

# Phys Ed | fit

## Your Place in the Race

### Even spectators can burn calories at the Marine Corps Marathon

Besides good shoes and smart training, every Marine Corps Marathoner this Sunday is going to need some spectator support. "Oh, the runners can feel the energy," says spokeswoman Beth Johnson. "Hearing someone cheering your name can be the push you need to get through the miles."

So, lace up, prepare to yell, and don't forget water — you're in for a workout, too.

Plan ahead by swinging by the expo (see box) and snagging a map, a critical tool if you're hoping to spot your favorite racer multiple times. Also, sign up on [Marinemarathon.com](http://Marinemarathon.com) for high-tech helpers. Map Track shows where a participant is on an online course map, and Remote Runner Tracking sends text messages or e-mails to spectators to alert them when their runner approaches significant mile markers and crosses the finish line.

And then get walking, says Jim Fraser, head coach for Team in Training, an organization affiliated with the Leukemia & Lymphoma

Society that prepares members for endurance races.

He points out that while the starting line is exciting, it's also mobbed. Instead, he recommends heading across the Memorial Bridge after the race begins and waiting near the Lincoln or Jefferson memorials. In both areas (as well as on the Mall), the course loops back on itself, giving spectators two opportunities to cheer for runners. The Mall and monuments come later in the race this year than they have in the past, which means runners will be more spread out — and easier to spot.

After the runners pass the Mall, spectators can walk back across the Memorial Bridge to watch the finish in Rosslyn, and yell like hell. "There's a small hill by the Iwo Jima Memorial, and it looks huge by the time runners get there. Crowd support seems to lift runners up the hill," Fraser says.

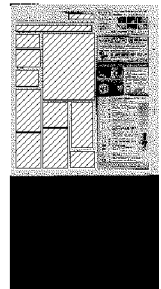
Joe Racine, vice president of the DC Road Runners Club, advocates a more active approach. He'd hop on a bike to bypass street closures and

cover more ground. On two wheels, it's easier to reach areas like Hains Point, where cheering crowds are pretty sparse. Racine wishes he could then ditch his bike and run alongside friends, but that's not allowed during the MCM. He says on-the-course support can make a big difference to weary runners.

Just being there for them can mean more than words. And whatever you do, "don't ever say, 'You're almost there!'" instructs Racine. "It doesn't help. Tell them they're looking good, instead."

Both Fraser and Racine add that the chances of finding your runners increase if you tell them ahead of time what you'll be wearing — preferably something bright — and where you'll be.

None of your pals is up for a 26.2-mile challenge? The trek is still worthwhile. "Even if you don't know a soul going, go out and watch," Fraser says. "It's something you'll never forget." AMANDA ABRAMS



**“Hearing someone cheering your name can be the push you need.”**



TONI L. SANDYS/TWP

Fans cheer and clap just past mile marker 26 during 2006's Marine Corps Marathon.

**WARMUP WELCOME**

→ Too lazy, scared or just not interested in running 26.2 miles? You're still welcome at the Marine Corps Marathon's Health & Fitness Expo at the D.C. Armory this Thursday, Friday and Saturday (see [Marinemarathon.com](http://Marinemarathon.com)). More than 200 exhibitors and vendors will be showcasing running gear and accessories, training tips, foodstuffs and more — last year, there were even free beer samples. New for 2008 is the Expert Bar: Three counters staffed by running whizzes (including Kristen Henehan, the female winner of last year's race, and race director Rick Nealis) to answer any last-minute burning questions.