

33RD MARINE CORPS MARATHON



Training Tips from Mel Williams

- 1.** Training - Use several different pairs of shoes during training. This may help prevent running injuries associated with possible mechanical defects in one pair of your running shoes. Vary your training, but incorporate a long run every week or two. The long run is the heart of a marathon training program.
- 2.** Race pace - Learn to pace yourself. Physiologically, the best way to run a marathon is to set an even pace throughout and have equal half-marathon splits. To predict your marathon time, race shorter races about a month or less than the marathon. For a 10K race, multiple your time by 4.67 to predict your marathon time. For a half-marathon, multiple your time by 2.1. For example, a 10K time of 45:30 would predict a marathon time of about 3:32:30; a half-marathon time of 1:35 would predict a marathon time of about 3:19:30. For first-time marathon runners, one recommended strategy is to use the walk-run protocol popularized by Jeff Galloway. For example, one protocol is to walk for one minute at every mile marker. This strategy helps prevent the debilitating fatigue often associated with the last 6-8 miles of the marathon.
- 3.** Nutrition - Increase your daily intake of carbohydrate, particularly whole grains, fruits and vegetables, during training. An increase in daily protein intake is also recommended, with the balance coming from dietary fat. Carbohydrate is the major fuel used during training, and both carbohydrate and protein may help facilitate muscle recovery. Practice fluid and carbohydrate intake, both as water and sports drinks, during training so that you are comfortable with the procedure during the marathon. Know the sport drink that will be used in your marathon, and train with it. You may also wish to experiment with carbohydrate gels (some contain caffeine; see comment below on Running a faster marathon); if the marathon provides gels at points on the course, try to experiment with the specific brand.

4. Running a faster marathon - Incorporate faster running workouts, particularly tempo runs, into your training schedule. Buy a pair of racing flats. Wear them in increasingly longer races (5K, 10K, 10M, 1/2 marathon) to see if you are biomechanically suited to wear racing flats in a marathon. Compared to regular training shoes, racing flats can save you 2-3 minutes over the course of a full marathon. Lose excess body fat. If you have excess body fat to lose, a loss of each 1 percent of body fat could improve running performance by about 1 percent. A 150-pound, 4-hour marathon runner who lost 3 percent of body fat (4.5 pounds) could run the marathon about 7 minutes faster (.03 x 240 minutes). Experiment with taking caffeine prior to your long runs and record how you feel. Research suggest that caffeine supplementation, approximately 400 milligrams or the amount in two Vivarin tablets or two large coffees), may help improve aerobic endurance performance. Caffeine use is legal, but some question its use on ethical grounds. Load up with carbohydrates and rest for 3 days prior to the marathon. The carbohydrate intake should be based on body weight and should approximate about 4 grams of carbohydrate daily for each pound of body weight. For example, a 150-pound runner would consume about 600 grams of carbohydrate daily. Experiment with carbohydrate before your long run in training.

5. Race Day - Rise early, about 3-4 hours before the race, and consume a high-carbohydrate breakfast containing about 3-4 grams of carbohydrate per pound body weight. Drink about one or two pints of fluid, such as a sports drink, within the hour preceding the race. Use body glide or Vaseline for any body parts that may chafe; you may learn where you chafe most on your long training runs. Have a large plastic garbage bag or a rain poncho to keep you warm and dry in case of inclement weather before the start. Please dispose of properly off the side of the race course. Apply protective sun block, particularly to the face and lips, if it will be a sunny day.

In 1976, Mel Williams began what has turned into 33 years worth of participation in the Marine Corps Marathon. Despite having run the New York City Marathon two weeks earlier, and having stayed up partying until 2:00 a.m. the night before the inaugural race, Williams finished in 2:51:41, 86th place overall. At the MCM, he has consistently finished in the top of his age group, and won his category several times. He was inducted into the MCM Hall of Fame in 2001.