



Help – the big day is approaching Preparation for an organised running event/race

Many of you will have set yourself a goal of taking part in a race or organised run and you will have planned your training and preparation carefully in the weeks and months beforehand. However, for those who have already completed a race and those planning to do one, you may be familiar with the mild panic that sets in as the day approaches What do I eat, what should I wear, how do I get there – these are just some of the factors that can mount up and cause serious stress levels before you even toe the start line. But it doesn't have to be that way! Here are a few tips on how to get the most out of your race day experience.

The day before:

If you do any exercise the day before, make sure it is gentle and does not get your heart rate up too high; a walk or a jog is fine to calm the nerves. Eat normally, although try to avoid food high in fat and hot spices. And, you have come this far, so a night off the booze will help too! Don't go to bed mega early, as you may be restless, but try to make sure you have a good night's sleep. Stay hydrated throughout the day but try to stop drinking water about an hour before bedtime, so that your sleep isn't disrupted with too many overnight toilet visits!

The morning of the race:

Try to eat a plain breakfast, nothing too stodgy! Maybe cereal (with little or no added sugar), bananas, and about ½ litre of water (no greasy fry-up!) is ideal. Check what time the race starts as you want to have digested your food in time for the start of your warm-up. Around 3-4 hours is ideal although if the race start is really early you may want to have a very light breakfast about 2-3 hours beforehand. If this means you need to wake up earlier then try to get used to it in the week or so leading up to be big day. Make sure you have all your kit; it is best to go already changed with warm clothing over your running kit. Make sure your running number is pinned securely onto your running top (on the front).

Footwear:

By the day of the race you should know what shoes you are going to wear – 2 main rules apply, they shouldn't be new, nor should they be worn out. Other than that, shoe choice depends on factors such as your weight and your biomechanical characteristics.

Getting there:

Make sure you have read the race instructions properly and you know how you are getting to the start. If you are travelling by car remember that many roads around the area of the race may be closed (or busy with others coming to the race), so try to use public transport if possible. Try to get there in plenty of time, at least an hour beforehand, you will feel less stressed if you do this, promise!

Arrival:

Examine the course map to give you an idea where mile or km markers are along with water stations (if any). Check where you are leaving your baggage and where you will meet friends or relatives afterwards.

Weather:

Don't worry too much about the weather (unless you are going to an overseas country that is known to have extreme conditions); it's something you can't control. If it is very hot ensure that you take on board more water and don't forget to put on sun cream before you run. If it is cold then ensure you have warm clothing on before the start and that you wear adequate clothing during the race; gloves and hat may be necessary in winter months, although you will be surprised how much body heat is generated from running hard!

Warming up:

Some gentle jogging, walking and gentle limbering up exercises is probably enough. You should try to get used to your warm-up routine during your training. If you suffer from foot blistering or jogger's nipple make sure that you apply some petroleum jelly at this time.

The start:

Make sure you get to the start line in plenty of time to get in position. You should be realistic about where you start, so unless you have turned into Paula Radcliffe overnight, line up in an appropriate place for your expected finishing time, this will ensure that everyone gets off the start line efficiently and reduces the chances of bumps and falls.

Pacing yourself:

Even pace usually works best, start too fast and you will lose a lot of time and struggle towards the end. Start too slow and you will finish like a steam train but not achieve your optimum performance. If you are a walker or don't know how fast you might run, line up at or near the back at the start. Your training runs in the weeks before the race should have been getting you used to running at your ideal pace.

The finish:

You've completed the race, well done!! At the finish line, continue to walk slowly as this will help you cool down, you should drink some water to get your fluid levels back towards normal and you should also eat something, such as a banana or an energy bar, within 15 minutes of finishing the race.

Warming Down:

Once you have recovered sufficiently try to walk or even gently jog for a few minutes and then try to do some gentle stretching of your muscles (particularly the legs). Your body will thank you for this in the next couple of day!

You've done it, what next?

If this was your first ever organised run or race, you will feel exhilarated and proud of yourself, and so you should, it is a great achievement! Wear your medal with pride after the race and take it to work (or the pub?!) at the first opportunity, it's your moment of glory, so milk it! Once this euphoria dies down, don't lose the momentum of all that hard work, have a look for your next goal, maybe another race of the same distance to get a faster time or a longer race to challenge yourself even more.

www.atlantisleisure.co.uk

peter@atlantisleisure.co.uk

Dalriach Road, Oban, Argyll – Tel: 01631 566800 / Fax: 01631 565393