

# Running in a marathon?

## Be prepared with our top tips!

Before embarking on a marathon, make sure your GP has cleared you as medically fit to take part. The following points can help you with your training:

### The costume

- If you are a first-time marathon runner, don't run in a cumbersome fancy dress costume as you don't know if you can even complete a marathon without one. If you insist on wearing something unusual or fun, go for something easy, simple and lightweight – like a cape.
- Whatever fancy dress costume you decide to wear, make sure you have had enough running practice in it over long distances. It is unlikely you will be able to cope with it on the day without previous trial. Running several long runs in fancy dress beforehand will be sufficient.



- Running in a fancy dress costume will make you dehydrate and sweat more quickly than if running in a conventional outfit. Sweat can aggravate the skin so practising beforehand can help



you determine where you might feel excessive rubbing and chafing and at what distance it is likely to occur. Wear loose long sleeved/legged items of clothing under the costume. Applying petroleum jelly can make wearing your costume more comfortable.

**N.B.** If there is excessive, painful rubbing, **ABANDON** the costume!

- If you are running in a shared costume with friends, make sure you have a contingency plan! If you are running in flexion – for example as the back end of a horse, be sure to change over with your friend(s) to distribute the load or tension.
- Be sure that your costume enables you to run in an upright position and as near to normal as possible. It should fit properly and you must be strong enough to carry the load if it sits on your shoulders
- Remember – make the costume work for you and not the other way round!

## Running shoes

- You need to be wearing a good pair of trainers that are supportive and that have been worn for a few long runs before the marathon. It is worth training with two pairs of running shoes and run alternately between the two so that you have two pairs that are suitable and worn in for the day.
- Don't wear trainers that are too small. Your feet expand during exercise, so try them on with a pair of training socks and make sure there is a gap of around half a centimetre between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
- Check the width. Don't try to secure a gaping shoe by tying the laces too tightly. Laces need to be tied firmly but not so tight that circulation is restricted during exercise.



## Visualise

- Visualising the race and how your body is going to cope with the marathon is a tip for all participants – professionals and fun runners alike. Concentrate on maintaining a steady arm swing and be sure that you are striding properly.
- See yourself on the starting line and crossing the finishing tape.

## Relax

- Run with your body in a relaxed state. Your breathing should be steady and your shoulders should be relaxed.

