



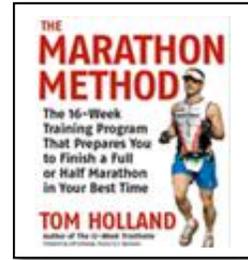
## MMRF Endurance Team: Marathon and Half Marathon Training Resources

Enhance your training with these resources available to MMRF Endurance Team members.

### Training by Tom Holland

As a MMRF Endurance Team member, get access to esteemed athlete Tom Holland's training resources at no charge.

When you join the team, we'll send you a copy of Coach Tom's book, *The Marathon Method: The 16-Week Training Program that Prepares You to Finish a Full or Half Marathon in Your Best Time*. Tom has trained thousands of runners using this method, and find it is a safe and effective tool for helping you reach your goals.



Tom's training plans are now available to runners on line via TrainingPeaks software, the most highly regarded provider of online training plans there is. Working with TrainingPeaks will prepare you for your best event ever. Look for:



- A 16 week training plan based on your goals.
- Nightly emails with your next day's work out
- Track your training or upload your workout file from one of 80+ training devices (GPS, HR, speed/distance, etc).
- Create and save routes.
- Share your activities with your friends or coach through email or Facebook.
- Track your nutrition together with your training.
- And much more...

[Click here](#) to find out which one of my training plans is just right for you and to get started! Training Peaks plans are available at no cost to MMRF Endurance team members!

### Marathon and Half Marathon Q&A

Esteemed athlete Tom Holland provides answers to runners' most frequently asked questions.

#### 1. WHAT ARE THE BEST RUNNING SHOES?

There is no "best" shoe. Everyone is different and thus have different needs. Different arches, different foot strike patterns, different body weight, training mileage and so on. Go to a store that specializes in running and have a qualified person help you choose the appropriate shoe for you, based on your individual characteristics.

#### 2. SHOULD I CONTINUE TO LIFT WEIGHTS WHILE TRAINING FOR MY RACE?

I believe strength training is an essential component of run training, regardless of your distance or your goals. We all possess muscle weaknesses and imbalances and lifting weights will help fix these issues. A smart strength training program will not only help prevent injury, it will also help your performance as well.

#### 3. WHAT SHOULD I EAT BEFORE A RUN?

One of the most difficult parts of coaching is the sports nutrition component. It is highly individualistic and varies greatly from one person to the next. What works for one person can be horrible for another. Know that you need to fuel your runs, especially the longer ones, and that we get this energy primarily from carbohydrates. Listen to your body: if you are lacking energy and feeling light-headed during runs, then try eating more pre-workout. Toast with peanut butter, oatmeal and energy bars are some easy options.

#### **4. CAN I CROSS-TRAIN?**

Not only can you cross-train, I encourage it highly! For running, cross-training would be biking, swimming, yoga, etc. If we only run, we can create imbalances and experience overuse injuries. Like strength-training, cross-training will not only help keep you injury-free, studies show it will also make you a faster runner!

#### **5. I'M CONFUSED ABOUT STRETCHING...**

You should be! There is so much contradictory information concerning the benefits of stretching out there it is mind-boggling. When you look at the science it seems we don't really need to engage in static setting before our runs, what is more important is that we perform a "dynamic" warm-up before we exercise, engaging in several minutes of any low-level full-body movement to warm our muscles, increase the blood flow and raise our core temperature. For most of us this simply means going easy for the first mile or two of our runs, then picking up the pace if our workout calls for it. Running does shorten our muscles over time, however, so performing a few minutes of static stretching AFTER your run is a good idea.

#### **6. I'VE SEEN THESE FOAM ROLLERS - ARE THEY GOOD FOR RUNNERS?**

Very good! Foam rollers are an extremely effective form of self-massage, allowing the user to target and stretch muscles, especially those that become tight from running. Your quads, glutes, hamstrings, calves and especially your IT band can all be targeted and loosened by rolling on these inexpensive foam cylinders. They are also now being used to warm up the muscles prior to running as well!

#### **7. DO I NEED TO EAT DURING RUNS?**

Most people don't need to take additional calories during runs of 60 minutes or less. For runs longer than 1 hour, however, I recommend taking in some form of semi-solid or liquid nutrition. This can be a GU, PowerGel, Cliff Shot, etc. Again, everyone is different. You may need more or less depending on numerous factors - remember to always listen to your body.

