



YOUR MARATHON HOMESTRETCH GUIDE

time to
AN *ASO* EXPERIENCE

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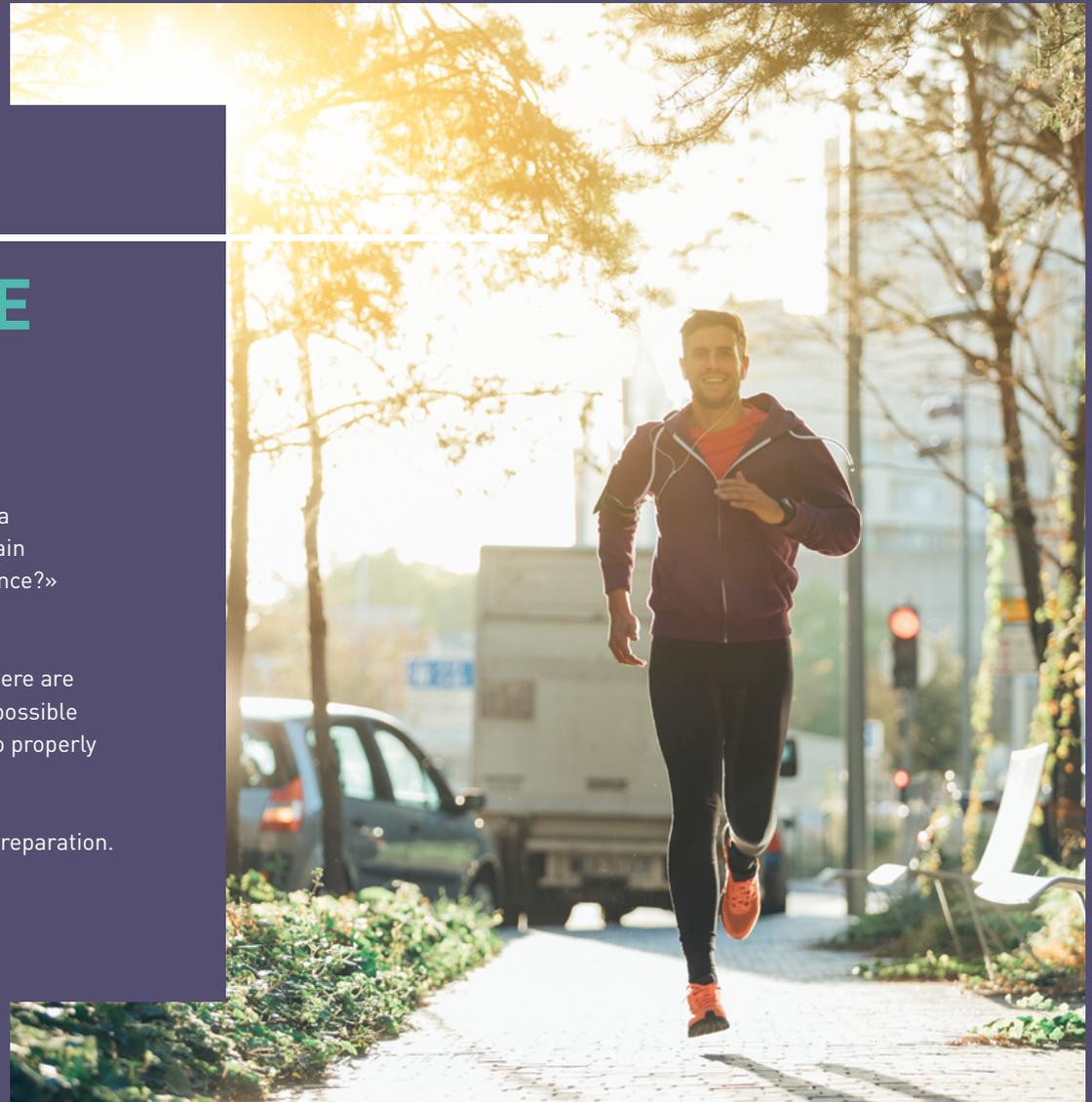
A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXPERIENCE

In a few weeks, maybe even a few days, you'll be in the starting gates of a marathon. Like many runners, your mind is probably racing, with two main questions standing out: «how am I going to be able to cover such a distance?» and «how am I going to cope with the last few kilometres?».

