

April/May, 2009

INTRODUCTIONS / TIMELINES / SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE TRAINING PLAN

Greetings all! It is a privilege for me to be serving as the PEI Marathon Coach. I look forward to the training to come and helping those of you with training questions. To help get the discussion going, I will be preparing monthly articles on general training principles and offer hints and tips to help you get the most out of your training.

The PEI marathon weekend is October 16 to 18, 2009 and will feature the MRSB Marathon; the Brown's Volkswagen Corporate/Team relay; the Half-Marathon Run and Walk; the Confederation Bridge 10K run, and 10K walk; and Bens Smart 5K run and 5K walk. With nice running weather returning, it's a good time to begin getting in the easy base-building runs in preparation for your event on race weekend. If you are a first-timer for any of these distances, it is important to do a bit of planning in advance of starting your training program. For those doing the full marathon, usual training plans are in the range of 18 to 24 weeks. As such, the 24 week program would begin in early May, and the 18 week program in mid June. Half-marathon training programs typically run from 12 to 16 weeks in duration, and the 5K and 10K can range anywhere from 6 weeks to 12 weeks.

Training for a distance race can be just as challenging as actually competing one. There are many places to find training plans: books, online, in magazines, from your running club, to name but a few. Selecting the right training plan is an important component of success on race day. Here are a few factors to consider when selecting an appropriate training plan:

- As with any exercise activity, consult your physician and get medical clearance before attempting any training plan.
- Many training plans offer a suggested base level of conditioning before attempting the actual schedule. Make sure you can comfortably complete this base load before starting the training plan.
- A good training plan will build weekly distance totals (a.k.a. volume) gradually (5% to 10% a week) and will focus on endurance first while volume is increased. Speed work during volume build-up opens the door to injury.
- Rarely does one size fit all. Therefore, a generic training plan should be considered a template. Adjustments are to be expected. If the schedule must be modified, try not to stack back-to-back hard workouts. Your body needs rest and recovery as part of the training process.
- Missed workouts: Life is unpredictable. If a workout is missed, the best advice is to write it off. It's gone, over. Treat it as an extra rest day. Do not try to compensate by adding extra kms to the rest of your workouts for the week.

If you want further guidance, I am more than happy to help you select a suitable training program for your race.

I wish you all a wonderful training cycle, and I look forward to all the fun running to come.

Happy Trails!
Coach Jack