

On Your Mark, Get Set, Run For Good Health!

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U *C San Diego Experts provide tips for San Diego Rock N' Roll Marathoners*

As San Diegans get ready and set to run the Rock N' Roll Marathon this Sunday, June 5, UC San Diego cardiology and sports medicine experts offer these health and safety tips for runners of all ages, from 12 to 80 plus.

Before the Race

- → **Know the Route:** Drive, cycle or look at a race map to familiarize yourself with the course. This will reduce anxiety and help you pace yourself mentally and physically during the race.
- → **Sleep Well:** Get good quality and quantity sleep the entire week before the marathon. If you're anxious and have trouble dozing off the night before the marathon, but are generally well rested, you'll be a step ahead.

Race Day

- → **Morning stretch:** Stretch & stride a little and focus on positive thoughts. A warm-up run generally isn't necessary and will probably make you start off too fast.
- → **Prepare for the weather:** In cold weather, dress in layers that you can shed as you run. Avoid cotton which traps moisture next to the skin and can chill you in a hurry. Inner layer fabrics should wick your body's moisture away, while the outer layer should repel cold, wind or rain. Don't forget to wear a sweat proof sunscreen (minimum SPF 30).
- → **Prevent chafing:** Use a petroleum-based product or other lubricant on your thighs and near your armpits (where a bra or tank top might rub) to help prevent chafing.
- → **Water:** Hydrate often and early. Make sure you are well-hydrated going into the race, particularly in warm weather, and take advantage of the aid stations along the way. Water is always good but sports drinks provide carbohydrates and electrolytes in addition to fluids.
- → **Go with what you know:** Don't try anything new on race day. Don't wear new shoes or clothing. The result may be blisters or chafing. Stick with beverages and foods that are familiar.

- → **Your team:** Have a support person(s) along the course, especially at a vulnerable mile point for you, whether to give you a pair of dry socks, carbohydrate source or just verbal encouragement.
- → **Relax:** Visualize a beautiful, fun run.
- → **Smile:** When you finally see that finish line up ahead, only go for that final sprint if you have trained with sprinting on your long runs. But don't forget to look up and smile for the photographs!

Nutrition

Before the race: Drink plenty of fluids so that you enter the race well-hydrated. What you eat the night before and the morning of the race should be familiar, comforting food that is typical of your usual pre-running meals. For dinner, enjoy a high carbohydrate meal with some protein, such as pasta, thick-crust light-cheese pizza, rice and beans, rice and veggies, or lentils. Your morning meal should be low in fat, include a carbohydrate and protein, and be eaten at least an hour before start time. The purpose of the meal is to provide enough blood glucose to keep you alert, as well as fuel your muscles in the beginning of the race. Good breakfast choices are:

- → A large glass of orange juice, three pieces of toast with a few teaspoons of peanut butter, a banana and a cup of tea with sugar and milk
- → One or two poached eggs or low-fat cottage cheese on toast
- → Cereal and low-fat milk with fresh fruit
- → Pancakes with fruit and syrup (no butter) and a large glass of skim milk

During the race: With any endurance event longer than 90 minutes, an athlete will benefit from carbohydrate ingested intermittently. You can increase your stamina by consuming 100-300 calories/hour during the marathon. Snacks should be made of easy-to-carry, easy-to-eat carbohydrates. These foods should have a high glycemic index, which means they will be absorbed quickly to provide energy. Examples are sports drinks, orange segments, bananas, energy bars, sports gels or other similar products.

After the race: Refuel muscle glycogen immediately after the race, preferably within the first 15 minutes. There is a two to four hour window of opportunity where muscles will refuel maximally. Drink and eat carbohydrates like juice, yogurt, fruit, bagels, pretzels or have a high carb meal. And rehydrate.

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