

# **What you should keep in mind while training for the marathon**

## **Dr Santosh Kumar Dora, Cardiac Electro Physiologist, Asian Heart Institute, Mumbai**

It is important to follow a proper training schedule which should ideally start one year prior to the marathon.

Intense training may be required for at least 16 weeks prior to the race day. 5 days training with 2 days' rest is a good strategy for marathon training. If a proper training schedule has not been carried out, then there can be serious issues on the race day.

Shoe selection is very important. Shoes should be light and well fit. You should have the same pair of shoes for race day as they were during the training sessions which started many weeks prior.

Before you start training, visit a doctor who will evaluate whether you are fit for the training and subsequently to run a marathon. You must visit a doctor if you are trying to participate in marathon for the first time. If you have any cardiac ailment, diabetes, hypertension, lung disorder etc , then you must see a doctor at regular intervals. Your doctor may do routine screening including blood tests, echocardiogram, stress test, pulmonary function test etc to determine your fitness for a rigorous marathon training.

Nutrition is very important. Maintain proper proportion of carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals in your diet. Roughly carbohydrates, proteins and fats should constitute around 60%, 10% and 30% of the daily caloric requirement. A proper food is necessary to supply and replenish the fuel needed for marathon training and muscle building.

Drink plenty of water to keep yourself properly hydrated. It is essential during training as well as on race day. Sports drink may be better by replacing not only the fluid loss but by supplying the carbohydrate and vitamins. Neglecting fluids during training and marathon actually brings in fatigue early during the race. It is good to avoid alcohol prior to the race or even the night before the race. It can lead to disturbed sleep, early morning hypoglycemia, disable the focus and sharpness needed during the race time and impair endurance.

### **Tips to take care of your body post the run**

- After your marathon run, take at least a week off before resuming your running/exercise schedule. Start exercising only when you feel ready. Take your time to easing back into distance, duration and frequency.
- Taking plenty of sleep is important for your body to recover from the strain it underwent during the marathon.
- Have well balanced meals the day after the marathon. Try to consume small quantities of nutrition rich food every two hours. Avoid consuming large meals. It is important for your body to get proper nourishment post rigorous marathon run. Your immune system also needs nourishment, which will be more vulnerable after the run.
- Do not ignore any injuries or ailments you may have developed during the race. It is important to visit your doctor if you experience any physical discomfort after the race day.