So, banish any self-doubt and kiss your performance anxiety goodbye! Here are your two priorities while waiting for D-Day: live your life as normally as possible and reassure yourself by thinking about every mile you have dedicated to properly training. You've prepared yourself for a big moment!

Do not doubt the achievements of an undoubtedly long and meticulous preparation. You're ready. You have the distance in your legs. You know how to handle long-range effort. You are on the verge of achieving a formidable feat.

**Now, after months of arduous training, you're on the homestretch.
And you should be proud of yourself!**



IT'S TAPERING TIME!

Tapering should begin two weeks before D-Day. This will allow your body to recover in depth before the marathon. It's now time to avoid long, exhausting workouts that deplete your glycogen reserves.

FIND YOUR RHYTHM



The ideal method is to run two to three times a week with an overall effort time of less than an hour to maintain your endurance. You can do a few acceleration rounds, making sure you warm up well to avoid muscle injuries.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE A BREATHER



It's tempting to look for another sport with which to satisfy your need for effort. But keep in mind: tapering before a marathon is serious business. Do not spoil it by swimming or biking for hours: **the goal is to rest**. Also avoid engaging in contact or sliding sports to avoid injuries.

NO GUILT ALLOWED



Now is the time to let go. Enjoy those last free moments to spend more time with your loved ones and to indulge in real moments of zero-guilt rest: take restorative naps, sleep in a bit... You've earned this period of calm before the storm of the marathon. You're storing up precious energy!

MIND YOUR HABITS

Do keep an eye on your diet. So, push aside fatty foods, alcohol, and anything else that can hinder your digestion. Make sure to get a good night's sleep in order to stock up on a maximum of energy.

A SOUND MIND

Getting your legs ready for the 42.195 kilometres of a marathon is a good thing, but it's just as essential to get your mind in tip-top shape. Your brain is the muscle that will get you through the race's inevitable ups and downs.

THE ART OF SAVING UP YOUR STRENGTH

Even if you are used to running long distances, a marathon is a very demanding race. Keep in mind that the last few kilometres will probably be difficult, both physically and mentally. A marathon is an endurance race: don't burn through your energy at the start. Save as much as you can.

POINTS FOR PRIDE

There's no need to expect the best – and no point in expecting the worst. Whether it's your first (or 10th) marathon, you will have intense moments, both ups and downs – just like riding a roller coaster! The important thing is to realize that you are there to achieve something big, to push your limits. That alone should make you proud. Even if you don't reach your time goal, spend part of the race walking, especially if your stride feels laborious through those last kilometres.

The important thing is to cross the finish line.



THE RUNNER'S DIET: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE MARATHON

As the pace of training is lightened, you can try to reduce the portions during your meals to avoid gaining any extra pounds. On the seventh day before the race, you can emphasize complex carbs, but not excessively. Eating pasta, rice or grains certainly helps to build up glycogen reserves (the effort super-fuel that gets stored in your muscles and liver), but it is preferable to maintain a balanced diet that includes proteins and lipids up to the second day before the race. Keep in mind that energy stocks get built up during the 72 hours before the race.

48 HOURS BEFORE THE MARATHON

Careful not to eat any foods that you're not used to. That might upset your digestion. Stick to those you ate before your long training sessions. Eat your fill, but don't binge: that might leave you feeling bloated. And above all, regular hydration is key!

ON THE EVE AND MORNING OF THE RACE

Have an early dinner on the night before the race. It is usually recommended to have your last meal twelve hours before the scheduled start of the race. Avoid eating excessively – that might disturb your sleep.

Have your breakfast three hours before you get in the starting gates. Avoid fatty foods (especially dairy) and mind your portions. Go for whole-grain bread, sugar-free cereal and energy loaves.

The two most important meals before a marathon?

