



ROTORUA MARATHON 4 MAY 2019

TOP 12 TRAINING TIPS - by John Bowden

One: Warmup

A warm-up activity serves two major purposes—to enhance performance and prevent injury. Consequently, a warm-up is both physical and mental.

Don't let your warm-up be the first two kilometres of your training. Jog easy for 5 to 10 minutes, then throw in a few 100-metre accelerations to get your heart rate up, so you'll be ready to go and get the best out of your training. If you're not warmed up, your muscles aren't as viscous, your body won't rid itself of waste product as effectively, and you'll have to run your first kilometre slower.

Two: Better running & walking technique

"Running economically will help you run faster and longer," says exercise physiologist Jonathan Dugas. That means using as little energy as possible with each stride by ironing out flaws. "Run as though you're on top of clouds. You'll run taller, becoming less of a slow-footed heel-striker and more of a fast mid-foot runner." Keep your elbows close to reduce tension and shoulders relaxed to encourage better breathing.

Three: Pool your efforts

Aqua-running is the best cross-training choice for runners. It's a full-body workout. Studies show runners who aqua-run improve their hip extensions for longer strides and faster race times.

Your move: Adopt a sweeping, pendulum-like motion from hips to toes. Keep your arms straight and take short strides for 3x5 widths of the pool.

Four: Fuel injection

"The optimum pre-run meal should contain 200-300g of carbohydrate for energy and be low in gut-shifting fibre," says nutritional therapist Henrietta Bailey.

Your move: Try a bowl of porridge with honey and berries. And wash it down with a flat white. In studies at two Minnesota universities runners saw a 4% increase in VO2 max and a 3% increase in lactate threshold after caffeine – which translates into a 36-second cut in 12k time.

Five: Hit goals: keep a log

The one thing that has helped me in achieving my goals has been monitoring my training and progress in a running log – it's very, very useful.

Six: Pay attention to your shoes

Something's should be obvious, and this is one of them. But it's worth repeating if it keeps even one of you from getting injured. Most shoes wear out after 400-600 kilometers. You often can't see the wear, but your knees, hips, back and Achilles tendons will feel it. Give your old, worn-out shoes to a local charity shop, and get yourself to a specialist running shop for a new pair.

Seven: Eat a healthy breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day because it fuels you for the entire day. To skip breakfast or eat a skimpy one is like failing to rehydrate and refuel after a workout. You wouldn't do that, would you? Well, your night's sleep is like a marathon to your body; because you don't get any fuel while you're sleeping. So carbo-load at breakfast. And add a little protein.

Eight: Stay hydrated

Eat your fruit and vegetables. Get plenty of sleep. We know – you've heard all this stuff before, so we won't nag too much. But remember that the simplest, most basic advice often makes the biggest contribution to improved consistency.

Nine: Stretch

The best way to get into the stretching habit is to do it whenever you have a minute. Whenever you boil a kettle, do neck stretches or put your foot onto the worktop and stretch your legs. If you find yourself in a queue, do some more neck stretches or work those arms!

Ten: Listen to your body

If you're feeling tired, don't push things. Make 2019 the year that you tune in to what your body's telling you rather than just following instructions from a training log written by someone else. Forget that old non-sense 'no pain, no gain' – your body's pain mechanism is there for a good reason. If you're feeling more than the usual stiff muscles, make sure you pay attention and respond to what it's trying to tell you!

Eleven: Breathe easy

There are lots of theories on the best way to breathe during running, but a study from Liverpool John Moores University showed that once exercise is moderately hard, the most efficient way of breathing in and out is the way that comes naturally – through the mouth, not the nose. This allows you to get more oxygen into your lungs to fuel your muscles.

Twelve: Finally... enjoy yourself

Sometimes it's good just to forget about PBs, paces and targets, relax into your stride with a smile and enjoy that 'runner's high'!

You'll probably know and love those endorphins by now, but just a reminder: running triggers masses of happy-making endorphins, as well as keeping you fit and trim, relieving stress, helping you achieve amazing feats of speed, endurance and determination... and of course, getting you from A to B!

OTHERS

I resolve to Snack on fruit, rather than sweets.

Why? We should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. When those mid-morning hunger pangs strike, munch on dried apricots, an apple, a banana... it'll satisfy you and provide essential vitamins, minerals and trace nutrients.

I resolve to Read the food labels in the supermarket.

Why? As a runner you can get away with eating some things that you shouldn't. But too much fat, or salt, or sugar still isn't good for you. And you might be surprised just how much 'junk' is in some of your favourite treats.

I resolve to Talk to the person next to me at the start of races.

Why? Whether we're at the sharp end or bringing up the rear, we're all in it together. And a chat before the gun goes does wonders for pre-race nerves.

I resolve to Smile, and say hello to everyone I meet on a run.

Why? People sometimes complain that runners are a miserable, introverted bunch. Help knock that preconception on the head.

I resolve to Listen to my body.

Why? If you're ill, injured or simply tired, don't run until you feel up to it. Missing the odd few days doesn't matter.

I resolve to Not cheat on sleep.

Why? What you do when you aren't running can be as important as what you do when you are.

I resolve to Try inwardly chanting a mantra every few steps, when the going gets tough,

Why? Consistency, above all else, is the key.

I resolve to Respond immediately to injuries and illnesses.

Why? Few, if any, running injuries respond positively to sustained hard training.

I resolve to Eat something before the race.

Why? You might have been able to get away with not eating breakfast before a 5K, but it's a lot harder to push through a 10K/half marathon/marathon on an empty stomach. Of course, don't make the mistake of eating too much before the race, either.