#### **8. DO I REALLY NEED A REST DAY EVERY WEEK?**

I strongly believe in taking at least one day off from exercise each week. This means complete rest. Exercise breaks down our muscle fibers, and we need to allow these fibers to rebuild themselves. We get stronger and faster during these recovery periods, not during the workouts themselves.

#### **9. HOW MANY RACES CAN I DO IN A YEAR?**

That's completely up to you! Despite what you may have read or heard, there is no hard and fast rule concerning this subject. Some people may be able to recover from one big race per year, others can do a dozen or more. Once again, this all depends on the individual. Their age, fitness level, genetics, quality of training, goals, and so on. I personally do a large number of races per year, yet I remain injury-free due to a combination of all these factors. Listen to your body and remember that it's about health first and foremost.

#### **10. WHAT SHOULD MY GOAL BE FOR MY RACE?**

As I discuss in my books, proper goal-setting is crucial to both performance as well as enjoyment. For all the athletes I coach (myself included) my first goal is always to finish the race. Specific time goals are always secondary because things like the weather can wreak havoc on hard and fast time goals. Especially if it is your first time running the distance, setting time goals can be challenging due to the lack of experience. You can have a "best case scenario" goal, but I encourage you to keep it to yourself. This will help you avoid the stress both during the race as well as afterwards, of failing to accomplish the time you said you wanted to run. Focus on finishing and if you happen to run a great time, great!

#### **11. I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS!**

No problem! I answer these questions in greater depth and many more in my book *The Marathon Method*.

## Marathon and Half Marathon Q&A

Tom Holland, acclaimed lifestyle and fitness expert, has partnered with the MMRF Endurance Team to share his proven tips for training for a marathon. The shared goal? To enable you to make your next race your best, both physically and mentally.

### **WEEK #1 – Get Your Training Plan in Place**

When you joined the team, you were sent a copy of my book, *The Marathon Method: The 16-Week Training Program that Prepares You to Finish a Full or Half Marathon in Your Best Time*. Thousands of people around the world have completed marathons and half marathons using my plans. It doesn't matter whether you are a complete beginner or seasoned veteran; these plans can help you have your best race while remaining injury-free.

There are many different training plans you can follow. In fact, if you do a little research, you can become overwhelmed. I recommend that you find a plan that makes sense for you from a reputable source and then stick with that. I outline numerous different plans in both the book, *The Marathon Method*, and you can also find free training plans on the Internet. The key is to find a plan that fits your goals, your fitness level and your available time to train.

I have also created plans for both the marathon and the half marathon distance and made them available on an interactive basis, via TrainingPeaks software, the most highly regarded provider of online training plans there is. Working with TrainingPeaks will prepare you for your best event ever:

- Look for nightly emails with your next day's workout
- Track your training or upload your workout file from one of 80+ training devices (GPS, HR, speed/distance, etc).
- Create and save routes.
- Share your activities with your friends or coach through email or Facebook.
- Track your nutrition together with your training.
- (And much more.)

So, if you like what you see in my book, and want to receive the same plans and motivational training advice built into an online training log and plan, sign up to receive my marathon and half marathon training plan via TrainingPeaks. You can find a plans for novice, intermediate or veteran runners.

Click [here](#) to find out which one of my training plans is just right for you. These plans are available to MMRF Endurance Team members at no cost. Simply enter code "mmrf" in the PROMO/COUPON box when you check out!

### **WEEK #2 – Set Goals and Keep a Log**

**Set Goals:** I believe that the primary goal for first-time marathoners and half marathoners should be to just get to that finish line. Setting a realistic time goal is extremely difficult to do with no prior history as a comparison, and this type of goal can add a great deal of unnecessary stress to both your training and to race day. Just finishing a 13.1 or 26.2 mile event is a huge accomplishment! My goal as a coach with my clients is three-fold: first, to get them to the starting line healthy; second, to adequately prepare them for the race so they have an enjoyable experience, and third, to make sure that they enjoy the training process and the race enough that they want to do it again. You should strive for the same results for yourself.

