

THE STARTING LINE

JULY 2007



WALKERS AND RUNNERS AROUND THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

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Comments and Suggestions are always! Welcome

Please feel free to contribute your thoughts in our next
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these nine tips to avoid or break through the wall, so you can finish your race at your ideal time.

Injury focus:

Iliotibial band syndrome, a.k.a. ITBS

By Denise Mann
WebMD Feature

Marked by a sharp, burning knee or hip pain, ITBS is a very common running injury among marathoners. Indeed, it's responsible for as many as 80% of all overuse pains on marathon day. The ITB is a ligament that runs along the outside of the thigh -- from the top of the hip to the outside of the knee. It stabilizes the knee and hip during running, but when it thickens and rubs over the bone, the area can become inflamed or the band itself may become irritated -- causing pain. ITBS may be caused by running on a banked surface that causes the downhill leg to bend slightly inward and stretches the band, inadequate warm-up or cool-down, running excessive distances, increasing mileage too quickly or certain physical abnormalities.

The best stretch? Place the injured leg behind the good one. If the left side is sore, cross your left leg behind your right one. Then lean away from the injured side toward your right side. There should be a table or chair that you can hold onto for balance. Hold for 7 to 10 seconds and repeat on each side 7 to 10 times. Anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen (some brand names are Motrin and Aleve) can help get the swelling down.

GETTING PAST THE WALL

ON RACE DAY

By [Gale Bernhardt](#)

During a race, everyone experiences highs and lows. Knowing this helps alleviate stress during the race. When you hit a rough patch, try to stay focused. Whatever is bothering you at that time, brainstorm possible solutions for the problem. Then, pick the best to keep you going. Follow

- **Pace yourself.** One strategy for doing this is to begin the first quarter of the event slightly slower than the average pace you hope to achieve -- each remaining quarter faster than the preceding one. This keeps you from burning out too fast. This "negative-split" strategy has produced numerous world and personal records.
- **Try not to be so hard on yourself.** During the race, ask yourself, "Am I doing the best I can at this moment?" Your answer should be "yes." You will have no apologies to make to anyone.
- **Break the race into small pieces.** Near the end of the event, when it gets difficult and your legs no longer feel fresh, make small goals for yourself. Can you run to a land mark within your vision?
- **Carry a small tube of lip balm with sunscreen.** You can, of course, use the balm on your lips to prevent chapping and sunburn, but it has a second purpose. If you feel hot spots forming on your feet, use the lip balm to reduce friction and prevent blisters. With your finger, remove a small piece of lip balm and apply it generously to the hot spot and surrounding area. Stopping to take care of a potential problem like this can save you time in the long haul.
- **Positive self-talk makes a significant influence on event performance.** Develop at least one positive mantra to use during the race. Some suggestions include: "I'm fit, I'm good, I'm fast."; "Every day, in every way, I'm better, stronger, happier."; "I'm healthy, I'm happy, I'm light on my feet."
- **H2O.** To successfully complete a marathon at the highest pace possible, it's critical to hydrate and fuel at a steady pace. When using aid stations two miles apart, consume 50 to 100 calories of energy drink and four to eight ounces of fluid at each aid station. If the race-supplied energy drink doesn't suit you, carry your own drink and drink mix or gels. It's not as convenient as using the

race-supplied drink, but it's better than an upset stomach.

- **Stay flexible.** If race day weather is hot, windy or cold, adjust your pace goals accordingly. Also, adjust your fueling and hydration plan to accommodate the conditions.
- **The wall.** Even if you hit the wall -- and have a gorilla climb on your back -- you can still recover and successfully finish the marathon. Slow your pace or do a combination of walking and running.
- **Get your energy!** If you skimped on calories and fluids before hitting the wall, walk through one or more aid stations and refuel and hydrate. Energy drinks contain calories and electrolytes that help you feel better. If you know you are a heavy sweater and need additional electrolytes, sodium in particular, carry a small baggie with electrolyte tablets with you. You'll know if you need to do this based on your long training runs. Hitting the wall in a race is tough, but follow these tips and you'll find a way to push through it, if not avoid it all together!

Gale Bernhardt was the 2003 USA Triathlon Pan American Games and 2004 USA Triathlon Olympic coach for both the men's and women's teams. Her first Olympic experience was as a personal cycling coach at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

THE PRE-RACE MEAL BY MATT FITZGERALD

Every meal is important, but no meal is more important than the one before a race. Choosing the wrong foods, eating too much or too little, or eating at the wrong time can affect your performance and possibly ruin your race, or at least make your performance less than optimal. Eating the right pre-race meal at the right time ensures that all your hard training doesn't go to waste.