The Friday dinner and Saturday lunch preceding the race!

A typical meal plan for the day before a marathon:

- Appetizer: potage, tabbouleh or tuna pasta salad
- Main: a turkey cutlet with rice or fish tagliatelle
- Dessert: cottage cheese and a baked apple or semolina pudding with a clementine



YOUR PRE-MARATHON FITNESS CHECKLIST

For a successful marathon, no detail should be overlooked. So here are a few last-minute checks you should do.

MIND THOSE TOENAILS



Your nails will get a beating during a marathon. Your extremities, which will be in direct contact with the tip of the shoe, should not be neglected. Get a pedicure or see a podiatrist about ten days before the competition. This will give the nails time to grow back. They should be neither too short nor too long, and match the shape of the toe.

GET THE NICKS AND CUTS LOOKED AT AND TREATED



Some minor wounds or irritated areas can go unnoticed on short trips, but may get worse during competition, causing particularly severe bleeding or pain.

Inspect your feet closely, including the areas that will be rubbing up against fabric during the marathon, to ensure that no nicks and cuts will

interfere with your running. If necessary, place a Band-Aid on the affected areas. The same applies to your nipples, and other areas particularly prone to chafing. Applying a generous helping of anti-chafing cream to the armpits and inside of the thighs can work wonders!

CHOOSE YOUR SHOES AND SOCKS WISELY



Your foot gets longer as you run. For your running shoes, choose a size up from your usual footwear. And most importantly, wear only the shoes you tested during your workouts, especially your long runs. New shoes are verboten on race day! For socks, so-called technical fabrics are to be preferred. Less seams = less friction.

GIVE IT A REST!

It's not easy to slow down after weeks of training, indeed! However, just before the race, it is important to let up a bit, and to take time for yourself.

TIME TO STORE UP YOUR ENERGY!

The increase in mileage in the last four to six weeks of your training has left its mark. It is therefore advisable to decrease the duration and frequency of training sessions, especially in the last week. It is generally estimated that the tapering-off period (two weeks before a marathon) must include a **reduction of approximately 50% of your mileage.**

