

Runners' Last-Minute Tips for Marathon Day

After marathon runners have completed their final long training runs, there's little to do but taper, eat sensibly, rest and wait for race morning.

Additional intense training can only prompt injury in the final two weeks before a marathon. But as race day approaches and just prior to the race, a personal checklist is a good idea.

A few days prior to the race:

- * Trim your toenails. Don't do it the morning of a race, when a too-short cut could prompt bleeding during the race. An improperly trimmed toenail can catch part of a sock or push against the front of running shoes and prompt blisters.

- * Prepare your running clothes. Check the weather report and act accordingly. In the winter months, dress in light layers and use older, easily disposable running clothes. In warm weather, shorts and a singlet will be sufficient.

- * Check your running shoes. Is there any debris stuck in the soles? Are the laces still wearing well and not frayed? (Imagine running a race with an untied shoe, if the lace broke?) Better yet – lace locks or elastic shoelaces.

- * Drink plenty of water the day before the race. One good guideline is to drink enough so you need to urinate before you go to bed and perhaps once during the night.

On race morning, do the following:

- * Use a lubricant product like Body Glide (it looks like a deodorant container) or another product like petroleum jelly and cover body areas susceptible to chafing.

- * Eat a light meal 2-3 hours before the race (I like toasted bagel with a tiny bit of peanut butter and lots of honey) and another snack (banana), no sooner than an hour prior to the race. Toast, bagels, water and non-acidic fruit like bananas are popular choices. Avoid dairy products, fatty or fried foods or anything you're not accustomed to eating at breakfast.

- * Make sure you've secured your race number according to race rules. Make sure if you're using safety pins not to have metal exposed to your skin. One good way to attach a race number is to make a 1 1/2-inch horizontal fold and tuck that portion of the number under the center of the waistband of your shorts. Secure it with two or three safety pins. Better yet (again) – wear a race belt.

- * Carry a water bottle on way to the race and drink the entire bottle before the race starts. Use the restroom facilities as soon as you arrive at the race start to avoid the last-minute rush and long lines.

- * Take an energy gel 15 mins before race start along with water to wash it down and follow your nutrition plan – especially the hydration!