If this is not your first marathon and you wish to improve your time from a previous race, be sure not to be too aggressive with your new time goal. Remember that certain elements are out of your control including the layout of the course and the weather. Both of these can drastically affect your performance.

Regardless of the number of marathons you have competed in, make finishing your primary goal. Choose a specific time as your secondary goal. If you wake up on race morning and it is 90 degrees and ridiculously humid outside, it's a very smart idea to drop the time goal and just enjoy the race! Even though I have completed over 60 marathons and 20 Ironmans myself, my primary goal is still first and foremost to make it to that finish line, period.

**Keep a log:** One of the simplest things you can do to ensure major success in your training is to keep a running log. Jotting down a few short notes after each workout will:

1. Help you avoid injury by illuminating those elements of your training that may cause pain (increasing mileage too quickly, incorrectly changing footwear, running on a certain surface, etc.)
2. Help you 'dial in' your personal nutrition and hydration strategy by keeping notes on what you consume pre-run/ride/swim, during your workout and post workout, so you can learn what works best for you.
3. Let you know when it's time for a new pair of shoes (something that will impact your overall running – knees, back, feet).
4. Help you determine the best clothing and gear for you.
5. Serve as a huge confidence boost during the taper, your final weeks of training, when you can look over your log to remind yourself of all the hard work you have put in and how prepared you are!

The log need not be time consuming. Just write down a few basic notes on the details of each run. You can use a notebook or your computer, a calendar, the log on TrainingPeaks – whatever works best for you. Not only will this log help you immeasurably for this marathon or half marathon, it will prove to be an invaluable resource for all of your future races as well!

### **WEEK #3 – Building Volume for Injury-Free Training**

One of the most important aspects of marathon training is building your training mileage wisely. Many running related injuries are directly caused by doing "too much too soon," increasing mileage too rapidly or "over-racing", Shin splints and knee pain are two common ailments that can arise from building your running mileage incorrectly. The good news is that by gradually increasing your training volume and "periodizing" your training, you can get to race day injury-free and ready for a great experience.

In layman's terms, periodization simply means "cycling" your training, gradually increasing and then decreasing your total training volume over time. For marathoners and half marathoners this translates into 3 or 4 week cycles consisting of adding a little more training time in each week, followed by a "recovery" week where you decrease the training time to allow your body to "absorb" what you have done and prepare it for the additional volume to come. One mistake I have seen in so many runners make is that they don't add these recovery weeks in their training, and they get injured. Scheduled recovery weeks are essential to your marathon success strategy and cannot be left out of your program.

A few rules to remember when building training volume:

1. Don't increase your training time too drastically from one week to the next
2. Don't "cram" missed workouts in and throw off your overall plan.
3. Remember that your key run each week is your LSD or Long Slow Distance run. These are the runs that will best prepare you to go the distance. The mileage of these runs needs not only be increased gradually, but also shortened during your recovery weeks as well.
4. Stick to YOUR plan. Don't worry about what others may be doing; stay focused on your own program.
5. Be sure to help your body adapt positively to the increased mileage by strength-training, stretching, resting and eating a healthy diet.

### **WEEK #4 – Join a Running Group**

Nothing makes your marathon / half marathon training more enjoyable and easier than joining a running club or group. Sure, we are all busy, but you are about to spend a lot of time on the roads getting ready for your distance race. Joining a running group helps you find others who are at your same training level, and will provide you with like-minded athletes to work out with you as go through the many weeks leading up to race day. It is fun to plan to do build up races and get together for your big runs.

It's easy to find a group. Ask around! Your local running specialty store, the race director for events in your area and your community recreation department are good places to start. Also, most marathons offer group runs or marathon training programs. This is an excellent way to meet and run with other runners who have the same training schedule as you do. You will find that you will get through those workouts – whether speed workouts on a track or those long 20 milers – with a much better running experience when you run with others. You will be amazed how organized and welcoming these running groups are.

So, don't be shy or intimidated. These groups have runners of all levels – from first timers who run at a 12 mile pace to speedy veterans who are looking to qualify for Boston. Make time for this, even if you can only go once a week. You'll improve fast and enjoy the camaraderie of other local athletes! Many runners make lifetime friendships this way.