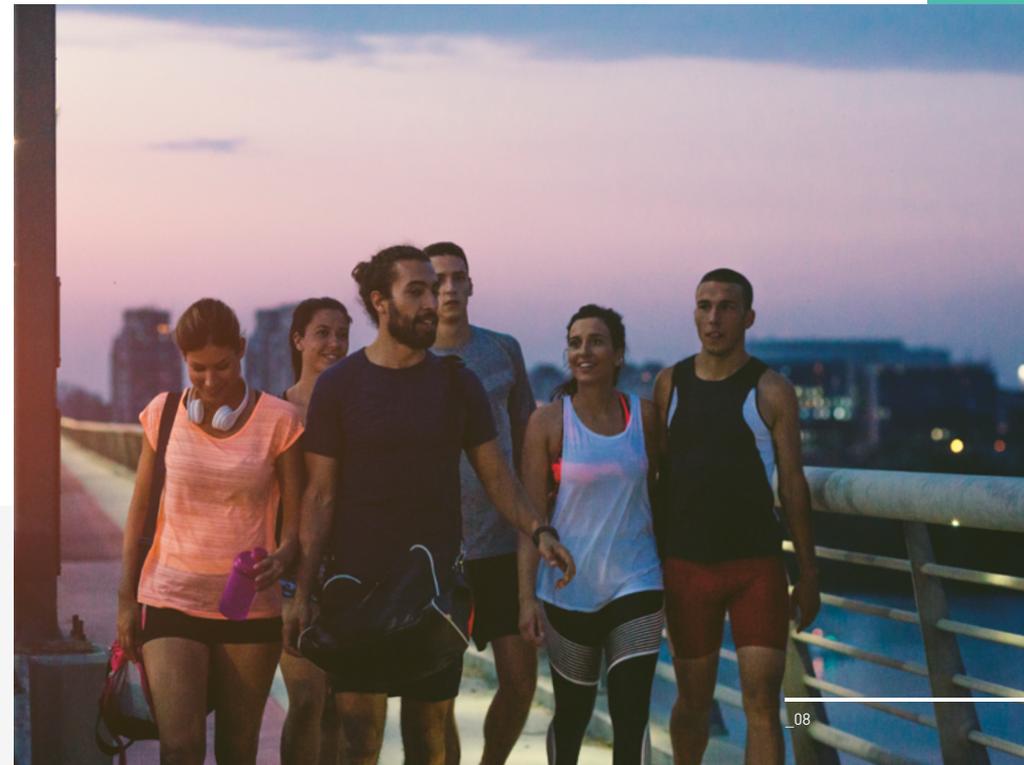
NO CHANGING YOUR HABITS

Pre-race "stage fright" sometimes causes curious changes in behaviour. Do not starve yourself (or eat too much), or force yourself to change your natural behaviours. You could risk upsetting your daily routine and throwing off your balance.

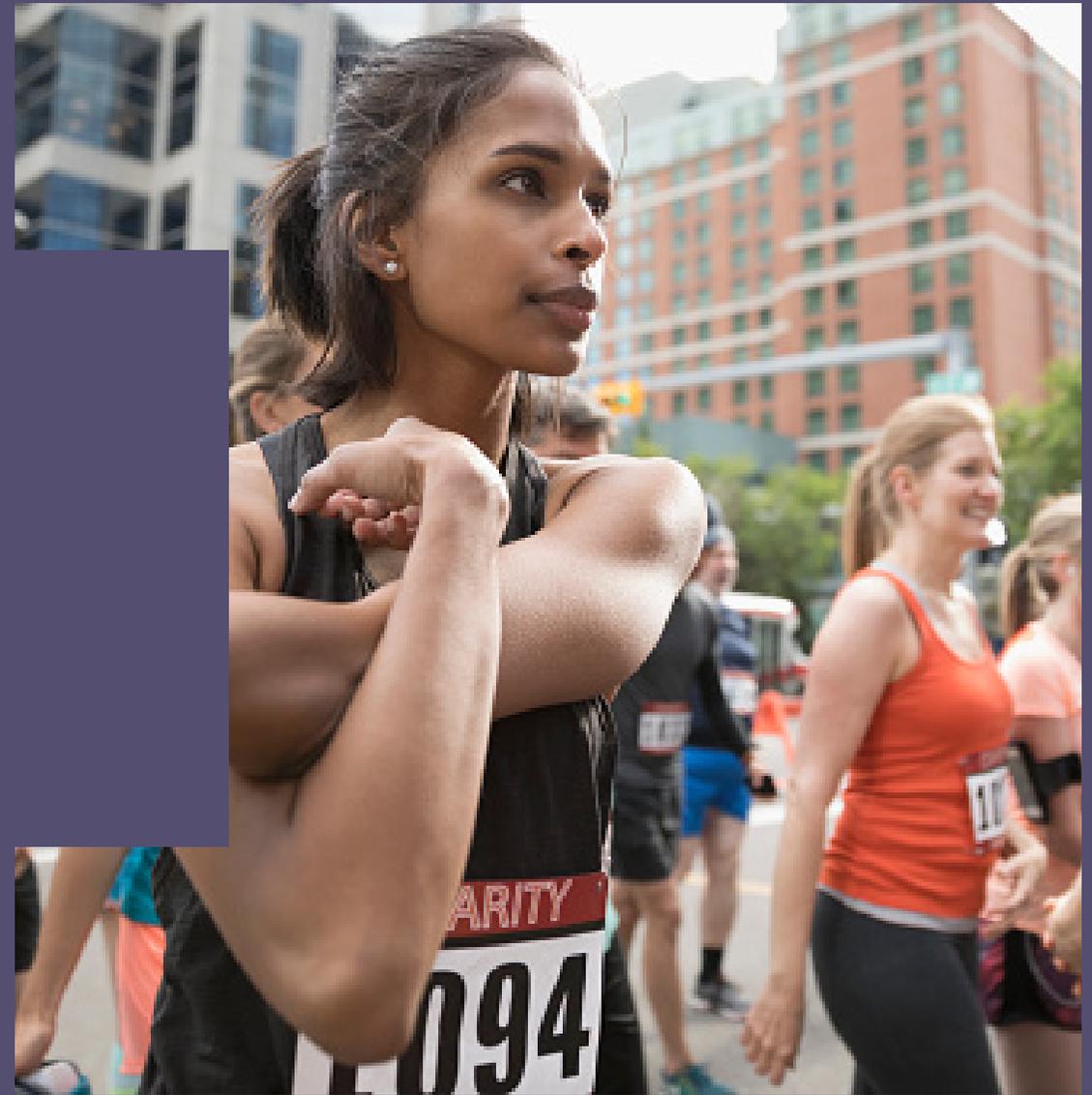
The days before a marathon must be spent on resting, nothing more. **Your body thrives on stability.**

