

Run in groups, train in basic CPR, docs advise marathon runners

Disha Shetty

disha.shetty@dnaindia.net

Mumbai: Following news of noted Mumbai gynaecologist Dr Rakesh Sinha's heart attack while training for a marathon, and his subsequent death on Monday, doctors once again caution against pushing one's body over the hill.

Sinha, 59, a two-time Guinness World record-holder (first, for removing the largest fibroid, and second, for removing the heaviest uterus, both laparoscopically), had no history of heart ailment and was a regular marathon runner.

"One needs at least six months of preparation for a full marathon, and three months for a half marathon, assuming you start at a moderate fitness levels," says Dr Aashish Contractor, Head of Department of Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital, Girgaon.

"Many people start running without a medical check-up, even diabetics. They often find themselves very exhausted by the end of it, as their muscles are not toned. You don't just start running on day one," says Dr Nilesh Gautam, Head of Department of preventive cardiology and rehabilitation, Asian Heart Institute, Bandra-Kurla Complex.

Doctors insist that prospective runners first go for a health check-up, and go slow initially, increasing the intensity of exercise over a period of six weeks.



File photo of former athlete Alphonso Leealama training members of the Road Runner Club for a marathon at Marine Drive

KNOW WHEN TO STOP

- Chest pain
- Increasing fatigue
- Indigestion / heartburn
- gastrointestinal symptoms
- Excessive breathlessness
- Ear or neck pain

Dr Sinha was running alone and a lot of time was lost in getting him to the nearest hospital, points out Dr Gautam. "Run in groups. In case of an emergency, co-runners can provide him/her basic CPR till medical help arrives," he says.

"You may have a history of heart disease, but with proper training you can manage to run a marathon," says Dr Contractor.