### **WEEK #5 – Fueling During Workouts**

Many runners might not realize that an electrolyte beverage like Gatorade is not only great for fluid and sodium replacement, but also contains carbohydrates for energy. Thus, by consuming a drink like this, you are simultaneously taking care of three crucial aspects of running success.

It is easier for your body to process fluids than solid foods, especially when you are running. You therefore want to try to take in energy in fluid form first, semi-solid second (think energy gels) and solid form last.

You need to practice fueling during your long runs. This is critical. Everyone is different, and you want to know what works for you on race day. The goal, as always, is to prepare your body for what your strategy will be during your race. What many newer distance runners don't realize is that the conditions of the race, including increased adrenaline and a faster sustained pace, can drastically affect the way in which your body reacts to taking in fuel. Thus, the more you can train your body to adapt to the exact feeding schedule you use, the better.

Be sure to check out which sports drink will be served on your marathon course. Then, either train with that same beverage or prepare to bring your own sports drink of choice to drink during the race. Don't make the mistake of trying something new on marathon day!

After extensive experimentation, I now drink roughly 8-12 ounces of Gatorade every fifteen minutes and take in a PowerGel (110 calories) every thirty minutes during my marathon races. My fluid intake will vary depending on the conditions, and my gel intake may increase in the later stages of the race if I experience any lightheadedness, but these intervals and amounts have become fairly routine. Experiment on your long runs and find out what works for you.

### **WEEK #6 – Training in Inclement Weather – Training in the Rain, Cold or Heat**

We can control many aspects of our race-day except one major one — the weather. The good news is that if we prepare correctly we can help minimize these effects, especially the toll that cold and heat can take on our bodies.

Lance Armstrong supposedly said that when he wakes up during the Tour de France and it's raining outside, he knows he's already beaten half the field before the race has even started. Why? Because he's trained in all types of extreme weather conditions while most others have not.

You never know what the weather will be like on race day, so train in all conditions. Don't skip a run because it's cold or a little rainy or because it is hot. Always be safe, but do not skip a workout simply because you might be slightly uncomfortable. These workouts make you significantly tougher both physically as well as mentally. Come race day, you will look back on some of your toughest runs and know "If I got through that 3 hour run in 15 degree weather (or in 90 degree heat), this is going to be easy."

### **Running in Cold Weather**

Regardless of the old wives' tales you may have heard, exercising outside in the cold, even severe cold, is not damaging to your lungs or "bad" for you. While it may be uncomfortable for some, it is indeed healthy. No matter how cold it is outside, by the time the air reaches your lungs, it is body temperature.

A few points about training in inclement weather:

1. You can train on a treadmill: While you wouldn't want to train exclusively inside, mixing it up and running on a treadmill is perfectly fine. World-class marathoners train on treadmills inside to complement their training. You can even find great treadmill workouts on the internet and play with the speed and incline to get an amazing workout you would not get outside.
2. Invest in inclement weather gear. What to wear: Since you will occasionally be training in cold and rainy weather, invest in some good technical clothing. Go to a reputable running specialty store and talk to someone who knows their stuff. Think "layers." These days there are great technical clothes that are not bulky, but that can keep you warm and dry. Get some good running tights, and a mid-weight technical shirt. Your jacket should not be so much about keeping you warm – it should be about keeping you dry, and/or keeping the wind off of you. A good 'half zip' shirt can be your most comfortable piece of running apparel. You can use a thin layer underneath in super cold weather, or run with it alone if it is not so cold. There are even socks that are no more bulky than 'normal' socks that are made for cold weather. A good lightweight hat and gloves are a must! Lots of heat can escape your body from your head, and your hands will be uncomfortable if they are too cold. If you heat up, simply stuff them in the back of your tights or in your pocket.
3. Don't overdress for runs: The rule of thumb is that when you step outside to begin your run, you should feel slightly chilly. Your body will warm up as you run. If you are warm when you begin your run, you are overdressed.
4. Don't forget to hydrate: Even when it is cold and rainy, you are still sweating and still need to hydrate before, during and after your workouts.

### **Running in Hot Weather**

When we exercise, our working muscles produce heat and our core temperatures rise. Our body's major mechanism for dissipating this heat is by increasing the rate of blood flow to the skin to facilitate the evaporation of sweat. Thus, there is a major "contest" between the blood that needs to go to our working muscles and the blood that is going to the skin. We want as much blood to go to our muscles as possible!

