

Hi folks,



I am using the email list that Pastor Randy used to contact those who expressed interest in running the Prince William half marathon on October 1st. Pastor Randy asked me, as an experienced marathoner, to give those of you who are new to running, or not a serious runner, some tips and basic info to help you.

What do you need to train for the half marathon?

Running shoes: A half marathon and the miles of training for it, means that you need a good pair (or two) of running shoes and advice from experienced salespeople on the type of running shoe that's best for your individual needs. Expect to pay \$80-125 for a good pair of running shoes that will last for 300-450 miles. If you already own a good pair of running shoes that you are satisfied with, buy them where ever you can get a good price. But if you want help in choosing a shoe, go to a "running store", like Potomac River Runners, or The Running Store (Gainesville) where the sales people are experienced runners themselves; or even REI, but preferably not Dick's Sporting Goods and definitely not WalMart or other stores without knowledgeable sales people.

Clothing: Wear shirts and shorts designed for running. They will be artificial polyester type material that wicks away the moisture from your body, not cotton. Wash them separately from other clothes in cold water on casual or delicate cycle and without fabric softener. Drip dry or delicate dry cycle.

Nutritional supplements: You need electrolytes, in addition to water, to recover from a long, hot, and sweaty run. Running stores carry a selection of chewable bite size products or powder to mix with water that have electrolytes and/or carbs and some protein for recovery. I personally don't like individually packaged gels, as they are sticky and messy trying to open and consume while running. Eat half a banana or something similar a half hour before running if you want. After a long, hard run, I reward myself with carbs, fruit, cookies, etc. Fruit is better than drinks with sugar or even fruit juice, as the whole fruit has fiber, which slows the rush of fructose into your blood stream.

How long and how far to run while training: Increase the length and speed of your runs slowly over time. Don't do one long run a week and hardly anything the rest of the week. Never have your long run be more than 1/3 of your weekly total. Better to spread your running over the course of the week. Not necessarily every day, but at least 3-4 times a week. Personally, I run 6 days a week if possible and rest on Sabbath. I alternate hard and easy days. One day for speed, running laps around a track at faster than half marathon speed, alternating with slower recovery laps. One day running several miles at race pace. And one day a week for a long run, gradually increasing the length of the run each week.

Personally, I don't use a heart monitor and I run alone on paved residential roads. I listen to audio books on my ipod. If you can find a running partner or group to keep you motivated, that's fine. The half marathon will be partially on the battlefield, but it will be paved.

Sun and showering: Running outdoors is a good way to get the benefits of sunshine. But if possible, wait 15+ minutes to shower, so the vitamin D on the surface of your skin can be absorbed into your body and not washed away. Running on your lunch break poses drawbacks, because when you rush to shower, your body is still producing heat and sweat that will continue after you return to work. I know it sounds hard, but in this hot, humid weather, try getting used to taking a cold shower. It will feel more refreshing and will cool down your body faster.

Stretching: Personally, I don't stretch. If you do stretch, run slowly first for a few minutes, so that you are not stretching cold muscles. It's also helpful to stretch after your run, to loosen up your tightened muscles.