TWO THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Your hard work will not be going to waste if you decrease your training time or intensity for a few days.** Quite the opposite. There's no need to panic and fall for the myth that the kilometres you've raced in the last week will have an impact on the quality of your future performance, on the contrary!
- **You must listen to your body** and indulge it with a little movement if it demands it. However, keep in mind that, in the last few days, shorter, well-paced sequences are preferable to long, endurance-style running sessions.



ON D-DAY



TWO MISTAKES THAT CAN MAKE (ALL) THE DIFFERENCE!

Running may seem natural to you, but you have to be careful not to fall into the traps that await you at every turn.

MISTAKE #1: PICKING THE WRONG PACE

This is the most damaging mistake! If you start at an overly ambitious pace, you may gain back the seconds lost in the rush of the beginning, but you might run out of energy too fast.

It is important to start at the pace that you worked on during training, which will allow you to go the distance. The clock is your most precious ally.

MISTAKE #2: SKIPPING THE REFUELLING STATIONS

We all know that hydrating regularly and sufficiently is of utmost importance. Water bottles are available at each station.

You can also ingest products that provide a fast and digestible supply of carbohydrates. For example, the energy drinks offered on the course are valuable allies to avoid hitting the “30-km wall”. The same applies to energy gels or any other sugar-rich product that you may have tested during training. They will help you counter glycogen depletion and maintain good muscle performance.

HITTING THE DREADED “30-KM WALL”

The 30-km wall is a well-known physiological phenomenon experienced by runners. Past a certain level of effort, glycogen reserves may become exhausted. It's like your muscles' fuel tank has gone empty! So, don't skip out on those refuelling stations!

PACEMAKERS: HOW TO CHOOSE YOURS

EACH GOAL HAS ITS PACEMAKER! IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PELOTON, SURROUNDED BY OTHER RIDERS AND RUNNERS, THEY ARE YOUR ESSENTIAL METRONOME. THEY WILL SHOW YOU THE PACE TO FOLLOW, ON A REGULAR BASIS, FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF THE RACE. THEY OFTEN GIVE REAL EFFORT-MANAGEMENT LESSONS TO INEXPERIENCED RIDERS. DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THEIR STRIDE IS USUALLY THE BEST WAY TO GO TO KEEP THE RIGHT DISTANCE. BUT YOU MUST CHOOSE YOURS JUDICIOUSLY...

PICK THE RIGHT GOAL

The job of pacemakers is simple: to help maintain a steady pace throughout the race. It's up to the runners to accurately gauge their ability.

BEFORE THE START OF THE RACE

Pacemakers are easily spotted by the flag that floats above them. In the starting gates, get closer to one of them, but don't rush. No need to stalk them: they're not going to fly away!

KNOWING HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT STRIDE

Keep your eyes on your pacemaker's flag, and stay 20 to 30 meters behind. Try not to get too far behind, and make sure throughout the first kilometres that the speed you're running at is indeed the one you had planned to maintain. Then trust the pacemaker, focus on refuelling, and have fun.

IF IT'S ALL GOING TOO FAST...

You may realize early in the race that the pace is too fast for you. Don't wait. Let yourself be left behind and settle into a pace that suits you. Don't stop for 15 minutes on the side of the road to wait for another pacemaker.

