

33RD MARINE CORPS MARATHON



Training Tips from MSgt Jeff Klemmer

- 1. Set a goal:** The first step is to set a realistic goal. Regardless of your fitness level, whether just to finish your first marathon or to finish with a PR, goal setting is important and will provide you the motivation to steer the course during your training cycle. Write your goal down and post it on the refrigerator, or bathroom mirror to remind you of where you want to be on race day. With goal setting also means setting milestones along the way to keep your training sharp. Pick several races during your build up to do. Anything from 5k through a 20 miler (avoid longer races as your marathon day approaches). Select goals for these races. They will measure the effectiveness of your training, and serve as confidence builders for you.
- 2. Your body knows:** As you train, it is important to listen to your body. Minor aches and pains are ok, but anything that sticks around more than a few days may be cause for you to slow down or take a few days rest. Massage therapy, stretching, Epsom salt, or ice baths can do wonders for minor aches. If those combined with rest do not help, see a doctor.
- 3. Be consistent:** Training for a marathon is different than a 5k. You can't just wing it and decide the day before that you want to tackle 26 miles. It takes time, six months to a year of commitment, depending on your level of fitness. Think of an example of a written exam in school, where you can cram all night, retain some info, and with a little luck, earn a passing grade, you cannot expect this same philosophy to work in a marathon, and still achieve the desired results.
- 4. Allow real life to interrupt:** Consistency is important, but from time to time real life gets in the way. Unless you're an elite athlete, and your income and livelihood depends on your training and racing, you can afford a little flex time in your training schedule. The balance can be tough at times, but it is important to adjust. Remember, there is a fine line between consistent and obsessive. Allow family or work commitments to take priority and adjust your running accordingly. Remind yourself that running should be fun.

5. **Cross Train:** Cross training is a great tool to help keep you sharp. While specificity training is key, cross training allows you an opportunity to work different muscle groups, allow other muscle groups to recover, and still keep your fitness levels high. Water running or swimming are great substitutes. Cross training can also provide you with a mental boost, and a renewed vigor on your daily runs. Remember to stay focused on your goal of running a marathon and not setting PR's in the pool.
6. **Strength in numbers:** There will come a point in training where you can only do so much on your own. Running with a group, or joining a running club is a great way to meet people and improve your performance. It also offers a venue to exchange training ideas. Many clubs have structured speed workouts or scheduled long runs on the weekends. Depending on their size, they can range from fitness runners to elite runners. Runners tend to be a friendly and accepting bunch. So regardless of fitness level, you should never feel as though you have to prove yourself worthy to be a part of a group.
7. **Weighing in on Nutrition:** Runners tend to be leaner than non runners, and the idea of lighter is faster is accurate to an extent. The lighter you are means the less weight you have to carry over the course of 26 miles. But keep in mind that you need to have enough energy to get you through your marathon. Eat healthy foods, but don't deprive yourself to the basic food needs. You can afford to splurge at times, especially when preparing for you longer runs. Remember, weight is just a number. Don't let the scale determine the difference between a good day and a bad day.
8. **Speedwork:** In your marathon prep speedwork is not as important to you as your longer runs. A quality speed session or tempo run once a week should be enough to keep the zip in your legs. Longer intervals such as mile repeats or longer will get your legs trained to sustain a given pace over the longer distances.
9. **Taper:** The taper for a marathon is very important. Now is the time to reduce your mileage, and let the legs recharge. This is also the time to reflect on all the hard work it took to get this far. Be proud of yourself for getting this far! Assess your goals, and visualize yourself running in the race. Drink plenty of fluids the week before the race, eat well, and get plenty of rest. If you find that you just can't sit still, then try walking. The rest during the last few days before the race is crucial.
10. **Race Day!** Traditionally the MCM takes place the same day as daylight savings ends. This alone is enough to confuse me. Set your clocks, and make sure you give yourself plenty of time get to the starting line. The MCM

is a terrific race, and it is easy to get caught up in the energy of the crowd. Be careful not to waste your energy here. Stick to your pre-race plan. Today is your day so enjoy it to the fullest.

MSgt Jeff Klemmer has been a competitive runner for over 20 years. He has competed on nearly a dozen All Marine Running teams. He was a medal winner at the All Armed Forces Cross Country Championships, a top 3 Marine finisher in the Plymouth Half Marathon, a veteran of several Marine Corps Marathons, including a 2:38 marathon PR, and completed a 50 mile Ultra Marathon.