

## TRAINING FOR THE NOVICE

Elaine Doll-Dunn, Psy.D.

Have you said it yet? Have you articulated those immutable words, “I’m going to run a marathon!” If you have, and you are now wondering what in the world is wrong with you head, cheer up. It’s called the rite of passage, the power of one, the ‘it’s time for me’ proclamation. Still the most challenging of events, the marathon defines the person you are, the person you want to be, and the person you become. Welcome to the ranks of those who live outside the box.

A prodigious distance, an awesome accomplishment, you owe yourself this conquest...and training is the key. So if you have chosen the full *or* the half for your distance debut, the following suggestions will be beneficial to your comfortable finish and solid accomplishment

**1. Make a commitment.** Write it down, tell your friends, and make it a priority. Circle August 16<sup>th</sup> on your calendar, make whatever reservations you need, and register NOW!

**2. Run a copy of the schedule and tape it to your refrigerator,** plan the time for your daily workout, and make it a habit.

**3. Make a trip to your trusted shoe guy.** If you don’t already have two pair of good running shoes, now’s the time. It’s a small investment, all things considered, two pair because it’s good to rotate, 400 miles on a pair of shoes and they should be history. Don’t be sabotaged by an injury.

**4. Find a running buddy.** It really helps to get you out in the morning if someone else is depending on you, and it does make the miles go by more quickly.

**5. Plan your running venue.** Pick safe places and forgiving surfaces. Parks, trails, asphalt instead of concrete, grass is great; if you’re the **Deadwood Mickelson Trail Marathon** it’s almost all on the railroad bed so gravel road running is optimal. If the **Leading Lady Marathon** is your choice; do some runs in the canyon to put the race in your head as well as your feet.

**6. Determine your goal;** is it to finish? Better a previous time? Qualify for Boston? The race reflects the training.

**7. Give yourself plenty of training time.** You should be able to run comfortably for 30 minutes three or four times a week before beginning the 12 (half-marathon) or 18 (full marathon) week formal schedule.

**8. Focus on the long runs.** The most important part of any marathon training program is the long run. The purpose of these runs is to strengthen your legs and body and to develop the fitness of your cardiovascular system so that they can withstand the rigors of the marathon distance. Walk and run, the goal is time on your feet for your body and for your head.

**9. Listen to your body.** Staying healthy is imperative. You must train enough to achieve proper conditioning, but not so much that it leads to exhaustion, injury, or illness. It’s a balancing act, and runners are notoriously addicted to over training.

**10. Keep a running log.** Remember why you’re doing this, and remember that you’re setting the bar for someone. Run well, run happy, run smart.