IF IT'S GOING TOO SLOW...

Sometimes your legs are in better shape than expected and the pace set by the pacemaker seems too slow. Should you accelerate? Sure, you can, but be careful not to do so too abruptly. Run the first 35 kilometres with the pacemaker, and save your energy for the rest of the race.



HOW TO RUN SAFELY IN THE MIDDLE OF A PELOTON

Even if you are used to running in a group, the day of the race will not be quite the same. At the time of registration, you will be assigned a departure gate. The main objective: to ensure that competitors of comparable level are grouped together from the outset to avoid disparities in speed, confusion and scrambles at the start of the race. Don't try to cheat or stand in the way the volunteers doing their work.

Here's a tip: spread your arms out in front of you to create a minimal space to prevent a fall.

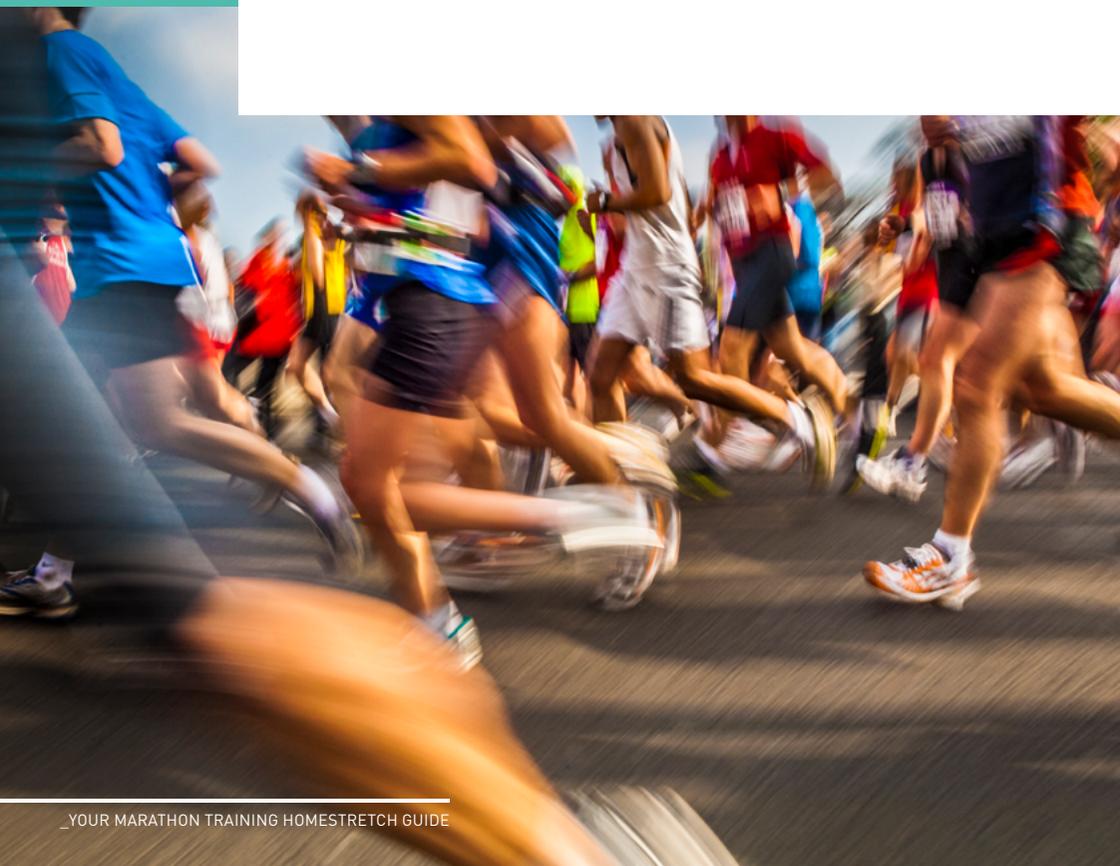
DOZENS OF VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO ENSURE THAT THIS SPECIAL MOMENT TAKES PLACE IN AS FRIENDLY AND SMOOTH A WAY AS POSSIBLE. IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR THEM!

