

Stafford Half Marathon Pre-Race Training Tips *10 tips when training up to the event*

The training information below has been provided by Clare Skelton, Stafford Half Marathon 2003 Ladies Race Winner. Please note: this training information is provided only as a guide.

1. In the weeks leading up to the Half Marathon, build up your training gradually. Increase EITHER the time, intensity or duration of your training. Your body will not adapt to increasing all three components at once and remember don't increase your training if you are not ready to do so.
2. Avoid training hard on consecutive days; your body requires steady RECOVERY sessions. Recovery training will break down the waste products in your muscles, increase endurance and alleviate muscle soreness. Walking and swimming are great forms of recover training.
3. Remember that 'running' is not the only way of training for the Half Marathon. Cardiovascular CROSS TRAINING will help increase Cardiovascular Fitness, strength and will help prevent impact and over-use injuries. Add variation to your training by brisk walking, swimming, cycling, or using CV gym equipment such as the rower, stepper, elliptical or cross trainer.
4. Make sure you have a complete REST day at least once a week, this will enable your body to recover from the training you are doing, allow any damaged tissues to repair and prevent fatigue.
5. Try to do some SHORT RUNS at a quicker pace than you will be running in the half marathon. For example if you estimate that you will be running 10minute miles in the half marathon, in training try running 5 miles at 9.30 minute mile pace. These sessions will mean that your body should easily be able to cope with the demands of running at the slower half marathon pace.
6. Try to incorporate some PACE CHANGE sessions into your training. Initially alternating between brisk walking and jogging will increase your endurance fitness; incorporating brisk walking will enable you to train for longer. As your fitness increases you can alternate between jogging and running, if able, between running steady and running hard. Pace change sessions are not only a great way of improving your endurance base but they also help train the body to tolerate the build up of lactate acid, the substance which makes your muscles ache when you train.
7. Make sure you EASE DOWN training a week before the Half Marathon. It is too late at this stage to experience a training gain or to benefit from working hard or increasing your mileage. However, training steady will maintain your fitness level and will prepare the body for the demands of the half marathon.
8. 13.1 miles is a long way, so make sure you wear a specialist pair of 'running' trainers for both training and competing. SPECIALIST TRAINERS will cushion your feet, reduce impact and help prevent injury. Both 'Mammoth Sports' in Milford and 'Up and Running' in Stafford are specialist running stores offering expert advise.
9. Make sure you eat plenty of foods that contain CARBOHYDRATE, such as, pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals and bread. Carbohydrate will convert into energy essential for training and recovering from exercise.
10. While in training, it is important to keep HYDRATED. Try to drink water regularly throughout the day, during training and after training. Dehydration will lead to fatigue, which will have a negative effect on training.