



TAPERING AND RACE DAY

The taper is upon us! We've put together loads of tips below to get the final phase of the training spot on so you arrive at race day feel fresh and positive!

THE TAPER

- The taper is in simple terms a process of gradually cutting back training to allow your body to adapt to and absorb all those hard miles banked over recent months.
- Your longest run should now be in the bank 4 weeks out (for marathons) – no closer than that. 2 weeks out this might reduce to 1 hour 45 minutes with the final 30 minutes at your goal race pace, a week out down to 75 minutes or so very easy and relaxed.
- Your key long run doesn't need to be more than 3 hours 30 minutes (no matter what mileage that gives you) and for many 2 hours 45 minutes – 3 hours 15 minutes is enough, consider running the final 60 minutes at your goal race pace. The temptation to add one more long run, or head on to 4+ hours can be great but this will likely leave you tired on race day if you leave it too late.
- A parkrun or self-timed 5km time trial can be a great option to sharpen up a week out from the marathon.
- The key to the taper is reducing your volume but keeping up the frequency of your running, so if you are out 3-4 times a week in a normal training week, you'd still be out 3-4 times a week in those final 2 weeks, but we reduce the length of the sessions to reduce your overall volumes by about 30% 2 weeks out and 50% in race week.

THE FINAL WEEK

- Simply ticking over with some 30 minute runs in race week is enough. You might look to add 3-4 short faster efforts of 3-5 minutes on Tuesday but most of the rest of your running should be easy.
- Don't be tempted to use all that extra time to fix the decking at home or add some gym classes – this week is all about recovery.

- Stick to your normal diet with slightly more emphasis on carbohydrate don't go mad with a carb load. Aim to maintain the fueling you had in your peak weeks of training, as you cut back your runs this week you'll store more of that precious carbohydrate as glycogen naturally.
- Keep sensibly hydrated all week with 2-3 liters of fluids, perhaps including some electrolytes.
- On race day positive thinking is your most powerful performance tool. Aim to draw out 5-10 real key positives from your training, write them down and reinforce them in your mind.
- This is not the time to try or do anything different – stick to your routine, don't get caught up with trying new products or kit at this stage.
- The expo is an incredibly inspiring moment but it can leave you super tired if you are not careful. Get in, get inspired, get your number and then get home and stay off your feet.
- Plan your race day logistics well in advance – look at train times and get your race kit ready including shoes, race number and pins, spare laces, vaseline, hat, gloves, old cloths, bin liner, toilet paper food for after the race etc and plan where you will meet your friends and family afterwards

THE FINAL 24 HOURS

- Keep these final 24 hours very relaxed and easy, stay off your feet as much as you possibly can.
- Stay positive and focused about your race plan – remind yourself of those key positives, then try to relax about tomorrow.
- A very easy 10-15 minute jog the day before the day works for many runners to keep the legs fresh for tomorrow and also to help calm the nerves. Do this in the morning and keep it super easy.
- Graze on carbohydrates through the day and have a number of small meals – avoid the pasta party and huge main meal on the Saturday night – it will likely only leave you feeling bloated and sluggish when you wake tomorrow. Try to eat your main meal relatively early at 6-7pm and remember if you are staying over in London you'll need to plan where you eat in advance.
- Keep hydrated but don't overdo it – small regular sips on water or water with electrolyte throughout the day and try to avoid caffeine or alcohol – especially later into the evening.
- You may find that your don't get your greatest sleep ever but this is totally normal – the key thing is to stay with your feet up – if needed read a book but don't get up and walk about the house or hotel.

RACE DAY!

- Have your normal pre-long run breakfast – you might need to pack and plan this in advance if you are staying over in a hotel.
- Graze on your breakfast over a 20 minute period – nerves can make you rush it and cause digestive discomfort. Aim to eat 2-3 hours before the start of the race and take a small snack such as a banana or an energy bar to eat 75-90 minutes before the gun.
- Keep control of your nerves, spend some time in a calm space, remind yourself you have the training in the bank, positive thinking now will bring you're your best performance.
- Aim to get to the start a minimum of 75 minutes before the gun goes, ideally a little longer and plan your logistics well in advance.
- Wear old clothes to the start as it can get cold as you wait in your pen, consider a bin bag to wear if it is raining. You will soon warm up as you start to run so take care to not wear too many super warm clothes to run in. Arm warmers, gloves and hats can be great options as they are easily removed as you warm up.
- Ditch the warm up – you have 26.2 miles to get into your running and if you spend time in the holding area warming up you will only need to stand still again when you get into your pen – save your energy.

THE RACE

- Remember it's a race about you against the distance – start sensibly. Running a good race is all about **pace** and **patience**. Aim to run the first 5-10km either at your goal race pace or even a few seconds slower. If you are not worried about time work at the speed of chat. Most people hit a wall in the marathon run running the first 15-20km too hard.
- Stay in control but enjoy the atmosphere and excitement!
- Manage your energy and fuel economy and aim to take on gels consistently starting after 45 minutes the one every 30-40 minutes after, sipping on water but not drinking too much or more than your need.
- Be aware of what others are doing and debris at drink stations and run even pace – try to avoid weaving around other runners as you'll add masses of extra distance as a result – the marathon is long enough.
- The race starts at 30km – everything to that point is just transport...protect your energy levels so you can throw everything at the final 10-12km.
- Through the final 10km focus on the km you are in. Perhaps dedicate every mile or KM to someone important in your life – you won't let them down when it really counts. Focus on a vest

in front and aim to pull in and pass the runners ahead of you. Keep your posture tall and relaxed.

- When you cross the line pump your fist in the air, soak up all the atmosphere of those incredible final few miles, then keep warm, get your kit and get some carbohydrate and fluids quick into your system.

GOOD LUCK TEAM!