

HEALTH & WELLNESS

When the Race Goal Rises From 6 Miles to 26

Ramping Up for Longer Races Requires Physical Training and Motivational Tricks

By SANETTE TANAKA

For the record number of American runners who completed an official race event last year, the questions often start not long after they cross the finish line: “What’s my next challenge?” and “How much further can I push myself?”

But data show that the bulk of runners are heavily concentrated in shorter races, specifically 5 and 10 kilometers. That could be because many who aspire to race longer distances struggle with how to successfully ramp up training and stay motivated.

Of the 15.5 million race finishers in 2012, 40% completed a 5k (or 3.1-mile) race, while 10% finished a full 10k, according to Running USA, an industry nonprofit organization based in Colorado Springs, Colo. By contrast, only 3% accomplished a full marathon.

Runners may want to sign up for a second race well in advance of their first 5k or 10k, says Tom McGlynn, founder of Runcoach.

“Going from 3 miles to 6 miles—a 5k to 10k—that’s logical. Going from 6 miles to 26 miles is a whole different world of stress,” says Tom McGlynn, a three-time Olympic marathon trials qualifier and founder of Runcoach, an online training program for runners. Longer distances require a much different mind-set and approach than shorter ones, he says, with more focus needed on muscle stamina and endurance.

Doctors and running coaches advise beginners to transition slowly. Some recommend running regularly at a 5k to 10k level for six months to a year before training for a marathon, while others suggest dedicating one to two years to building a base.

All agree—don’t wait too long af-

ter a first race to start working on the next one.

Mr. McGlynn says he advises runners to sign up for a second race well in advance of their first 5k or 10k. That way, he says, they immediately have another goal to train for.

“A 10k doesn’t take a lot of rest. A day or so and you can get back into training,” says Bill Roberts, director of the University of Minnesota St. John’s Hospital Family Medicine Residency and medical director for the Twin Cities Marathon.

Generally, runners shouldn’t increase their mileage by more than 10% each week and should run three to four times per week, Dr. Roberts says. One of those runs should be longer and paced more slowly to help runners increase their endurance and stamina. “If you’re a new runner, it takes a long time to toughen the tissues,” he says.

One problem runners face is a lack of interim-length race opportunities. Last year, there were roughly 60 12ks and 320 15ks—a fraction compared with 3,200 10ks and 1,900 half-marathons, according to Running USA.

Boredom and mental burnout can also trip up beginners who are moving to longer distances, says Jennifer Van Allen, a running coach and co-author of “Runner’s World Big Book of Marathon and Half-Marathon Training.” “Go with a buddy, go with a group, run with music, run without, run with a watch, run on trails or run on the road,” she says.

Half-marathon and marathon training plans also introduce a new component to the weekly schedule: the long run. These typically start with 5 or 6 miles and build up to near-race distance by the last quarter of training, says John Honerkamp, manager of runner products and services and coach at New York Road Runners.

“For a beginner, the long runs each week are pretty daunting,” Mr. Honerkamp says. “Focus on a sign, focus on the people you’re running with,” he says, which will help combat monotony. Another strategy: Dedicate each mile to a friend or family member. Or if it is windy, think of pushing against the wind. “It might seem silly, but if you’re on mile 22, you need these mind tricks,” Mr. Honerkamp says.

Overweight and older runners should check with their doctor before starting a training plan. “If you’re overweight, it is probably good to

A 16-Week Marathon Training Plan

A guide for people who have just completed a 10k race and have been running for at least three months.*

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Week 1	Run 3 miles, average pace	Run 3 miles; do intervals, run hills or vary speeds	Off	Run 3 miles, regular pace	Off	Off	Run 6 miles
Weeks 2 to 16	Continue 3-mile runs; best day to replace with cross-training or a rest day	Build up to replace with cross-training or a rest day		Build up to max 8 miles by week 11		Run 3 miles, relaxed pace; build up to 5 miles by week 5 and maintain	Build up to 20 miles by week 13. Begin tapering by week 14 for race

Note: Consult with a doctor before starting any training program. *Regimen designed for a typical 150-pound 35-year-old.

Source: New York Road Runners

The Wall Street Journal



Meg and Pete Navatto of Oceanside, N.Y., at the New York Giants Run of Champions 5k race in June. The couple is training for the New York City Marathon.

spend time working on the weight loss and strength to support that weight, and bring that weight down before you increase to a half-marathon or 10k,” Dr. Roberts says.

He also suggests alternating strength days and running days. Runners should focus on their core, including their abdominals, hips, glutes and lower back, as well as their up-

per body, he adds.

Once the regimen reaches about 30 miles per week consistently, “you’re ready to make that next jump to marathon distance,” he says.

