case of trial and error, 26.2 miles is further than the body can cope with, unless it is refuelled along the way, there are plenty of gels, isotonic drinks etc... on the market and worth experimenting with on your training runs, do not leave it to marathon day - eating and drinking on the run takes practice and getting used to.

The most important thing to remember for both racing and training is to make sure you are well hydrated (the easiest way to assess this is the colour of your pee – the clearer the better i.e. it should be almost clear, with no odour)

After each training run or race, ensure that you rehydrate yourself and eat as soon as you can to put the nutrients back into your system and help you muscles repair themselves, Be aware of what you need to refuel, don't forget after a hard training session your tummy might not respond too well to a sudden helping of fatty food....

Finally never run or train if you are injured, most minor injuries will heal in a few days, but if ignored will develop into a more serious injury, that could potentially stop you from running for weeks. Remember rest is an important element of your training and must be programmed into to your training schedule

We think that's enough from us to start with , please feel free to offer any advice or stories to this section ,as we said earlier we can all learn from each other. At the moment of finishing this we have 2 months 29 days 13 hrs till the start of the Virgin London 2012 Marathon...the clock is ticking..its probably 2 months 28 days now!!

Pete and Fi Road Running Reps