

Marathon talk

Week before and after

- The simple things matter (as always) Eat good meals, regularly, at the same time (as far as possible if travelling abroad)

- Bed / Up at the same times all week allowing you to get a good consistent 8 hours sleep in as much as possible. 1 nights bad sleep pre the marathon is not going to undo all the hard work that you have put in. A weeks bad sleep will.

- Really enjoy this last week of reduced training. - You have done the work by now - you aren't going to get any fitter at this stage by working harder. This is about keeping you tuned up not tired out. Anything closer than 10 days out won't really make a difference - so yes some intensity but NOT volume. Talk to your coach, sessions that you enjoy that get the legs turning on the Tues and something lighter & fast on the Thursday AT MOST would be my advice

- If not already after the next hard marathon W/O (or half marathon / Big Half) write down answers to these questions:

What went well that I would want to repeat & Why / What was challenging & what did I do / What was awful and I want to change. Share these with coaches / other runners. Use this as a focus up until marathon week.

Marathon week re look at this list - what have you learnt and what have you changed?

- Planning is your friend and can reduce so much anxiety as the day approaches. So with that in mind, give yourself space over the week to plan doing these things. Timetable when you'll get each job done.

1. EXPO - go as early as possible. Check what you need to take (Don't make my mistake of getting to the EXPO without a passport and having to go back to collect). The expo's can be pretty large and overwhelming. You've trained to run a marathon, not go shopping in a giant aircraft hanger. Do enjoy what is there in terms of marathon history, but try to avoid buying anything that you didn't need before you arrived.
2. Where are you going to meet people afterwards? How easy is it to meet them, have a plan B (my experience of Rotterdam helped here). Book somewhere to eat if abroad.
3. The course. Watch flybys, look at the profile, understand where the water stations are, plan where to take fuel, picture the race, where you will feel good, how you will cope at certain landmarks, Where do you want someone cheering you on. be really specific on this point (having missed my better half on several runs, it was wonderful to see her face at London last year). 17 miles and on is so helpful, it really does lift you.
4. What are you going to wear on the day. If you haven't already got a good idea do a couple of long runs in the kit that you intend to wear. If you need to buy anything get it now and get training in it. Same with gels / fuel. Buy what you need now so one less thing to do.
5. How are you going to get to the start on the day itself - plan this, if you can actually do the journey prior to the day itself. Work out how to pay for tickets / change trains / free buses etc. This will massively reduce your stress on the morning itself. Have a plan B in case things go wrong on the morning itself.
6. Plans A, B & C for the race - base this off training at the beginning of that week.

If you are abroad:

1. Avoid long city walking tours the day before (Me New York 2004). If you want to see the City use a bike and ride easy, or a bus. However much as this may be a pain you booked to go to the city to run a marathon, not a pre city wide tour. This will affect you. You get to see the city when you run around it. Plan to do things, but keep not light in terms of time on feet. If you are travelling with friends / partners have this conversation now - rather than leaving it unspoken and potentially creating disappointment and friction when you arrive.
2. Plan out where you are going to eat in advance of your visit. Book places, use trip advisor.
3. Tracksmith club runs - are they doing shake out runs in Berlin & Chicago. I'm pretty sure that they will.

4. Any other run crews / clubs in the Berlin / Chicago doing organised runs?
5. Do you know anyone else going that you can run easy with?

Post Race.

I see my role as to get people, not just to finish the marathon, but want to continue running after the event. So with that in mind:

REST REST REST REST FROM RUNNING. No running for at least 2 weeks. Walk, cycle, swim. Give your body & mind the space to unwind and absorb the experience. If you want a sports massage plan it in 3 days after the event to let your muscles settle down. It can be too painful too soon.

- Do something nice for your significant supporters they go through so much in ensuring that you are able to do, what can be a pretty selfish pastime. (Not your coach, that's their job!)

- You may feel low / empty - be kind to yourself you have just hugely stressed your body and physiologically it needs time to recover. It will and that sense of emptiness passes. Eat, hydrate & reflect. Breathe coherently. count of 5 in / 5 out all nasal.

- Write down the same answer to the questions above

- If you haven't already got a race planned in the calendar don't book another hard race within the next month - if you need to enter a spring marathon I'd consider whether that's something you plan to do now, rather than making a gut decision immediately post race. Then it's a more considered decision (ie entering London the day after you've run London) and less likely to lead to regret