The main purpose of the pre-race meal is to fill your liver with glycogen, especially if it precedes a morning race. Liver glycogen fuels

your nervous system while you sleep, and as a result, your liver is roughly 50 percent glycogen-depleted when you wake up in the morning. Your muscles, inactive during the night, remain fully glycogen loaded from the previous day.

Timing

Timing is perhaps the most important consideration. The ideal time for a pre-race meal is about four hours before the race, because it's early enough to digest and store a large amount of energy (i.e. a large number of calories), yet late enough that this energy won't be used up by race time. Most running races start early in the morning, and since sleep is also important, it's often impossible to eat a full breakfast four hours before the horn sounds. That's okay. It's usually possible to eat at least two hours out. While you won't safely be able to eat as much this close to race time, you can still eat enough.

The appropriate size of your pre-race meal depends on three factors: the duration of your race, your size and the timing of the meal. The longer the race you're competing in and the heavier you are, the larger your pre-race meal should be. The closer your pre-race meal falls to the race start, the smaller it must be. If you're able to eat four hours out, you can safely consume up to 1,000 calories. If you eat just two hours before the start, eat a smaller meal of 300 to 400 calories.

What to eat

At least 80 percent of the calories you consume in your pre-race meal should come from carbohydrates. Keep your protein, and especially your fat and fiber consumption low. These nutrients take up space that are better utilized by carbohydrate. Also avoid gas-producing foods such as onions!

Choose foods and drinks that are not only easily-digested, but also easily-consumed -- especially if you're prone to nervousness. Few athletes have their usual hearty appetite on race mornings, but the butterflies in their

stomach usually permit consumption of soft, bland foods such as oatmeal and bananas. A liquid meal such as a breakfast shake is another good choice, as long as it's high in carbohydrate and low in protein, fat and fiber. If you don't have a ritual pre-race meal, try various options and pay careful attention to the results. As with your pre-race dinner, once you've settled upon a pre-race breakfast that works well, stick with it.

****Here are my choices for the five best foods to eat (or drink) before a race:**

Bagel

A bagel makes an excellent pre-race breakfast food, not only because it's rich in carbohydrate, bland and easily-digested, but also because it's something many runners eat for breakfast routinely, hence familiar. Eat it dry or top it with something low in fat such as a light smearing of reduced fat cream cheese.

Banana

Bananas are almost all carbohydrate. A large banana contains more than 30 grams of carbohydrate, just one gram of protein and no fat whatsoever. Bananas are also high in potassium (400 mg), which is lost in sweat during running. As mentioned above, their softness and light taste make them easy to consume even with pre-race nerves, and their natural "wrapper" makes them handy for eating on the road.

Energy Bar

Energy bars such as Power Bar and Cliff Bar are made to be eaten before exercise. Most are very high in carbohydrates and low in fiber, fat and protein. The better bars also contain useful amounts of sodium, potassium and the antioxidant vitamins C and E.

There's a huge variety of energy bars on the market -- some are better than others. Avoid the high-protein, low-carb bars that have become popular in recent years. The advantage of the wide selection of bars on the market is that it's easy to find one you like and

can eat without unpleasantness before a race. Pay attention to texture too. Some bars are very chewy, and for some runners eating chewy foods tends to exacerbate the stomach churning that's associated with pre-race nervousness.

Meal Replacement Shake

I drink one or two meal replacement shakes before almost every race. Brands such as Boost and Ensure have a nearly perfect nutrition profile, they take care of energy and hydration needs, they're super-convenient, and nothing is easier to consume before a race -- even if you're extremely anxious. And they taste good.

Ensure, for example, delivers a whopping 250 calories of energy in a little eight-ounce can, including 40 grams of carbohydrate. The one downside to these beverages is their efficiency. By providing so much nutrition in such little volume, they are not as filling as solid foods and can actually leave you feeling hungry in the middle of a marathon if you rely on them solely.

Oatmeal

Like bananas, oatmeal is almost pure carbohydrate, plus soft and light in taste. It is also the most filling food among the five best pre-race foods, which is good for those wanting something substantial in their belly before they head out to burn a few thousand calories. Some runners also prefer to eat a real breakfast food for breakfast, and oatmeal certainly provides that.

There are so many factors we must think about before a big race. Following these guidelines can help you deal with one of the most important elements

Matt Fitzgerald is a certified sports nutritionist and editor of the Powering Muscles web site. (www.poweringmuscles.com).

**Just a Reminder to Everyone:
Child Abuse Prevention Aug. 12th
The Diabetes Run on Sunday
September 9th, 2007 is Cancelled.**