Here are a few ways to minimize the effects of running in the heat. They apply to training as well as to race day.

1. Be sure to hydrate before, during, and after all workouts.
2. Wear light-colored loose-fitting clothing made from a performance (wicking) fabric. NO COTTON!
3. Consider wearing a hat or visor on runs to minimize the sunlight's effect on your face.
4. Try to do a few "acclimatization" workouts in the heat, preferably within two weeks of the marathon if race day could be a hot one.
5. When the heat is oppressive, slow your pace down. This goes for training as well for the race day running effort.
6. We lose electrolytes, especially salt, in our sweat. Excessive sodium loss can lead to muscle cramping. Consider hydrating (pre, during, and post run) with an electrolyte-beverage such as Gatorade.

### **WEEK #7 – Motivation**

My Master's Degree is in Exercise Science with a concentration in Sport Psychology. I wanted the psychological training as well because, after working with hundreds of clients over the years, I needed to know how to motivate each one. I'll never forget the words of one of my professors, however, when we were discussing this very topic. He stated very matter-of-factly "You cannot motivate someone. You can merely provide incentives."

All of the runners on our team have their own personal reasons for wanting to complete the race, but you also share one incredible common bond: You are doing this for more than just yourself. You are doing this for a cause, for a purpose greater than just your own; you are pushing your limits to help make someone else's life better. That is an amazingly powerful incentive.

When the last thing you want to do is go out for that early morning workout, when you are dragging during the final miles of your long run and just want to pack it in, when you're not sure you can continue with your training, remember what you are running for.

Never forget how fortunate you are just to be able to lace up your shoes and go out to exercise. Every day is a gift.

### **WEEK #8 – The Importance of Rest**

Rest is essential to our success as athletes. I personally believe in at least one day off per week. This means complete inactivity. No cross-training or strength training: Just a day to let our bodies rebuild and recover. Realize that during our workouts we are stressing our cardiovascular systems and creating microscopic tears in our muscles. If we continue to exercise without periods of rest we never truly allow our bodies to rebuild themselves. This leads to decreased performance, injury, and eventual burnout. We get stronger during our periods of rest, not during the workouts themselves!

Let's refer back to my article on building volume and periodization from a few weeks ago. Remember that periodization means "cycling" our training; a huge component of this process is rest. If we do not take time off, our bodies will not be able to adapt to the training we have just completed, nor will they be prepared to handle the increased training to come.

I personally love my rest days. I am convinced that I can "feel" my body rebuilding itself as I relax once a week. These days are our rewards for a solid week of training and, trust me, as you get closer to race day you will appreciate these rest days more and more!

### **WEEK #9 – Speed Workouts**

I often say that **performance in endurance racing is not about who goes the fastest, it's about who slows down the least.** A common statement made by runners after marathons is "at the halfway point I was 'on track for' (fill in the time) marathon..." Then something happens that slowed them down. Well, quite often what slowed them down was simply a lack of preparation, specifically their endurance workouts. Not speed training, just good old long runs to build endurance. I believe this comes first. So, you can run a faster marathon without speed workouts by building up your endurance. This endurance allows you to maintain a steady pace throughout your entire race.

There does come a time however, when your fitness or goals are at a point where to get faster you must train faster. The good news is that speed work need not (and should not) mean lengthy workouts or be done several times a week. Speed work does not have to be performed at the track or with a heart rate monitor. The non-elite runner can benefit tremendously by doing one interval workout per week on the roads or trails. Here is an example of one:

- 15 minute easy warm up
- 3 x 5 minutes hard at 2 minutes rest. This means go for five minutes at a "comfortably hard" pace, slow down to an easy jog for two minutes to recover, then repeat this progression 2 more times. I equate the five minute interval to intensity where you're not dying, but you don't want to be there much more than five minutes.
- 15 minute easy cool down

You can also use shorter weekend races to get faster on the run as well. Running a 5K or 10K race every few weeks will help increase your run speed, helping get in some good speed workouts without the boredom of doing endless loops around a track all by yourself.

### **WEEK #10 – Stretching**

There are countless articles that state how stretching either does not help prevent injury and/or will not improve sport performance. I disagree, and so do so many other professional runners as well. When we run and run frequently, our muscles can become tight and shortened over time. Continue exercising without correcting these conditions and problems can occur.