REFUELLING STATIONS

Two priorities: anticipate and maintain a zen attitude. If you've decided to take a hit of energy gel, do it ahead of the refuelling station so that your mind and hands are free when you get to it. When arriving by the tables, do not go from racing to walking without making sure not to get in the way of the runner behind you. Take what you need and move on quickly. Access to the tables must remain free.

AT THE FINISH LINE

There's nothing abnormal about celebrating your victory as you cross the finish line. But don't forget that the runner behind you are also entitled to a nice, clear finish line. So, raise your arms, hoot, holler, and jump... but stay out of the way.



STAYING HYDRATED DURING THE RACE

Over the course of your marathon, you will find refuelling stations every 5 km. If you haven't brought a water bottle or hydration belt with you, they will be mandatory stops. Your performance depends on them, but also – and above all – your health.

WHY SHOULD YOU DRINK AS SOON AS YOU GET TO THE FIRST STATION?

While you run, your body produces heat that is eliminated in the form of sweat. And when you perspire, it is your body's water reserves that are evaporating. Of course, this phenomenon is amplified when it's hot outside, but dehydration also occurs when temperatures are low! But if you dehydrate, you reduce your oxygen consumption, which means you consume more glycogen, which will deplete your energy even faster. By hydrating right from the first few kilometres, you prevent this process from affecting your performance.

Don't wait until you're thirsty to rehydrate!



KEEP IN MIND

Be careful, drinking too much water, or water that is too cold, can affect your performance. You may feel bloated or get a stomach ache. Here's a tip: warm up the water in your mouth before swallowing it.

THE RUNNER'S GUIDE TO SPORTSMANSHIP

On the day of the race, it is possible that you might find yourself lost and out of your depth. But don't panic! Take a deep breath and relax: respect and courtesy are the watchwords of an event that is meant to bring people together in the spirit of sportsmanship and fun.

COURTESY FIRST

There is a real difference between running alone (or in small groups) during training, and running within a peloton during a marathon. So, of course, there can be a little shoving in the first few hundred meters. But you don't want to get upset.

Maintain a zen-like mindset: the situation quickly find its equilibrium.

RESPECT THE RULES

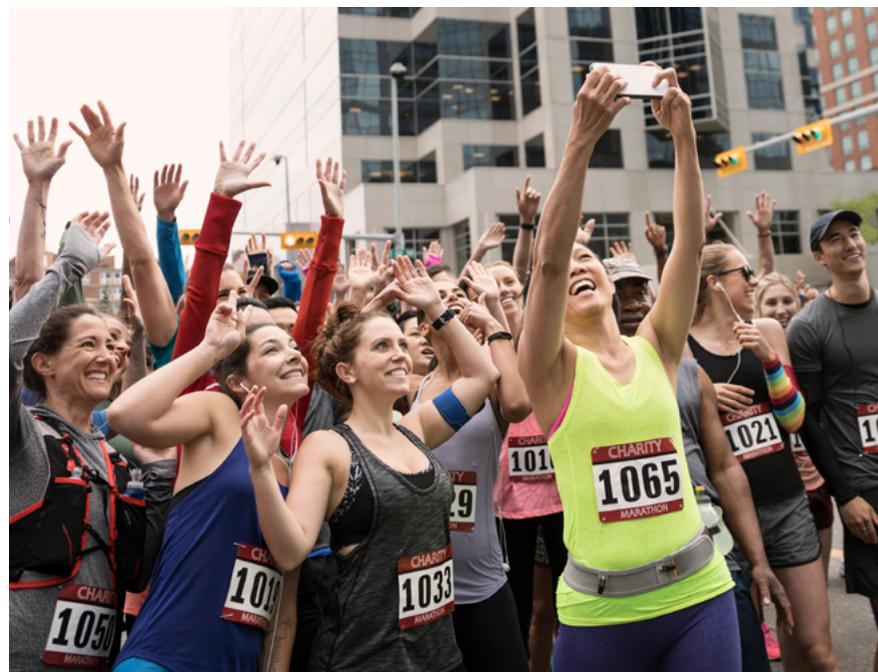
They are there to make the race easier for you and for everything to take place in complete harmony.