Meg Navatto of Oceanside, N.Y., decided to start running about three years ago to lose weight. “I was very heavy, over 200 pounds, and I’m only 5’2.” I couldn’t even walk up a flight of stairs without huffing or puffing,” says Ms. Navatto, 38, a cytogenetic technologist. When her husband Pete, also 38 and a New York State Court officer, said he wanted to start running, she offered to try.

They ran their first 5k in September 2011. He came in second place in his division. She came in last—but both were hooked.

They continued to run three days a week after work for 30 minutes. “We’d go to the park in Valley Stream near where we live. We’d loop in opposite directions so we ran at the same time, but not the same pace,” Mr. Navatto says. After Mr. Navatto completed a half-marathon and Ms. Navatto finished a 10k in May 2012, they started adding in one long run on the weekends.

Now, they are training together for the New York City Marathon in November, following a 20-week customized program from New York Road Runners. They typically run five days during the week, at varying speeds and terrain. They run an organized race pretty much every weekend, in addition to a long run.

Ms. Navatto says having shorter goals helps her stay motivated. “I said this to Pete last year, I have to get through the first one before I can think about doing another,” she says. “But then again, I said the same thing about a half-marathon. And now I’ve done five so far.”

Latest Research on the Effects of Alcohol on Your Waistline

Continued from page D1 metabolism, drinking patterns and gender may play a role.

Alcohol is “a real wild card when it comes to weight management,” said Karen Miller-Kovach, chief scientific officer of Weight Watchers International. At seven calories per gram, alcohol is closer to fat

than to carbohydrate or protein in caloric content, she said. Alcohol tends to lower restraint, she notes, causing a person to become more indulgent with what they’re eating.

Research bolstering the role of moderate drinking in helping to control weight gain was published in 2004 in the jour-

nal Obesity Research. That study followed nearly 50,000 women over eight years. An earlier study, published in the American Journal of Epidemiology in 1994, followed more than 7,000 people for 10 years and found that moderate drinkers gained less weight than nondrinkers. Studies comparing changes in waist circumference among different groups have yielded similar results.

Dr. Rimm said it isn’t clear why moderate drinking may be protective against typical weight gain, but it could have to do with metabolic adjustments. After people drink alcohol, their heart rate increases so they burn more calories in the following hour.

“It’s a modest amount,” he said. “But if you take an individual that eats 100 calories instead of a glass of wine, the person drinking the glass of wine will have a slight increase in the amount of calories burned.”

Food choices could also play a role. Some studies suggest that women who drink alcohol eat fewer sweet foods, possibly because alcohol stimulates the same pleasure center in the brain as sweets, said Dr. Rimm. That isn’t seen as consistently in men.

Men have more of the alcohol dehydrogenase group of enzymes that metabolize some alcohol in the stomach than women, said Andrea N. Giancoli, spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, a professional organization.

One theory for what this might mean is that women’s bodies divert alcohol not being broken down in the stomach to a different metabolic pathway that results in more calories being burned, said Ms. Giancoli, a registered dietitian near Los Angeles. As a result, fewer calories from alcohol may be stored in women as fat, she said.

Another factor is drinking patterns. A 2005 study in the American Journal of Epidemiology looked at data from 45,896 drinkers. It found that as the quantity of drinking increased from one to four drinks in a day, the subjects’ body-mass index increased.

“People who drank the least often but drank more on the

days that they drank had higher BMI,” said Dr. Breslow, who co-authored the study.

Dr. Breslow’s latest study, which found caloric intake increases with moderate drinking, didn’t look at associations between alcohol and body weight or track food choices and diets over time. She suggested that people who increase their caloric intake with moderate drinking one day might compensate the next day by consuming less.

The study, which appeared in the May issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutri-

tion, analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and included 1,864 mostly moderate drinkers.

Another study, which looked at data from nearly 16,000 individuals over a year, concluded that as alcohol consumption increased there was a decline in diet quality.

That research was published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association in 2010.

David Jensen, a 56-year-old who considers himself overweight, says cutting his daily

drink or two helped him reduce nighttime snacking. “You have a glass of wine and then it’s, oh man, I need cheese with that, or I need chocolate. You end up eating all this other stuff,” said Mr. Jensen, who lives near Seattle and works as a translator for financial clients.

Last year he stopped drinking for five months and lost just over 10 pounds “with really no effort,” Mr. Jensen said.

But once he started drinking again his weight went up and he is back to where he started.

Calorie Counts

 <p>Red Wine 5 oz glass approx. 125 calories Considered a good choice for its anti-inflammatory properties.</p>	 <p>Piña Colada 6 oz glass approx. 460 calories Ingredients like pineapple juice and coconut are high in calories.</p>
 <p>Margarita 6 oz glass approx. 280 calories Snacks like guacamole and chips might be hard to resist.</p>	 <p>Regular Beer 12 oz glass approx. 150 calories An alternative: light beer, which averages about 100 calories.</p>

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