There is also confusing information about when and how much to stretch. The most current research in favor of stretching suggests the following three steps:

- Begin with a 3-5 minute "dynamic warm up" before stretching. For example, prior to a run session you should ideally run easy for 3-5 minutes before you begin to stretch. You can also do running drills during this time as your warm up.
- After this "dynamic warm up" you should then stop and stretch your major muscles, holding each for 10-15 seconds.
- Then, after your run session, you will perform the same stretches once again, but this time, hold each stretch for 30-60 seconds. Your muscles are now primed and better prepared to be stretched.

I personally do not believe the pre-stretch is essential to a marathoner or half marathoner unless we are doing a hard run speed session or short race. If you can devote the time to it, excellent. If you can only stretch once, start your workout at an easy pace for at least 5 minutes to loosen up, and then stretch after the workout. Devoting just a few minutes after each workout can improve your performances and help keep you injury-free for years to come.

### **WEEK #11 – Mental Training**

Years ago, running a mile in under four minutes was believed to be impossible. Many also believed that doing so could cause serious physical injury. Then along came Roger Bannister who, on May 6, 1954, became the first person to break the four-minute mile barrier. Although this was indeed an impressive feat, more noteworthy to me was what happened afterward.

Forty six days later, Bannister's rival, John Landy, also broke the four minute mile, beating Bannister's time in the process. More than a dozen runners did the same thing within a few years. When people believed it could be done, they accomplished this seemingly unachievable goal.

There are two types of mental training that are extremely beneficial to marathon runners: self talk and visualization.

**Self Talk:** This refers to the internal monologues that play in our minds. These are the thoughts and conversations we have with ourselves. The longer the race, the more time there is to think. The key is to harness your thoughts to your advantage, because so much hinges on your mental state. If you can learn to control your thoughts, you can dramatically improve your race experience, both in practice and on race day. You can use self talk to do the following:

- Create and change your mood: ("I am ready." "This is my day." "I feel great.")
- Control your effort ("Nice and easy." "Float" "Push it" "Hammer." "Keep it up.")
- Improve your form: ("Relax the shoulders." "Fast foot turnover." "Relax the breathing.")
- Focus your attention: (Try to clear your mind. Repeat a simple mantra: "Focus." Or "This is mine.")

**Visualization:** Top athletes in all fields spend a certain amount of time each week visualizing themselves having a great performance, and you should too! All you need to do is spend a few minutes "seeing" yourself succeed in your marathon situation. I like to visualize the whole process, from the minute I wake up on race morning until the minute I cross the finish line. You can perform your visualization exercises while you stretch - or anywhere that you can find a quiet space and a few minutes.

Spend some time on the race website checking out the course. Read what you can about the marathon. Talk to other runners who have run it. This way you will have some details that will help you really visualize in detail.

If the race is near you, try to train on the course if you can. If not, you can often see pictures online and even watch YouTube videos of people racing on the course. This type of visualization of the actual course will add a whole new dimension to your confidence level. You will be way ahead before you even start your race if you incorporate this practice into your marathon preparations.

### **WEEK #12 – Marathon Success Strategies**

Here now are my personal top 10 Success Strategies for the marathon or half marathon. Many of these will sound self-explanatory and/or overly simplistic, but I guarantee you they are seldom followed and are the very keys to your best race!

1. Follow a "taper" – This is the gradual reduction in training volume, and will be dealt with thoroughly in next week's training tip.
2. Begin "carb up" several days before, not just the night before. You will need to eat more carbohydrates to fuel your body correctly.
3. Don't expect to get anything on the course, especially gels. Bring as much on your person as you can without significantly slowing yourself down.
4. Be prepared to adjust your goals to the weather conditions.
5. Run the first few miles slower than your goal race pace.
6. Don't try anything new on race day.
7. Be prepared for the unexpected. Nothing ever goes exactly as planned.
8. Control your emotions from the moment you wake up until you cross that finish line.

9. Hydrate and take in calories early.
10. Have fun.

Number eight is one of the most crucial points and one of the most difficult to master. I have a quote on the wall of my office by R.W. Lazarus which reads "Emotion is a direct manifestation of a person's appraisal of any given situation." This simple phenomenon can absolutely make or break your marathon performance.

