

NUTRITION for Half-Marathon during Summer/Fall Training

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A half-marathon is not half of a race. It is a long distance race of 13.1 miles

- 1) Appetite differences between summer and fall
 - a. **Appetite can be decreased by the effects of hot conditions**
 - b. **Comfort foods may be pursued in colder conditions**
 - c. **The effort of weight control may be perceived more during colder conditions**
- 2) Your relationship with your scale
 - a. **It is important to monitor your weight but remember, it's just a number**
 - b. **Body fat is a better indicator of health**
 - c. **Use the scale to monitor fluid loss during training (regardless of the season)**
 - d. **Progressive weight loss can be expected if you were overweight**
 - e. **Strength/Endurance vs. mass (airplane example)**
 - f. **The fit of your clothes is the better indicator of change than just your scale**
- 3) The salt trick
 - a. **Contrary to public health concerns, you can intentionally use salt to maintain your serum sodium levels**
 - b. **What kind of sweat do you have (excessive, nothing but water?, salty and gritty?)**
 - c. **Salt can help with each of these situations**
 - d. **Careful with pickle juice (small amounts and diluted are safer)**
- 4) Hydration
 - a. **Research is now indicating that it may be safer to drink to thirst (as opposed to fluid loading)**
 - b. **Simple logic explains that excessive fluid loss without replacement impairs you and your effort**
 - c. **Fluid replacements have a purpose (fluid and sodium)**
 - d. **Potassium is not a loss as expected (you lose 16x more sodium than potassium in your sweat)**
- 5) Cramping
 - a. **Can occur with one (or more): isolated muscle fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, fluid loss**
 - b. **Muscle fatigue cannot be corrected with fluid replacement (cramping can)**
 - c. **Do NOT drink straight water during temps over 60 degrees and/or long duration exercise**
 - d. **Hyponatremia is a deadly situation and fluid replacement may not be able to correct it (so this is where the salty sweaters need to learn to consume high salt the night before a long run)**
- 6) Fuel tank empty
 - a. **Consider if you are restricting your intake too much?**
 - b. **Your training session each time will build on itself but only if you complete the distance**
 - c. **Fueling yourself (in other words: giving yourself permission to eat) is required to safely train**
 - d. **Making weight loss your priority over your upcoming race will make for a long season**
- 7) Fuel tank overfilled
 - a. **Incorrect timing of meals will impair your training session**
 - b. **Seek to complete your food intake 1 hour prior to running (liquids empty quicker)**
 - c. **High fat items take the longest to empty the stomach compared to carb**
 - d. **High protein items are still faster often that high fat items however they can impair also**
- 8) The danger of entitlement
 - a. **This is a struggle that many seasoned runners face; you are likely no different**
 - b. **Just because you completed a certain distance does not entitle you to excess**
 - c. **Consider how your are treating alcohol (habit? Reward?) and know that alcohol has never improved a runner's health or training ☺**
 - d. **One reward you can begin planning now is what meal you will eat for dinner after your race**

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- 9) Quick answers to common questions about training for a half-marathon
- a. **No – you do not need to carb load at every meal**
 - b. **Yes – please have carbs at each meal**
 - c. **Yes – you can train on a low carb meal plan (20 g or less per day) but your effort will be monumental and we won't get to see the athlete you could have been**
 - d. **Yes – they have done research on fat-loading marathoners but it took nearly a year to adapt**
 - e. **Yes – you can pursue the Paleo Diet but remember that your need of carb intake remains high during training and scrutinize what carbs and how you think you can consume them in a timely manner**
 - f. **Yes – you can pursue the Weight Watchers program but don't be conflicted about the points you consume before lunch on long-distance Saturday runs**
 - g. **Caffeine is used by many runners but you have to know if you tolerate it**
 - h. **Fluids with caffeine or alcohol do promote a fluid loss**
 - i. **One can of regular cola = 12.0 ounces consumed = 1.5 ounce fluid loss**
 - ii. **One can of regular beer = 12.0 ounces consumed = 4.7 ounce fluid loss**
 - iii. **One cup of coffee – depends on the strength and amount consumed**
 - i. **Studies indicate that half-marathoners do not require calorie intake during the race**
 - i. **Keep that relative – if you are out there greater than 2 hours then you may benefit**
 - ii. **In other words: you do not have to train with carb gels, chews, etc**
 - j. **Eating after running**
 - i. **If you are exercising greater than 1 hour then you can benefit from a recovery snack**
 - ii. **Recall that it is a snack, not a meal**
 - iii. **The goal is to consume ~50 g carb**
 - iv. **Protein content is beneficial but not the emphasis, carbs are**
 - v. **Glycogen replacement is key; the body will recover it with or without your help but the resynthesis of glycogen within 30 minutes is the most beneficial**

NUTRITIONAL GOALS

- **Adequate calories (performance issues)**
- **Adequate carb (not the time to go low carb and expect performance improvement)**
 - **140# female can utilize 318-445 g (5-7 g/kg) per day while in a marathon program**
 - **180# male can utilize 409-573 g (5-7 g/kg) per day while in a marathon program**
- **Adequate protein**
 - **140# female would need 51-64 g if no exercise / 70-89 g if moderate intensity exercise**
 - **180# male would need 65-82 g if no exercise / 90-115 g if mod intensity exercise**
- **Low calorie, carb, or protein intake will present itself as excessive fatigue**

FLUID LOSS

- **One 12-ounce can of cola = 1.4 fluid ounces lost**
- **One 12-ounce can of beer = 4.7 fluid ounces lost**
- **One 8-ounce cup of coffee = undetermined (depends on brew strength)**

NUTRITIONALLY CONTROVERSIAL HOT TOPICS

- **detox diets**
- **low carb (20 g per day)**
- **excessive protein**
- **intermittent fasting**
- **Paleo Diet**