

August 2011

### **Marathon Tips that Beat the Competition**

Are you planning on running your first half or full marathon this year? If you are, you're not alone. Running has become an increasingly popular form of exercise because of the accessibility and cost of the sport. While running is great exercise, half and full marathons can take a toll on your body. Our consulting osteopathic physician from Kentucky has 10 tips for first-time marathoners to ensure that your first marathon won't have to be your last.

1. **Know what you're getting yourself into.** "Without proper training and technique, long-distance running has the potential to cause serious injury, particularly to your knees, ankles, and feet," explains the doctor. To avoid injuries, be sure to stretch and make time to train.
2. **Check with your physician before starting to train.** "Certain medications or previous health conditions can affect the heart no matter your age, so it is important for people of all ages to check with their physicians before committing to a race; not just the elderly," says the doctor.
3. **Eat like an athlete.** When making the decision to participate in a marathon, you need to feed your body with the nutrients that a professional would need. "A healthy diet, adequate hydration, and good rest are crucial to get the most out of your training," says the doctor.
4. **Research the running experts.** "Seek out advice and training tips from experts in books, magazines, blogs, etc.," our doctor says, "But, make sure these sources are reliable, especially when using the internet," she adds.
5. **Cross-train.** Changing up what types of workouts you do can be helpful. "Some people can become bored or frustrated with the training runs," says our doctor. Pilates, yoga, and

strength training are examples of effective cross-training exercises that may help keep you motivated and interested in the training process.

6. **Listen to your body.** Don't get discouraged if you become injured. Take a few days off to avoid further injury or damage to your body. "Make sure to see your physician if pain does not decrease after a few days of ice and rest," adds the doctor.
7. **Be safe.** If you are running alone, doctors recommend avoiding areas that are dimly lit or deserted, and carrying a cell phone and identification with you. "If you run at night, wear bright colors that make you visible to cars," they add.
8. **Dress for the conditions.** Appropriate dress will help make your run a success. Check the weather forecast and dress for the elements. Our doctor also recommends wearing sunscreen, especially when running during the morning or mid-afternoon, when the sun is the most harmful.
9. **Hydrate throughout the day.** Don't just drink water right before or during a run. "By drinking water throughout the day, a runner can stay properly hydrated before even lacing up his or her shoes," say the experts.
10. **Don't try an energy gel for the first time on race day.** Give your body time to adjust to it during training.

"A lot of time, thought, energy, and strength go into training for a marathon," our consulting doctors report. "Remember that training is individualized and that what works for one runner might not for another. Doing what works best for you and following these tips will help make the most of your race preparation and ensure that your first marathon is a complete success!"

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians provide. DOs are fully licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas, including surgery. DOs are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.