

## **Energy Replenishment and Hydration: Nutrition is a component of marathon success!**

One of the best pieces of advice regarding marathon training and consistent preparation for a successful marathon is to eat and hydrate intelligently. Having an informed energy replenishment and hydration game plan going into your marathon/half-marathon is only possible if you are practicing and adapting during the training period. You need to train your digestive tract to manage food and fluids while running. Following are tips to help you develop this aspect of your training.

- 1) **Consistency in nutritional intake!** Endurance athletes need adequate quantities of nutrition on a regular basis for maximum functioning of muscles. Sports nutritionists recommend 55% carbs, 30% fats, and 15% protein on a daily basis for distance runners. Carbo-loading needs to happen not just the night before the marathon, but rather during the months prior to the marathon. Total body energy requirements during sustained exercise increase 10-20 times above resting values.
- 2) **Be selective!** Make sure your food sources are good quality calories that provide nutrients, not junk calories (ie: almonds or another nut or seed instead of potato chips). Plan to consistently eat nutrient rich foods.
- 3) **Pre and post long runs!** Absorb adequate amounts of carbohydrates and hydrate ahead of your run. Plan to replenish carbohydrates within the first hour of completing your long run. Incorporate some protein for muscle repair. Continue to hydrate too!
- 4) **During long runs!** Use a variety of energy replenishment products along with water and sports drinks to determine what produces the best results for sustained energy. Figure out which specific energy replenishment products or foods agree well with you and are absorbed quickly to give your muscles the fuel (glycogen) they need. Some individuals use real food in the mix with great success. Examples: graham crackers, gummy bears, orange slices. Make sure you try the sports drink and energy gels that will be offered on the marathon course during your training.
- 5) **Drink on the run!** On long runs, decide if you will stop running while taking in fluids or whether you can drink and run at the same time. Train with a fuel belt to keep fluids easily accessible.
- 6) **Trust your thirst level!** Conventional wisdom in the field of running a marathon maintained that the feeling of thirst meant one was already too dehydrated (2% dehydration is typical and will not endanger the trained healthy runner). In more recent years, there are some sports research experts who found through their research with endurance athletes that thirst is actually a very accurate signal of when one needs to hydrate.
- 7) **Frequent replenishment!** It is better to hydrate and refuel more frequently during distance training. Experiment to see if you respond better to 20 or 30- minute increments for replenishing energy. Hydration will need to be more frequent on hot-weather days and/or for individuals who perspire profusely
- 8) **You are an experiment of one!** Get as much information as you can on these two subjects and then put them to the test while you are training. You can become your own best expert in order to give your body what it needs to perform successfully. The specific products that work for someone else may not work for you.

If the Shoe Fits carries a full-line of energy replenishment and electrolyte replenishment products as well as fuel belts. Several staff members would be happy to share their experience as it relates to running a marathon.