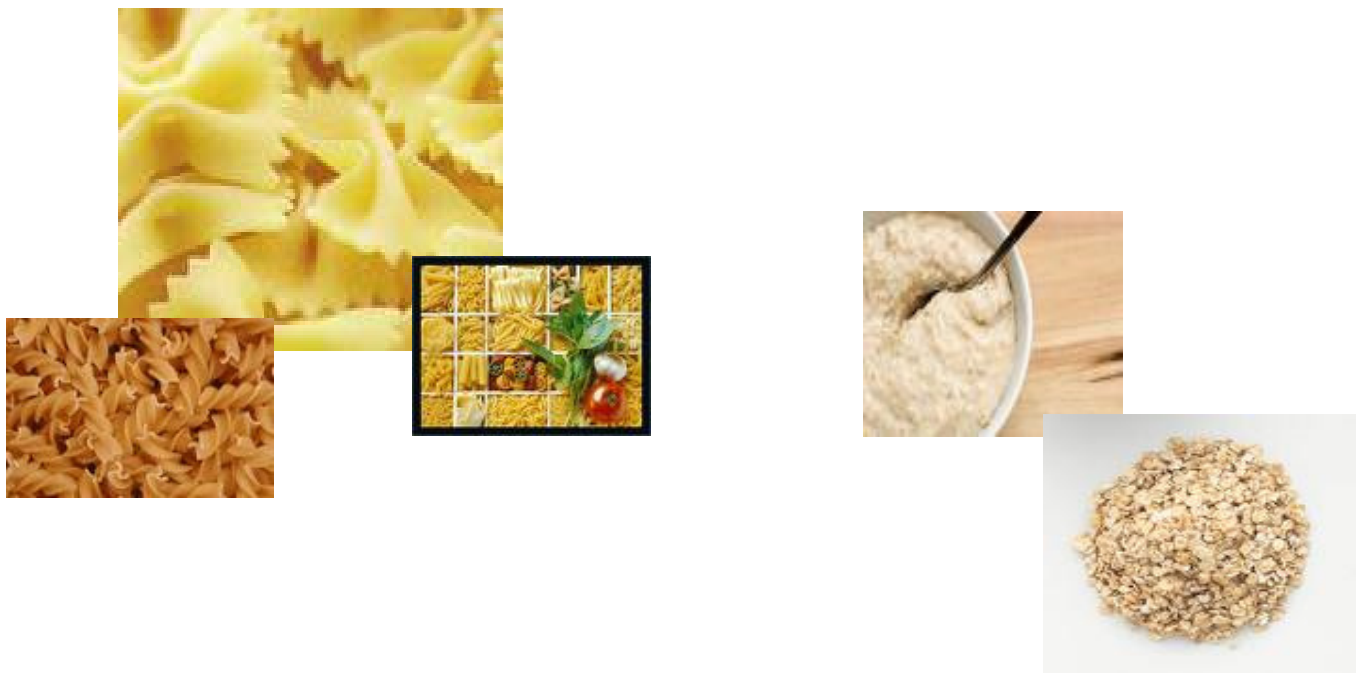
## Keep hydrated

- Most people running in costume think they will sweat too much and so drink a lot of water before and during their race. The key is to sip at water rather than gulp it down at the designated water stations. Over-hydrating could cause hyponatraemia – where you consume so much water that sodium levels in your body become dangerous and can cause you to become dizzy, disorientated, or even to pass out.
- In the week prior to the race, be sure you are sufficiently hydrated. You should aim to never reach the point of feeling thirsty.



## Diet and rest

- Know what you are going to eat the day before your race – something you have tried and tested.
- Your diet, during your training, should be a good mix of protein and carbohydrates.
- A suggested evening meal the night before can be pasta. A good breakfast on race day can be porridge. However, it is important that you know what suits your body prior to a long run.
- The week prior to the race should not involve long running sessions – shorter runs are fine but taking rest is important.
- Eating and resting well during the week before the marathon will help with the healing process needed after the big run.



## Race day preparation

- Sleep well during the week prior, as you may be too excited to sleep the night before.
- Make sure you have had breakfast.
- Make sure you have a change of clothes for after the race. Place them in a rucksack and then inside your official marathon bag - this will ensure they remain dry. Wearing comfortable and warm clothes, dry socks and underwear, and loose shoes after the race will help.
- Leave plenty of time to get to the start so you can remain calm before the race.
- Keep calm and visualise getting ready for the race and starting. Don't run too fast. Stay slow and steady, and at the pace you have practised. Look out for the official pacemakers and follow them if necessary.
- On the back of your marathon number, write down any medical conditions you have and medications you are taking. On the front of this number, put a red cross. This is to enable speedy medical attention if you were to become unwell.
- Wrap up warm with old clothes so that you can discard them while running. They all get collected for charity at the end.

- Be sure you have people to meet you at the end of the race. Marathon runners tend to stiffen up after the race and will need help getting home. Mobile phone coverage is very poor so arrange a meeting place.
- Eat a meal as soon as possible after the race.
- Don't run if you are unwell. Have the courage to put your body and self first otherwise you could be putting your body under a lot of strain and are unlikely to finish the race.
- Relax and enjoy your run.



## Post marathon recovery

There are three phases of recovery after a marathon

- Muscle ache/soreness – let this go in its own time. You will need to refuel and eat well for a whole week after the marathon to aid your body's recovery.
- Psychological recovery – you will either have a positive or negative marathon experience – elation of finishing and a realisation of your achievement or negative feelings if you dropped out.
- Return to training – take up gentle exercises, such as swimming or cycling, 6-8 weeks after the marathon. Avoid any intensive training sessions until you have made complete physical recovery.

If you are experiencing physical discomfort that doesn't appear to be subsiding, it's best to seek advice from a chartered physiotherapist at goPhysio. We are located within Saks at David Lloyd.

Call 023 8025 3317 for an appointment.

