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**The Three Components
of an Effective Workout**

By Blaine Moore

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Introduction

There are three major components that make up your training.

Whether you consciously plan them out or not, there are three strategies in your training that determine how fast you can meet your goals.

Ignoring any one of these three strategies means that your training plan may not succeed or reach its full potential. You will not be able to finish your workouts, you will not be able to train at your optimum level, and you are probably going to get injured.

By consciously choosing what your strategy will be when it comes to these three areas of your training, you can drastically improve the chances that you will meet your goals. You will be far more likely to lose or maintain your weight, and you will bring yourself closer to the race time that you are shooting for.

These are the three strategies that you need to consider in your training, in their order of importance:

1. Your Diet,
2. Your Rest, and
3. Your Training.

Your training is important. The actual work that you put in determines the actual gains that you will get out of your workouts. If you do not do the work, then you are never going to improve, period.

When it comes to how fast you progress, though, and how much you can improve, your diet and how much rest you give yourself are more important.

Your dieting and resting strategies directly influence how effective your training strategy is. If you do not take care of your body and properly fuel and rest it, then you will never be able to safely put in the work that you need in order to become stronger and faster without getting injured or burnt out.

Part I – Your Dieting Strategy

First, let's consider your diet. More specifically, we are going to consider your fueling strategy. I will give you some easy to implement strategies that you can adopt that will allow you to stop wasting your time when you work out.

Eating a well balanced diet with the right ratios of carbohydrates, proteins, fats and water is important. What those exact ratios should be depend upon what your goals are and what sorts of workouts you are doing and is the subject for another time. Your body is an amazing machine and can run on absolute junk if it has to, so it is not the end of the world if you do not eat the absolute optimal diet.

What is important is when and how you eat.

Food at its most basic level is fuel for your body. Your body needs a certain amount of fuel just to keep you alive. In general, most people burn 1500-1800 calories throughout the day just to wake up, sit around for 15 hours, walk around for 1 hour, and sleep for 8 hours.

Unless you are participating in some sort of endurance event like a 100-mile foot race, then you are probably going to burn more calories keeping yourself alive than you are going to burn by working out in any given day. And because you are going to spend more hours throughout the day keeping yourself alive than you are going to spend working out, you need to keep yourself fueled throughout the day.

In practical terms, this means that you need to eat on a consistent basis throughout the day. Consuming all of your food at once is not nearly as effective.

Eating 4 to 6 small meals every couple of hours is much better for you than eating 2 or 3 really large meals.

If you only eat 2 large meals throughout the day, then your body is going to think that you are in famine conditions. Your body will store excess fat so that when the food runs low you will be able to live longer without starving.

Your body is also incapable of processing large amounts of vitamins or minerals at one time. If you only eat a couple of large meals, then most of the nutrients that you consume are going to leave your body through waste rather than being absorbed into your blood.

Now consider somebody who eats every 3 or 4 hours rather than every 6 or 8 hours. Instead of storing excess fat, their metabolism is revved up throughout the day. In fact, this person is going to burn more calories than somebody who only eats a few times, even if they eat the exact same amount of food and have the exact same level of physical exertion. This person's body is going to absorb more

of the nutrients from their food as well because they are spread out between different meals.

No matter how many meals that you eat, your day should always begin with breakfast.

Breakfast does not need to be very large to get your metabolism moving. Breakfast is a signal to your body to begin moving again and to come out of its state of hibernation that you put it in while you were sleeping. A common trait amongst people who maintain a healthy weight and dieters that lose pounds and keep them off is that they all eat breakfast.

When it comes to workouts, you need to think in terms of fuel. You should never try to work out on a completely empty stomach. Your workout is going to suffer if you do not have the energy to put in the correct effort.

Maintaining a steady pace throughout a long run or reaching the correct speed during an interval session all depends upon the amount of available fuel in your body that your muscles can convert into energy. If you do not have enough fuel, then you are going to suffer from cramps and fatigue and your workout is going to suffer.

You are going to need to experiment to see how much fuel is right for you.

Some people can eat and then immediately begin working out without any trouble, while other people will suffer from severe cramps if they eat anything within a few hours of a workout.

The types of food that you can successfully eat without any trouble before a workout may be different than what works for somebody else, so try different mixtures of solid foods such as fruits and grains or liquid foods such as Gatorade.