### **WEEK #13 – Taper**

I believe a true taper is a major contributor to marathon success. What is a taper? It is simply a gradual reduction in training volume. This allows the body to recover from the weeks upon weeks of training so that you are rested and ready to go come race day. Yet, it is much easier said than done. You have been training so hard for so long and can become convinced that you will lose fitness if you pull back. Actually, just the opposite is true, but that is a very hard concept for most runners to accept, especially when they are just weeks from their race. It is also very hard to swallow when you see friends and acquaintances continue to put in major miles in the final weeks before race day. Let them. You are training for an endurance race, not the 100 yard dash. You need to let your body absorb all the hard work that you have been doing. There is a great saying when it comes to overtraining for endurance races: "It is better to be 10% undertrained than 1% over trained."

One of my primary responsibilities as a coach is to ensure that my clients taper correctly. When a client calls me during a taper and says that she feels absolutely terrible - she feels fat, sluggish, irritable and anxious - I reply, "Great!" That tells me that she is tapering perfectly. When you go from running, riding and swimming significant miles to pulling back drastically, as I have told you to do in the final weeks, your body and your mind will rebel. You will want that endurance fix, yet you can't have it. You will be burning fewer calories, which can make you feel like you've gained 20 pounds. You will feel slower during the workouts you do have left, and this will make you worry even more. Fear not, and have faith: You are tapering perfectly. You should spring out of bed on race morning and feel like a dog that has been cooped up inside for a week and is raring to go. When in doubt during the final week, leave it out. No one ever ruined a marathon by tapering too hard!

### **WEEK #14 – Predicting Your Marathon/Half Marathon Finish Time**

There are three types of goals you can set for yourself in relation to sporting events: outcome, performance and process goals. Setting a time goal for yourself for the marathon is an example of an outcome goal. It is our nature to want to set a time goal, but beware!

If this is your first marathon then I personally am strongly against choosing a time as a primary goal. You simply do not have the history or the experience to realistically do so and it can lead to unnecessary stress and disappointment. There are also too many variables involved with the race that are out of your control, such as the weather, and these things can wreak havoc on this type of goal strategy.

Putting all three disciplines together in a race situation is difficult enough. Setting a relatively arbitrary time goal for yourself will only add to all the things you will worry about.

Of course, we all like to shoot for something. If you do have a time goal, my advice is to KEEP IT TO YOURSELF! Don't tell your friends or family what it is. This will significantly diminish your stress level if and when things don't go exactly as you planned. And they rarely do in an endurance event.

That being said, there is one basic formula you can use to predict your marathon finish time. If you have run a half marathon race then you would simply double that time and add ten minutes. So, if you ran the 13.1 mile race in 2:00, then you could guesstimate your marathon time to be around 4:10.

My first goal in every race is to finish. Period. I make all my clients strategize similarly. We do often set time goals but they are fourth on the list, behind our Finish Goal, Performance Goals and Process Goals.

The good news is that when you race to simply race your best, you will quite often surprise yourself, often exceeding even your own expectations.

Next week, we will talk about Performance Goals and Process Goals. Performance goals focus on the strategy behind the race, not the outcome. Process goals focus on technique.

### **WEEK #15 – Performance and Process Goals**

In my column last week, I discussed the concept of setting a time goal for your marathon or half marathon, otherwise known in the sports psychology world as an outcome goal. As much as we all want to finish our race in a predetermined time, there are two additional types of goals that will help you have your best race without the added stress of a concrete finishing time. These are performance goals and process goals.

Performance Goals specify an end result of competition independent of other runners. These are much easier to set in team sports but they can have applications to endurance athletes and marathon runners in particular. I consider Performance Goals in marathon running as those that focus on the "strategic" elements of racing. They may include:

- Holding back on the first few miles
- Making use of the downhill while running
- Keeping heart rate in a predetermined zone
- Using self talk to improve performance
- Sticking to a nutrition/hydration plan
- Running the tangents

I define Process Goals as those that focus on technique. Examples may include:

- Keeping arms relaxed and swinging back-to-front while running
- Running with a soft foot strike
- Keeping hands relaxed and soft
- Increasing foot turnover towards the end of the run

The great thing about these two types of goal-setting strategies is that if you implement them they will ultimately help you have your best race. You can be successful at achieving performance and process goals regardless of the course layout or the race day conditions. They will enable you to focus on the truly important aspects of racing and you will enjoy the event exponentially more.

