**How to Run an Ultra Marathon**

**Instructions**

1. Develop a big base building up your mileage. Increased your mileage gradually, not more than 10 percent per week.
2. Schedule a number of "training races" that are shorter than your targeted distance so that you can learn how to consume plenty of calories and liquids during your ultra race. During your training, practice eating and drinking the same foods and liquids you will be consuming during the race and stay away from trying anything new and different during the race. Gastrointestinal problems and cramping are often ultrarunners' nemeses. Both can be prevented through proper training and taking in sufficient amounts of salts, carbohydrates, and liquids. Each runner has a unique disposition, so you will have to experiment to find out what works best for you. It is a common strategy among ultrarunners to weave a number of "training" races into their schedules. Training races can either be organized events or group runs that challenge you to perform at a threshold pace. Running such prep races helps to develop your efficiency, speed, strength, and endurance that are important to ultrarunning
3. Set aside your preconceptions and to follow a structured program leading to your ultra, retaining some flexibility to account for weather, stave off any potential injuries, and to accommodate work, relationship, and family commitments.
4. Harness your drive. You need to have your heart set on finishing to complete an ultra and the challenge it presents
5. Find an experienced ultra-running friend, acquaintance, or coach who can harness your drive and arm it with her or his knowledge and advice to make your desire, your ambition, your dream get closer to your reality
6. Running an ultra is all about stress management. A key ingredient to successful training is to condition yourself to adjust to hard and/or long workouts with relatively quick recovery. Try working back-to-back long runs into your training schedule. For example, if your goal is to run a 50k, you may work up to doing a Saturday run of 20 miles and a Sunday of 15, or other various combinations. On weekdays, you may want to roll back the mileage and focus on recovering through active rest and cross training, as well as some speed training, hill workouts, and some shorter tempo runs. Weight training, swimming, and other activities that strengthen your upper body and build muscle mass without impact on the joints will help to round out your ultramarathon training.
7. Know the terrain of your planned ultra. More so than shorter races, ultramarathons require sustained concentration and focus so, to make it easier to keep your focus on the day of the race it is helpful to run some or all of the course prior to the event. At least get a course map and study the topography to learn where the major hills and challenges lie. Try to reduce your background stress level as you enter the final week of the race and make some quiet time to visualize the course
8. Taper your training and allow your body to mend any strains and work out some of the toxins that build up from extreme training. The reduced output will probably result in a slight weight gain, which is actually beneficial for longer ultras because the reserve comes in handy after your body runs out of glycogen, the fuel your muscles use to keep you moving. It is also recommended to get used to waking up at the hour at which you will be rising on race day
9. In "racing" your first ultra, the most important thing you can do is to slow down and focus on maintaining a manageable pace, one that you can sustain throughout the event. You should run your own race. Ultras are rarely raced, which adds to the noncompetitive, friendly atmosphere that surrounds most ultra events
10. As you do all of this training and racing, listen carefully to your body. Ease off if you feel you are hitting a lull in your training. You may be overdoing it or suffering from the beginnings of an injury.
11. Think about the proper clothing, shoes, and equipment you will be using for the race. Unique to ultras, you will need to consider such items as a flashlight or headlamp for running in the dark, lubricant, nipple covers, hydration, gels and/or energy bars, rain and sun protection, hats, and gaiters. If the ultra you will be running allows for drop bags at different points along the course, then you will need to think about what spare supplies you will want to place in those bags. Your running shoes should not be brand new, but you don't want to run in a shoe is too broken down either. Because your feet are apt to swell during your ultra, it is advisable to wear ½ size larger than normal.

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