

### **Ten Top Nutritional Tips for a Great Marathon!**

Here are ten top tips to get you safely round 26.2 miles and help you bag that Spring PB.

1. In the week before the race, avoid all foods that might lead to bloating, flatulence and other digestive problems e.g. beans, onions, cabbage, asparagus, artichokes, deep-fried foods, fatty meats and fermented foods.
2. Keep your last evening before the race meal simple and do not over-eat. Stick to foods you know you have tolerated well in training.
3. Avoid alcohol and caffeine the night before your race to give yourself a chance of a good night's sleep.
4. Stick to the breakfast you have used in training and do not start your race without eating, or at the very least having a carbohydrate rich smoothie or shake.
5. Eat your planned breakfast at least three hours before the marathon start.
6. If your marathon starts later in the day still eat your last meal, with plenty of carbohydrates, some protein and a source of EFAs at least three hours before the start.
7. Stay hydrated right up to the start and then follow your race plan for drinks and fuel throughout the marathon.
8. If it's particularly hot on race day, sponge your face and arms if you can, but try to avoid soaking your shoes so as not to get blisters from wet socks!
9. And then, you'll definitely have heard this before, don't try anything before or during the marathon that you've not tried in training!
10. And finally, enjoy your day – you've worked really hard on both your training and your nutrition, and now's the time to reap the benefits, hopefully with a great new Personal Best.

## Eating to recover well

And when it's all over ..... The main goal in the post-marathon period is to help your body recover quickly by returning your system to a more alkaline state following the end of the race. You also need to replace your energy stores. Here's some actions to help:

Immediately after the race	<p>Have one or two packets of energy gel with water if you can tolerate them and have practised this in training. Either carry them with you or have them in your kit bag.</p> <p>Alternatively, drink several cups of a noncarbonated sports drink for rehydration and to avoid any risk of delayed dehydration that can come on after about 30 minutes of finishing.</p>
Within an hour of finishing	<p>Try to eat or drink about 200-300 calories of carbohydrates with some protein. A protein/carbohydrate shake or recovery drink would be practical here, or you can try fruit or bread. The carbohydrates will start to restore your glycogen stores, whilst the protein will help repair muscle damage.</p> <p>Eat – even if you don't feel like it! Eating now will help to reduce cramping, soreness and fatigue after the race. Focus on simple carbohydrates for now.</p> <p>Keep walking slowly while eating, or if this isn't possible, lean against a wall or barrier. To help avoid cramping, try not to sit down until you have walked around a little and had chance to stretch.</p>
Within two hours of the finish	<p>Aim for a simple meal if you can. Options might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light vegetable or water-based soup <i>or</i></li> <li>• Mixed salad or crudités with a little olive oil dressing</li> <li>• Plate of pasta or a rice or potato dish with a simple tomato sauce <i>or</i></li> <li>• Eggs (omelette, fried with minimal oil), hard or soft-boiled</li> <li>• Green vegetables dressed with a little sunflower/olive oil</li> <li>• Milk or rice-based pudding (rice, crème caramel, natural yoghurt, fromage frais) <i>or</i></li> <li>• Portion of low-fat cheese</li> <li>• Fruit juice or fresh fruit (to reduce acidity and help with hydration)</li> </ul>
In addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid alcohol (or stick to one glass of champagne!) so as not to overload your liver immediately following the race.</li> <li>• If your urine is very dark with a strong smell after the race, increase your water intake and reduce your intake of protein from meat, fish, eggs, cheese immediately following the race. Do the opposite if your urine is very clear with little or no smell.</li> </ul>
In the days after the race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat a balanced diet with plenty of carbohydrates and proteins to repair and rebuild your damaged muscles. If you fancy the odd treat, have it!! Wait at least a week before returning to any weight loss programme.</li> </ul>