How much you can eat or drink before a workout can change depending upon a variety of factors. As you age, your tolerance is probably going to diminish. Women may have monthly cycles for what works for them. A change in air pressure or temperature can frequently make a large difference in how much your body can tolerate.

You may or may not need to eat or drink anything during your workout. The longer your workout lasts, and the more intense the workout, the more likely that you are going to need to refuel. For most people, drinking water during a workout is going to satisfy most of their needs.

Following a workout, you need to eat something. If you do not eat anything after your workout, then your workout is not going to do you any good.

A workout that is not followed by food is a waste of your time.

It does not matter if you are trying to lose weight or if you are training for the Olympics. Your body is not going to respond well to a lack of fuel.

At the end of a workout, your metabolism is revved up, your fuel tank is low, and your muscles are torn and ripped. A small 100-200 calorie snack immediately following your workout will allow your metabolism to stay revved up for longer and will provide the material that your muscles need to repair themselves. Rather than weakening yourself, your muscles will be able to repair themselves so that they are better able to withstand the type of damage that you just inflicted on them the next time that you want to work out.

The last piece of your diet strategy should be how well you hydrate yourself.

Your body is made up mostly of water, and you require plenty of water in order to break down your food and process it into a form that your body can absorb for fuel. The easiest way to stay hydrated is to drink water on a consistent basis throughout the day. Like food, though, your body can only process so much water at a time before it just passes through your system.

Water is not the only way that you can stay hydrated. There are some sports drinks with minerals (such as salt) that are supposed to help your body absorb the water more readily. Almost every food that you eat is going to have water in it; some fruits such as apples are more water than they are anything else. Other beverages such as juice, coffee, and soda can also help you keep hydrated.

Water is probably the best beverage to be drinking throughout the day, though. Some beverages can be diuretic, and most people do not need the excess calories that you will find in the sugars and syrups that are used to make soda or juice. Your teeth will also be happier to be rinsed regularly with water as you drink than to be doused in some substance that is going to help them decay.

Most of these principles can be integrated into your life with little to no effort. By adopting good eating habits, you can keep your body running efficiently and you can optimize the time that you spend working out.

Here are some basic tips to integrate a better fueling strategy into your daily habits:

- Remember to always eat your breakfast.
- Space out your meals and snacks so that you are eating a small amount every few hours rather than only eating 2 or 3 large meals throughout the day.
- Stay hydrated and try to eat something before your workouts.
- Always, **always**, *always* remember to eat something within 30 minutes after you finish working out.

Part II – Your Resting Strategy

Your resting strategy is almost as important than your fueling strategy. Most people do not give themselves the proper amount of rest, which will keep them from reaching their goals. Too much rest or too little rest can sabotage even the best training plan.

What happens to you when you workout?

When you go for a run, you are ripping and tearing the fibers in your muscles.

The act of working out refers to the process of damaging your body so that you can temporarily make it weaker.

Once your body has been weakened, it will do its very best to repair that damage. Your body is very reactionary; whatever the latest stress that has been put upon it is assumed to be the sort of stress that is going to be put upon it again in the future.

By rebuilding the muscles and repairing the tears that you inflicted on them, your muscles are adapted to the workouts that you have been performing. The next time that you run or bike or swim, your muscles are going to have better protection from that activity and the workout will seem easier.

As you perform similar workouts over a period of time, your body becomes better at dealing with the strain.

The entire idea behind creating a workout calendar or schedule is to best utilize the small improvements over a period of time to see large gains at a specific point in time.

When your body repairs your muscles and improves them, the muscles tend to become a little larger or a little denser at the same time as they become a little stronger. This is problematic, because muscle tissue is *metabolically expensive*. In other words, it takes more calories to maintain muscle mass than it does to maintain fat in your body.

Because muscle mass is expensive, your body wants to break down any excess muscle that it does not believe is being used or is necessary for survival. If you are not keep performing the motions and activities that cause your body to create muscle, then your body will break that muscle down and cause it to go away.

So now you have a (very) basic understanding of how muscle is affected by exercise and lack of exercise. Working out damages your muscles so that they

can grow back bigger and stronger, and resting can break down your muscles so that your body does not have to work as hard to maintain them.

