

33RD MARINE CORPS MARATHON



Training Tips from Lisa Dorfman

Saluting Your Body With Your Best Training Diet

In celebrating this year's theme, Saluting the People, for me, training for Marine Corps means honoring your body, mind and soul and preparing it for the greatest day of your life.

Creating the best experience of your life nutritionally means achieving your own personal balance of food, fluids and training. Running nutrition means adapting simple scientific food formulas and experimentation with everyday foods and supplements that together create the perfect training and racing program.

Marathon nutrition requires and demands respect—without careful attention to this critical detail, considered by most experts to be at least 50% of race day success, your perfect training and mindset can be sidelined by the dreadful “bonk”—dehydration, electrolyte or glycogen depletion. Sure, getting enough carbs and drinking enough fluids during the race is certainly a start, but at least a dozen nutritional factors that contribute to successful training and racing.

Here are 10 tips to help your 2008 Marine Corps Marathon become your best race yet! Meet me at Marine Corps to find out the final two nutrition tips for your personal best plan.

- 1.** Eat Enough Calories, but not too much - Many runners simply don't eat enough, or they overeat to compensate for their perceived needs. Getting enough calories is necessary for strength, endurance, and stamina. Getting too much puts on unnecessary weight and can lead to injuries. Contributing factors are typically excess carbs, protein or lean foods prepared or topped with too much oil or fats.

To meet your minimal calorie needs, start with your weight and multiply this number by 10 calories per pound. If you eat less than this you can slow your metabolism down. About 50% of marathon runners require at least 15-20 calories per pound to stay healthy, prevent injury and avoid upper respiratory infections. Start with 10 calories per pound and monitor your weight and health and add calories as your training progresses.

2. Eat Consistently, Not Erratically - Runners are notorious for eating inconsistently, juggling work, training and family skipping meals in lieu of training, eating late night snacks to squelch hunger pangs. Make sure you stick to a regular eating schedule, preferably 3-5 meals daily, with approximately the same nutrient balance at your meal times. Save the majority of your carbs for the last few meals to replenish muscle glycogen stores and for faster digestion later in the day when compared with protein and fats.
3. Choose Wisely —Go Nutrient Dense- Eating on-the-fly, or on-the-run especially when you've skipped a meal or two, typically leads to filling with empty calorie food choices—soda, candy, chips, fast-food, sugary snacks, cereal or candy bars. Filling up on empty food leads to vitamin and mineral deficiencies, lack of energy, endurance and speed. To prevent impulsive eating, be prepared.

Choose nutrient dense snacks and foods chock full of vitamins minerals and fiber such as whole grains, cereals and pretzels, beans, bean soup and dips, fresh fruit, dried fruit, nutritious sport bars, breakfast bars, small boxes of high fiber cereal or stop for a smoothie or sub instead of skipping meals and grabbing for the first food in sight.

4. Get Complex about Your Carbohydrates - Complex carbohydrates in whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, high fiber cereal, seven-grain bread or crackers, fresh vegetables and fruits, beans, peas and corn are the best energy source for long distance running. Eat at least 3oz or approximately 240 calories of whole grains daily, up to 6oz and more for longer running days to get essential B vitamins, minerals such as magnesium and iron, and phytonutrients—plant compounds with ergogenic properties to keep energy levels high and illness at bay especially when the mileage picks up.
5. Meet Your Protein Needs - Protein is essential for your health and for keeping injury at bay while training. Protein is also essential for recovering from your tougher and longer workouts. Getting enough daily calories allows protein to be used for the essential functions and spare stored carbohydrates, glycogen for running.

Get at least half of your weight in protein grams—you'll need more when your training harder and longer. There are about 7 grams of protein for every ounce of animal protein and beans, 3-5 grams for every ½ cup of plant based sources like veggies and grains and 8 grams for each cup of low fat dairy. Sport bars like Powerbars can add 10-22 grams, while drinks can boost your daily diet two-fold.

Be careful not to overdo protein. Too much can ruin even your best runs

with side effects such as dehydration and muscle heaviness. To play it safe, do not exceed your needs with more than 1 gram of protein per pound of your body weight per day unless you have special health needs.

6. **Color your Diet** - A palate of dietary colors ensures a variety of vitamins and minerals. Get at least 5 colors in your food daily, not Gummy Bear colors, but vegetable, fruit and whole grain colors to ensure adequate vitamin, mineral and fiber intake. More than 90% of the runners that I see in practice are deficient in key vitamins and minerals required for fast running. Keep the major minerals in mind, especially iron and calcium, sodium, magnesium and potassium for proper muscle contraction, to prevent cramping and hyponatremia (low sodium levels in the blood aka over hydration).
7. **Drink, Drink, Drink** - Be prepared to drink 16-20 ounces of water or sport drink 1 to 2 hours before your long training runs, 4 to 6 ounces of fluid every 15 minutes during your run and 16 oz fluid after your run for each pound you've lost. Get a fair mix of sport drink and water to prevent over hydration, and balance each cup of soda or alcoholic beverages with a cup of water to prevent dehydration. Coffee has recently been shown to have antioxidant properties, essential for protecting your body's cells from breaking down and may also spare muscle glycogen so go ahead and have a cup of brew before heading out on the roads.
8. **Don't Overdue Fiber before Long Runs and Races** - While high fiber whole grain cereals, breads and crackers, fresh fruits and vegetables are part of the ongoing training diet, avoid more than 3-5 grams (varies from runner to runner), and too much the day before your long runs or race day to avoid misery and cramps. At those meals, maintain a high carbohydrate intake with low fiber, enriched white pasta, rice, sweet and plain potatoes and low fiber cereal like corn flakes to maintain adequate energy levels without the gastric distress.
9. **Supplement Intelligently** - When you don't have the time to get enough nutrient dense foods, high protein meals, and need a kick before or during the race, supplemental bars like PowerBars, shakes, and vitamin mineral supplements can fill the gap and enhance your training diet. Just don't take a pill, drink or gel for the heck of it—use supplements wisely.

If you can't drink enough milk, look for a calcium supplement. Don't have time to prepare high quality protein sources—have a shake, eat a sport bar or throw a scoop of whey protein in your smoothie. Can't get enough veggies or fruits, don't like whole grains? Take a multivitamin that doesn't exceed 100% of the RDAs for vitamins and minerals to prevent overdosing.

Before your longer runs, if you can eat a meal, have a bar or gel that gives you ½ your body weight in carbohydrate grams and fortify your energy levels every hour with no more than 60 grams of carbohydrates from gels, beans, sport beans or drink.

Supplements work to enhance a good diet that just can't keep up with the pace of training. To supplement intelligently, meet with a registered dietitian who is a Board Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) for more personalized guidance.

- 10.** Rest - The most important aspect of your training program will be rest. Take a rest day to restore glycogen (carbohydrates) in your muscles, replenish mental energy, and repair muscle fibers and to cross train for strength building, endurance or just for fun! Take a day off and load up on high quality protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits, veggies and low fat dairy and if you get antsy without activity, clean your house, wash your car or try a stretch class to improve your flexibility.

Lisa Dorfman, MS, RD, CSSD, LMHC, The Running Nutritionist® is an accomplished author/athlete, Board Certified Specialist in Sports Nutrition, Sports Nutritionist for the University of Miami Athletic Department and an adjunct professor in the UM exercise science department. Lisa has competed in hundreds of running and multisport events including more than 32 marathons (PR 2:52:32), and 4 MCM races. Dorfman's books, The Tropical Diet (2004) and The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide (2000) are available worldwide and at her website www.runningnutritionist.com.