

Beta Blockers and Running Performance – August 2, 2016

Approximately 20 years ago in my early 50's, I was diagnosed with glaucoma. Under the care of my ophthalmologist, the effects of glaucoma have been kept in check with the use of various eye drops. A few years ago my doctor suggested that I try a drop that contained a beta blocker. He warned that fatigue is a reported side effect and possibly could affect my running. I decided to try the drops and found that they noticeably affected my performance if I tried to run fast. My doctor immediately prescribed a non-beta blocker alternative. I realize that some runners may have conditions that make it necessary to use beta blockers. But I suggest in any case that you tell your doctor you are a runner. Also sometimes drug interactions can cause beta blockers to have an extra strong effect on your running and you should ask about this too. Phil Krajewski's story is an excellent example of what could happen to a runner who does not know that some eye drops could contain a beta blocker. Phil's story is here.

Phil Krajewski's Story^a

The past six weeks I have had a series of very difficult training runs. I had no clue what was happening as these were the first extended group of bad workouts that I have had since I started running 12 years ago. I am 69 and I started to have wild thoughts like 'age was setting in', and that 'my time for crisp competitive running was over'. The sluggish workouts, the physical unresponsiveness, started to affect me psychologically and I thought that I would not be able to recover. Then I noticed that the only new thing that coincided with the six weeks was that I had started taking Timolol (a type of beta blocker) for my glaucoma. I initially did not want to take Timolol (I was taking other drops) but my doctor wanted me to try it before I had a laser procedure known as SLT. I resisted because I knew one of the side effects was possible shortness of breath and dizziness. However I also discovered that extreme fatigue was also a side effect. I stopped taking the Timolol two days ago and I had my first 'normal' non sluggish run since I started Timolol 6 weeks ago. I had a very gratifying 10 miler with a 3 mile tempo at a 7:15 pace and I shouted when I walked through my door I'M BACK. I might need a few more runs to enlarge the sample but my feelings are that the Timolol (beta blocker) was the cause. Phil Krajewski Age group Philadelphia Marathon winner the past two years

^a<http://community.runnersworld.com/topic/running-with-beta-blockers>