Neither of those two processes are particularly fast. It takes months of consistent activity to build a muscle up, and it takes weeks or months for it to be broken back down.

In order to become a better runner, then you want to run more, right? There are many high mileage programs that would have you believe so, and as a general rule you do need to run more in order to become a better runner.

Repairing your muscles is not instantaneous.

It can take a day or two or three for your body to recover from a single workout, during which time your body is busy repairing and rebuilding the tears in your muscles.

If you work out again before your body has a chance to recover, then you are going to risk injuring yourself. Your body will not have had the opportunity to get back into fully working order.

What is the best way for you to improve, then? The best way to improve is to work your muscles hard, rest long enough for them to repair, and then work them hard again. Luckily, the damage to your muscles tends to be restricted to specific movements. You can often perform different types of workouts that will utilize your muscles in a different way.

The length of your stride and how you push off from the ground when you are running changes depending upon a number of factors, which causes your muscles to work in a different way.

The first thing that you can change is your pace. An easy jog is going to have a much different stride than an all out sprint. Tempo pace runs are different from long runs. A fartlek run can mix and match different paces within the same run.

The next thing that you can change is your terrain. Running hills puts different stresses on your legs than running on the flat. Running on grass is going to take more strength than running on the roads while creating less of an impact. Running on a trail is going to be much less repetitive as you try to find a place to put your feet than running on asphalt.

You can also try different activities altogether. Lifting weights, bicycling, and swimming are all excellent cross training activities that can allow you to exercise your muscles without stressing them in the same fashion as you do when you are running.

By mixing different types of workouts, you build up your muscles to withstand different types of stress.

This results in stronger, more injury-resistant muscles. If you were to always run at the same pace on the same route with the exact same running stride, you would quickly cause an overuse injury.

Generally speaking, you will cause more damage to your muscles the longer your workout or the more intense the workout. The more damage that you cause, the more time that you require to recover before you do another workout that is going to stress your muscles that much.

Try not to schedule excessively long workouts or intense workouts such as intervals near one another. Plan on having at least one or two days of rest or easy workouts after every difficult workout or race.

A common formula for how much rest that you need after a race is to take 1 easy or rest day for each mile or kilometer that you raced. For a 5k, you would take 3 to 5 easy days. For a marathon, you would take 26 to 42 days.

Sample Workout Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Rest	Easy	Intervals	X-Train	Tempo	Easy	Long
Rest	Easy	Intervals	X-Train	Easy	Easy	5k Race
Rest	Easy	Tempo	X-Train	Easy	Easy	Long

In the sample workout calendar above, you'll see that each speed session, long run, and race is followed by plenty of rest.

Depending upon your level of fitness, you should not schedule more than 1 or 2 speed sessions in a week or more than 1 long run. As your level of fitness improves, you are going to want to schedule more frequent tough workouts in an effort to get even better. You will think that your body will better be able to handle it because you are in better shape than you were a few months or a few years earlier. This is a mistake.

Your body still needs just as much time to recover as it did before you got into decent shape.

Rather than scheduling more frequent speed work, you should increase the intensity of the speed work that you are currently doing. Instead of running 4 intervals, you might want to work up to 6 or 8 intervals. Instead of running at 7 minutes per mile pace, you might want to try running at a 6:45 or 6:30 per mile pace.

A good plan is to spend 3 or 4 weeks increasing your weekly mileage. A safe number that most people can agree on is to try to keep within 10-12% of an

increase each week. Every 4th or 5th week, you should cut back 5% to 10% to give your body a little extra time to recover.

Cut back weeks are good weeks to increase the intensity of your workouts. You are running fewer miles, so you can try running those miles a little faster in individual workouts. In non-cutback weeks that you want to increase your intensity, you might want to limit your mileage increases to 5% or less of the week before.

As you improve, your muscles can handle longer and more strenuous workouts. If you allow your muscles to recover from those workouts, then you will realize the maximum benefit before damaging the muscles again.

The rest that you take during workouts is also important.

All of your workouts should be book ended with a warm up and cool down. Depending upon the type of workout, you may or may not need to take rest between the warm up and the work out.

When you are running intervals, you will have some measure of *rest* or *recovery* between each repeat. Recovery is an active movement between each repeat, such as a recovery jog or a walking recovery. When you rest between repeats, you are passive. You may stretch, or just stand in place or even sit down.

