

123 Of The Best Marathon Training Tips You'll Probably Ever See

A grain of rice will tip the scales. Apply just a fraction of these to achieve positive results in your training

Howdy!

Thanks for downloading the marathon training tips

Before we launch into these marathon training, nutrition and mindset tips please take the following into account; These are quick tips that provide headline overview of principles many advanced marathon runners use and trust. All of these tips will not suit everyone's level of development or lifestyle but some are bound to resonate with you.

Take a “steady-as-she-goes” approach, making little changes to your training and diet, and slowly but surely you'll see results begin to show. Bite off too much too soon and you may become overwhelmed.

Apply what you can, and be determined & sure about your direction. Test information from as many sources as is practical but not too many that you get swamped with information. (That's as bad as having no information at all!).

Stick this list to your fridge or notice board at home or work, and refer to it regularly. Also be sure to check out thesmartrunner.com for more detailed information.

We've broken these down into three categories;

- [1. Training Tips](#)
- [2. Mindset Tips](#)
- [3. Nutrition Tips](#)

Happy training!

1. Training Tips

1. Stretch, Stretch, Stretch

This is really important. Too many of us don't stretch nearly as much as we need to. As a result we are tighter than we should be which often leads to injury. Do a light warm up then stretch for a good 15 to 30 mins before and after training.

2. Do Body Weight Strength Work

Rule of thumb; if you can't move your own body weight comfortably, stay away from weights until you can. Do front, side and back lunges, squats, burpees, press-ups & sit ups every day for 20 mins to build strength

3. Lift Weights

Once you begin to move your body easily with regular body weight strength work, introduce weight training to your strength regime with the help and advice of an instructor.

4. Do Yoga

Yoga is a great way to combine strength training and stretching in the same session saving you time. If your flexibility is poor take up one class per week if you can. You're running will gain great benefit from it.

5. Correct Your Running Style

Hire a professional running coach to analyse your running style. Often poor running style can be the difference between finishing the marathon comfortably or in great discomfort. It can also cause injury.

6. Get Regular Sports Massage

Once a month visits to a good sports massage therapist will help you work out any of those knots in muscle fibres you've picked up along the road helping you stay in good nic.

7. Use A Roller

Foam Rollers are great for getting into those tender areas and relaxing tight muscles and niggles. It's not as good as a good therapist but can certainly aid recovery.

8. Use A Golf Ball

Got sore feet? Get a golf ball and place it under the sole of your foot, rolling back and forth until you feel relief.

9. Do Gymnastics

Gymnastics routines build strength and flexibility. If you can find a local gym where you can learn the basics you'll certainly benefit.

10. Do T'ai Chi

Tai Chi is a form of martial arts that slows everything down, helps you relax and increases strength and flexibility. Tai Chi is known as "meditation for the body".

11. Do Pilates

Pilates is a system of exercise that focuses on strengthening the core, the powerhouse of the body. It's an excellent strength accompaniment for runners.

12. Study Chi Running

Based upon the principles of T'ai Chi, Chi Running can correct posture and running style helping you avoid injury and improve recovery time from races.

13. Don't Over Train

Many runners try to compensate for lost training time by training longer or more frequently, not leaving enough recovery time. Don't do it.

14. Train Hard

When you're training train full out. Give it everything you've got. This is not an invitation to push through injury, rather it's encouragement to push beyond limitations

15. Take It Easy

Know when to relax and take recovery time. Your body will tell you when it needs to chill out so make sure to listen and rest when you need it.

16. Don't Train Injured

If you feel a twinge or a niggle, address it immediately. Roll it out or get a rub, use ice and stretch plenty. Don't train injured!

17. Train Hills

Use hills in your training if you're not already. Hills demand more from us and when we add hill runs to our training we increase our aerobic range and capacity.

18. Do 800m Intervals

If you're running with a club then you'll likely be doing 800m intervals. If you're running with a group of friends and not doing 800's, introduce them to your training.

19. Do Fartlek

Fartlek makes training on the roads or in the park fun and interesting. Run $\frac{1}{2}$ pace, then $\frac{3}{4}$ pace to the tree, then $\frac{1}{2}$ pace to the next tree, and $\frac{3}{4}$ pace to the post box, and so on for 3 or 4 miles.

20. Do 1km Intervals

Introduce 1000m interval runs to your training. If it takes you 3.5 mins to run 1km then rest for 3.5 mins then go again. Do 4, 6 or 8 in a set depending on stage of training you're at.

21. Run On Grass & Trails

Run on the grass and trails where you can. It's easier on the body long term.

22. Run Tempos

Tempo running is a marathon and half marathon standard training method. Say you're running 10km - slow warm up 2 km, race pace 6km, warm down 2km.