Your homework for the upcoming week? I want you to write down five performance and five process goals for your triathlon. Now get to work!

### **WEEK #16 – The Final Week**

It's almost here. I don't know about you, but I am starting to get really excited for the big day. Since you will all be running much less next week and will therefore have much more time on your hands, here's how you will occupy that time.

1. **Get all your gear together:** Assemble anything and everything you will need for your race. Try on your entire race outfit and go for a few runs. You will want to try out your clothes and gear and simulate your race with the exact clothing that you will wear on race day. Do not leave anything to the last minute. Nothing adds to potential tri stress like running around the day the marathon trying to buy your Power Gels or Body Glide and they are nowhere to be found.
2. **Stretch:** Use the extra time you have since you are not training as much this week to loosen up those muscles that have become tight from months of hard work. I will often spend up to an hour each session stretching the week before a race.
3. **Visualize Success:** Sit back, throw on your iPod and visualize the perfect race. Envision yourself running the perfect race — standing at the start line feeling excited, but not nervous, to get going. Feeling the first miles as you hold back

and run a 'smart' race. Cruising through the first half with ease and confidence because you have followed your plan. See yourself pass the 20 mile mark, knowing that there is "only" a 10K left. Visualize that final mile when you know that you are almost there and get a final burst of energy. Picture yourself seeing the finish line in front of you and then crossing with arms raised and a huge smile on your face.

4. **Relax:** The work is done. The best thing that you can do now is rest, rest, rest. When it comes to workouts now the rule is, "When in doubt, leave it out."

## Get Inspired by these Hand Picked Marathon Training Articles

- Jeff Galloway – [32-Week Marathon Training Schedule](#)
- Runner's World – [Marathon Training For Beginners](#)
- Hal Higdon – [Two Novice Marathon Training Programs](#)
- Runners World – [Ultimate Marathon Training Plans](#)
- Boston Athletic Association – [16-Week Marathon Training Program](#)
- New York Road Runners – [Marathon Training Schedules For Six Ability Levels](#)

### Half Marathon Training

- Runners World – [Nine Week Half Marathon Ultimate Training Plan](#)
- Hal Higdon – [12 Week Half Marathon Training Guide For Four Ability Levels](#)
- Jeff Galloway – [Two Half Marathon Training Schedules](#)

### Injury prevention

- Sports Injury Clinic – [Common Running Injuries and Prevention](#)
- Runners World – [11 Articles on Injury Prevention and Care](#)
- State of the Art – [Avoiding Injury While Training for Marathons](#)
- Furman Institute – [Complete Guide to Running Injuries](#)
- University of IL – [Running Injury Prevention Plan](#)

### Mental training

- Run Quick – [Mental Training Overview](#)
- About.com – [Staying Motivate to Run](#)
- Road Runner Sports – [Mental Training Techniques](#)

### Inspiration

- About.com – [Motivational Running Quotes](#)
- Tangle – [The Ryan Hall Story](#)

## Training Tools

### Training Tools by realbuzz.com

- Tap into these great tools to keep your training on track.
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### Route Planner:

- Tired of trying to estimate the length of your training runs and rides? Then use this FREE route planner! Map out your favorite routes - complete with distances - using specially detailed maps and satellite images. You can save multiple routes and share them with your friends.
  - [Learn More](#) ▶
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### Pace Tools:

- Use this calculator to:
    - Calculate your pace, based on a given distance
    - Calculate splits to help you plan your race
    - Predict your finish time
    - Convert KM to Miles
  - [Learn More](#) ▶
- 

### Training Calendar

- Keep track of your training miles and your races using this useful Training Calendar.
  - [Learn More](#) ▶
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### Additional Online Training Tools

- We also recommend using these additional free online tools:
  - **MapMyRun**
    - Map routes and track your activity in one simple location.
    - [Learn More](#) ▶
  - **Training Calculator**
    - The Runner's World Training Calculator is one online tool for all of your training needs.
    - [Learn More](#) ▶