- Bring a valid medical certificate (no fakes!) and don't show up with a fake number bib.
- Head to the starting gate that has been assigned to you and that corresponds to your level.
- Mind your manners and don't shove others to be the first to go when the starting signal is given.

SPORTSMANSHIP

A good performance is one that has been carried out in the respect of the rules:

- Taking a shortcut isn't a crime, but it is cheating.
- If you see a competitor hurt themselves or experience discomfort, don't ignore them: help them and warn the volunteers positioned all along the course.
- There's no point in lying about your time, just be proud of your performance!



IT'S EASY BEING GREEN!

On the day of the race, the city is yours. Whether it's your hometown or somebody else's, show respect for it. A little civic-mindedness goes a long way to keep our races as respectful of the environment as possible!

REFUELLING IS A GOOD THING. LITTERING IS NOT!

Energy gels have become indispensable partners in endurance racing, to the point that some runners consume up to five pouches during a marathon. But keep in mind that the packaging isn't biodegradable!

The pouches must be consumed tens of meters before a station so that you can rinse your mouth (or hands) with water. Keep the empty pouch and bin it when you get to the station.

TRYING PRACTICING AIMING FOR THE BINS!

Recycling is also key! Each station has bins for trash and for recyclables (especially plastic bottles). They are clearly identified as such, so you can't go wrong! Every effort is made to ensure that empty containers can be disposed of quickly and easily. Watch out for the caps: take them off so that bottles can be recycled. That is why volunteers usually remove them before the event.

These common-sense gestures will show your respect for the volunteers and the community in which the event takes place.

CARPOOL OR TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO THE EVENT TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT!

Want to adopt an environmentally-friendly attitude? Then choose the best means of transport to get to the site of your marathon! Think about taking public transportation if the network allows it, or try to organise a carpool with other participants.

BRING SOME OLDER CLOTHING TO COVER YOURSELF UP IF IT GETS COLD OR RAINY. THERE COULD BE A RECYCLING STATION ON THE SITE.

Want to protect yourself from the rain and/or cold during the race? Bring some older clothing to cover yourself up if it gets cold or rainy. There could be a recycling station on the site. Some participants also get rid of clothing (t-shirts, polar fleece jackets) at the starting gate. Know that these abandoned clothes are also recovered to give them a second life. So, keep that in mind when you decide what to wear!

AFTER THE RACE COMES THE RECOVERY

**The race is now over. Congratulations, you did it – you ran a marathon!
Now it's time for you to recover.**

___ DAYS 1 TO 3 POST-RACE

- Your legs hurt. That's completely normal! Muscle inflammation can last up to two weeks after the end of a marathon. It makes sense, therefore, to take a break from running. Walking, on the other hand, will restore blood flow in the legs. This will allow for the redistribution of nutrients and cells necessary for the reconstitution of energy stocks, and for the reconstruction of muscle fibres.

- Rest up and continue to eat regularly without skipping meals. Focus on proteins, which speed up the repair of your damaged muscle fibres.

___ DAYS 4 TO 7 POST-RACE

- Your immune system has been thrown off balance by the duration and intensity of the effort. Keep listening to your body and organise your schedule so you can get several nights of enough sleep (at least 8 hours).

___ DAYS 7 TO 14 POST-RACE

- You likely feel an urge to run. So, go for light jogging sessions of 10 km or less, and get some perspective on your post-race experience.

- The second half of the second week can be the perfect occasion for a first test run. Start with a light, slow trot. No more than 5 km. If you continue to feel any pain, make an appointment with your physiotherapist to make sure you're okay.



CONGRATULATIONS!!

You can be proud of yourself once again: you're a finisher!

Enjoy your new-found status as a marathon runner. Take the time necessary to recover properly (both physically and mentally), and start getting ready for your next adventure!