23. Buy A Skipping Rope

Skipping is a great fitness and weight loss exercise that you can do at home or in your backyard and it's a great all over body workout.

24. Train To 26 Miles

I really don't get why anyone would want to only train to 20 or 22 miles in preparation for a marathon, and I don't understand why any coach would suggest it either. If you're going to run the marathon train to the full distance.

25. Train On The Bike

Give yourself a break from running each week. Introduce the bike to give your body a break off the road and develop complementary muscle groups.

26. Train On The Cross Skier

Same here. Introduce different training such as the cross country skier to your regime.

27. Do Loads Of Burpees

Burpees are awesome! Everyone I know hates burpees and most people avoid them, but if you want to really test your body then bring the beast mode out with burpees!

28. Do Lunges

Do lunges! Do side lunges, front lunges, reverse lunges in sets of 10 (5 each side) x 5 rounds. Introduce weights if you're well practiced

29. Do Squats

Squats are really effective at building strength for running. Get deep into the squat, then come back up. Do sets of 10 to 15 and increase rep pace as you become more flexible. Introduce weight as you become stronger.

30. Do Core Work

Work your core. The core is a vital component in staying strong in your running. A weak core can lead to all kind of glute and hamstring issues.

31. Buy A Heart Rate Monitor

Buy a heart rate monitor and use heart rate training zones to develop your fitness. This is something you'll need to customise for yourself depending on your level of fitness so do the research.

32. Don't Wear A Watch (sometimes)

Technology is great, however becoming over reliant on it can negatively affect your understanding of your own body. Leave the watch at home for some long runs and get to know yourself better.

33. Start Slowly

Try not get caught up in the hype on race day. Start out about 20% slower than your race pace then build as you get comfortable. 26 miles is plenty of distance to build pace.

34. Speed Up In The Last 25%

Taking an easier start you'll find that you have lots more in the tank at the finish. So if you're feeling fresh at 20 miles pick it up a bit.

35. Stick To One Shoe Type

One of the biggest errors any runner will ever make is changing her/his shoes before an event. It's simply a no no. Try a couple brands then stick with the one you prefer.

36. Break New Shoes In

If you need new shoes make sure to buy about a month before your event and break them in. Please don't wear new shoes to a marathon event, you'll regret it big time.

37. Wear Running Socks

Specialist running socks are a good idea, especially if you're running upward of 50 miles per week. Same again here, try different ones and stick with the one that works.

38. Use Vaseline

Essential kit! Only from the experience of running longer distances without it will you know this. Use it to lubricate those chaffy areas before the race. **Pro Tip:** lube the threaded lining of your shorts too.

39. Mind Your Nipples!

Bloody nipples are a regular sight at marathon events especially if it's been raining. The simple solution here is to wear a body tight top like Under Armour or Skins.

40. Buy A Sports Bra

Ladies, (and some of you gents!) keep them bad boys under control! Go buy yourself a good quality sports bra.

41. Buy A Good Bottle Belt

Most experienced marathon runners don't wear a drink belt. They've conditioned their bodies to maintain good hydration. Until you train your body the same, wear a belt so you have water and other supplies when you need them.

42. Run In All Weather

Get out in the sun, rain and snow. Get used to running in all weathers but prepare for the conditions with the right gear and protection.

43. Run Early In The Morning

Get out and run before the world rises. There's quiet and calm at 6am that you just don't get later in the day and it can be very powerful.

44. Run On Your Own

Enjoy your own company without the distraction of conversation and learn to develop self encouraging mental conversation.

45. Do A Parkrun

Get involved with Parkrun. The 5 km weekly run is a great means to hook up with runners of a similar pace and test yourself against them.

46. Wear Reflectives

Wear reflective gear when you're out on the roads even in the day time. It's helps you stand out against the background so that drivers can easily see you.

47. Wear A Cap

A cap is a great piece of gear that I never leave the house without. It keeps the rain off your face, the sun, wind and vehicle headlight glare out of your eyes.

48. Wear Layers

Wear thin layers of clothing in the winter, and in summer if necessary. You never know what's waiting around the corner so if you get stranded miles from home at least you can stay warm

49. Use Music

If you need music for motivation then go ahead and use it.

50. Don't Use Music

If you're going to use music, don't become too reliant on it. Learning to feel you own body and recognise the signals it sends you is vital on the longer runs.

51. Listen To Motivational Audio

When you're relaxing or travelling put on a motivational audio like [*The Smart Runner Podcast*](#) or some other spoken word motivational stuff.

52. Buy Running Gloves

Running gloves can come in very handy (pardon the pun) on those cold mornings. You can whip them off later and shove them in your sleeve as you warm up.

53. Evacuate!

This is a vital one! Every runner will get caught short sometime so if you haven't evacuated before leaving the house, put a few folds of toilet paper under your running cap.

54. Have A Hot Bath

Hot baths are a great way to relax and sooth tired muscles. They don't suit everyone so like all of these tips, try it for yourself well in advance of an event

55. Have A Cold Bath

Cold baths and ice baths are touted by some experts as very beneficial for recovery. Personally I've never got any benefit from cold baths but you're welcome to try it.

56. Don't Change Your Routine

When coming up to an event, don't change the routine you've been using all along in your training. This is not the time to try new things.

2. Mindset Tips

57. Meditate

Meditation is a proven way to relax and develop a focused and still mind. Meditate early in the morning and last thing at night.

58. Visualise

The most successful athletes on the planet use visualisation to prepare for events. Focus your mind on what it is you want and picture it vividly without distraction.

59. Make Positive Statements

Make positive statements of intent related to your goal and write them down. Practice this every day without fail.

60. Keep A Journal

Write about your marathon training either in a physical journal or online with a blog. Document your experiences with a focus on the wins. Make the negatives small.

61. Choose A Mantra

Chant a mantra during your training like this; *"Easy - Strong - Powerful"* and repeat over and over again in your mind or out loud.

62. Find The Positives

Not everything will go according to your plan, however everything holds a benefit for you if you can see it. Look at what went wrong and extract a positive from it.

63. Make I Am Statements

Make out loud and in your head, statements about yourself in the present tense. Say *"I am fast" "I am strong" "I am powerful" "I am committed" "I am a successful marathon runner"*

64. Get Up Earlier Than You Need To

Getting up at the last minute leaves you with no room to prepare, everything is rushed and panicked. Get up one hour before you need to and move easily into your day.

65. Choose Big Goals

Dream big. Keep your dreams to yourself and tell no one, not even your spouse or best friends for they will surely try to insist you be "realistic".

66. Break Big Goals Down Into Smaller Ones

There's only one way to eat an elephant, and that's one fork full at a time.

67. Make A Daily Checklist

Make a list of daily training goals and create a spreadsheet of these spread out over 30 days. Print it off and tick each daily task as you complete it.

68. Make Time

Apparent lack of time is one of the biggest excuses many of us give for not achieving what we want. Decide to cut out rubbish like watching TV to make room for your goals.

69. Make A Commitment

Like the #69, making a commitment to yourself is deciding to do whatever it takes to reach your marathon goals. Find an accountability partner, someone who can hold you to your word.

70. Take Responsibility

Staying in a similar vein here, taking absolute responsibility for your results is where your power to achieve lies. No excuses.

71. Go To Bed Early

Rest is vital. Make sure you get at least 8 hours per night.

72. Take Micro Breaks

Take micro 5 or 10 min breaks in work. Close your eyes and have a quick snooze while nobody's watching!

73. Don't Beat Yourself Up

Avoiding negative self talk might be a big challenge given that most of us are well practiced at it, but it's essential if we are to succeed. Give yourself a break.

74. Accept Where You Are

You are where you are, and you can only move forward in your training or recovery once you accept this.

75. Never Quit

You might meet setbacks along your marathon journey but remember you only fail when you give up. Sitting on the fence for a bit might be necessary so do whatever it takes.

76. Form A Partnership

Get into league with someone of a similar or slightly better standard and help each other grow and improve.

77. Join A Club

There's power in numbers. Joining a running club will bring you on leaps and bounds.

78. Do It For Charity

If you need motivation, do it for charity.

79. Do It For A Loved One

If you need motivation do it for a loved one.

80. Do It For Yourself

If all else fails do it for yourself.

81. Celebrate Little Wins

Celebrate your wins, even if it's only a smile and self recognition of something small.

82. Register Early

Register for an event with plenty of time to train and prepare mentally and physically.

83. Record Yourself & Listen Daily

On your phone, record yourself speaking from the future to yourself now. Congratulate yourself on your spectacular achievement and promise your now self of even greater things to come. Listen to this every day.

84. Talk Out Loud To Yourself

Talk to yourself in positive terms out loud and firmly. Shout out your positive affirmations.

85. Ignore Negative People

You all know them, they are all around you. Weather they affect you or not is your call.

86. Ignore Negative Thoughts

Negative self talk will destroy your chances of success. Replace them with positive ones.

87. Avoid Mental Arguments

Same stuff here, except these forms of negative talk is directed at others. Taking part in mental arguments with others only serves to damage your progress and results.

88. Forget About The Wall - It Doesn't Exist

There is no wall except the one you create for yourself. Remember that.

3. Nutrition Tips

89. Do Your Research

Don't take other people's and expert opinion as gospel. Do the research and experiment.

90. Try The Whole30 Program

[Whole30](#) is awesome for fat loss, but it is a real challenge. Don't take it lightly.

91. Reduce or Remove Processed White Bread

Processed white bread and other refined wheat products can negatively affect fat loss. Reduce and replace with whole grain alternatives.

92. Stay Hydrated

The amount of water you need depends on your unique requirements so do the research. As a rule, I down a 2ltr each day and more when I'm training hard.

93. Eat A Good Breakfast

Breakfast is vital component in your training. Make it healthy and make it substantial.

94. Make Your Own Snacks

Having good quality snack at hand during the day is vital to avoid hunger and the inevitable reaching for shit food.

95. Keep Refined Sugar Low Or Out Completely

Refined sugar products are not good despite them being everywhere especially in race goodie bags. Find an alternative.

96. Forget About Sugary Sports Drinks

"Sports drink" companies are not interested in your health, they want your business so don't be fooled by advertising.

97. Eat Lots Of Green Vegetables

Not much more to say about that..

98. Prepare Meals Fresh

Forget about the chipper and the chinese while you're training for the marathon.

99. Eat Avocado

Avocado is a great food, full of good quality vegetable fats. Eat them.

100. Make Your Own Soup

A bowl of soup is a great job and welcome after a session in the winter. Buy a recipe book and make your own soups, it's easy.

101. Eat Fresh Fruit

Nothing much more to say here other than all the sugar you need you can get from fruit.

102. Stay Away From Commercial Chocolate

Popular branded chocolate is bad news. It's packed full of sugar and low grade fats. If you want chocolate buy the good quality 70% stuff.

103. Make Your Own Energy Drinks

Mix your own energy/electrolyte drinks using water, fresh juice and dioralyte

104. Use Sea Salt

Use sea salt in your food preparation. It's full of minerals your body needs.

105. Avoid Table Salt

Table salt is bad news. It has commercial man made chemicals added which are damaging to your long term health.

106. Don't Overload On Carbs

Eat good quality carbohydrates like whole grain and wild rice, wholegrain real bread, wholemeal pasta and green veg like broccoli.

107. Eat Healthy Fats

Cold pressed olive oil, coconut oil and other virgin oils in dark green bottles are best. Avoid oils like Crisp 'N Dry, Flora and other junk oils.. Eat plenty of vegetables too.

108. Avoid Animal Fats

Eat lean meat and preferably organic. Avoid prepackaged meat from the supermarket as it has gas added to the packet to keep the meat "fresh". Buy from your local butcher.

109. Avoid Too Much Dairy

Avoid going overboard on butter, cheese, yogurt and milk.

110. Take A Vitamin Supplement

Consider a good quality vitamin supplement if you need it.

111. Include Additional Quality Protein

Protein promotes muscle, ligament and tendon repair. Consider an extra 30g of protein in drink form after a training session. Go for Sunwarrior brand,

112. Avoid Getting Hungry

Keep good quality snacks at hand like fruit and homemade flapjacks to avoid the hunger demons!

113. Eat Porridge

Porridge is a great job. Prepare with milk or water and add fruit and honey to sweeten.

114. Lose The Booze

Stay out of the pub!

115. Use Spices & Herbs

Liven up your grub by using spices and herbs.

116. Drink Smoothies

Blend up your extra 30g of protein with some fruit, an egg and some ice.

117. Drink Green Tea

Drink green tea in the morning.

118. Eat Bananas

Stick a banana in the elastic of your shorts or up your sleeve for your long runs

119. Forget Commercial Energy Gels

Sports gels are bad news, especially if you become reliant on them. Ok to use them if you get stuck but try develop an alternative.

120. Make Your Own Gels

Honey, mashed strawberries and sea salt make for a natural gel alternative.

121. Eat Nuts & Seeds

Keep a bag of almonds or brazil nuts, raisins and seeds with you and snack on them during your day.

122. Eat Within 30 Mins Of Training

Make sure to eat a good substantial meal within 30 minutes of completing a long run or marathon event. It aids recovery.

123. Don't Change Your Diet Last Minute

Stick to what you know works for you and don't change it close to an event on the day. Practice your food and hydration plan and prepare the day before the event.

So there you have it.

Use these tips to form new positive habits or perfect existing ones. Altogether, small efforts and changes to your routine will help you improve your training, lose the belly, cultivate a positive mindset and achieve your marathon goals.

I hope it helps.

An expanded version of this article and subsequent more detailed articles will be available on [The Smart Runner blog](#).

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