When you are first getting into shape, I recommend that you maintain *at least* a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio of rest to work. If you are doing a walk/run workout, then you should start by walking for 4 minutes and running for 1 (4:1) or 2 (2:1) minutes. A 1:1 ratio would be when you walk for 1 minute and then run for 1 minute.

As you get into better shape, you will want to begin to limit your rest. No matter what kind of shape that you are in, though, you should have a very good reason to take less rest than work and you should limit the number of workouts where you go below a 1:1 ratio.

As you perform more workouts at a more strenuous level, the cumulative benefit of those workouts adds up.

The trick is finding a balance between recovering from your workouts and getting as many workouts in as you can. You want to get as much benefit from each workout so that you can get more of a benefit out of all of the workouts, but you want to keep yourself from getting injured.

And that is where the third component of your training strategy comes in.

Part III – Your Training Strategy

How you train directly influences how much you can improve and at what level you can compete. Your training strategy prepares your body to withstand the stresses of further training and competition. Your training strategy is going to be different depending upon what your goals are, so some very simple strategies are included in this section.

The reason that your fueling strategy and your resting strategy are more important than your training strategy is because your training can not happen without fuel or a chance to recover. All three strategies need to work together in order to allow your body to perform.

Your training strategy is going to be dependent upon what your goals are and what resources that you have available. In a best case scenario, you would be able to work one-on-one with a personal coach that could match your workout schedule to your time constraints, current level of fitness, and the goals that you are aiming for.

Attaining & Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Living at a healthy weight can lead to a plethora of physical and mental health benefits. If you are not already at your ideal weight, then your goal should be to reach it *slowly*.

There are a lot of diet and drug products out there that can claim to cut your weight dramatically in mere weeks, but your body does not like sudden changes like that and chances are pretty good that once you are done spending a lot of money on those products that you will balloon right back to where you started.

A better strategy is to only try to lose (or gain, if you are underweight) 1 pound per week. If you are obese or grossly out of shape, then you might be able to lose weight a little bit faster than 1 pound per week safely.

Any new exercise program should be discussed with your family doctor before you begin. Your doctor will have a good idea of what may or may not be right for you specifically.

If you are beginning a new exercise program and are out of shape, then you will want to begin with regular walking. If you are an active person but just want to get into better shape, then you might want to begin with running.

Start out slow and take your rest days completely off. The biggest gains are made when you are first beginning a new program, so you can stick to slow and easy walking or running and still get all of the benefits of a more complicated program.

In fact, it is better to build up a base level of fitness before incorporating any other types of workouts. Depending upon where you are when you begin, you can spend months with easy walking and jogging before you hit a *plateau*.

A plateau is when you start leveling off and maintaining your weight, rather than continuing to lose weight. You can also refer to a leveling off of your racing times (or anything else that you measure regarding your goals) as a plateau.

Once you reach a level where your body can take a little bit more intensity then you can really start to get into shape. The best way to burn fat is with high intensity interval training and weight lifting.

Interval training can be something as easy as mixing in a few minutes of running in the middle of a walk (8 minutes walking, 2 minutes running, repeat) or it can be full blown quarter mile repeats on a track. You will not burn as many calories during the workout itself, but your metabolism will be ramped up and you can continue burning calories for hours after the workout if you remember to eat something when you are done.

Weight lifting is another good way to burn calories. You should concentrate on multi-joint exercises that mimic real world motions. Exercises like squats, dead lifts, and pull-ups are excellent ways to get in shape fast and work up a good sweat.

Bear in mind that your weight is not the only metric that you can use to calculate how fit or healthy you are. It is not always going to be in your best interest to lose weight. Talk to your family doctor about your *body mass index* (BMI) or your *body fat percentage*.

A very good measure of your overall health that you can easily test at home is your *resting heart rate*. As you get into better shape, your resting heart rate will drop. The best time to measure your resting heart rate is as soon as you wake up and before you get out of bed. It is usually easier to measure it at another time in the day after you have been sitting still for a few minutes, though. Just be sure to be consistent with when you measure your heart rate if you want to compare the numbers.

The most accurate way to tell how many times your heart beats per minute is to find your pulse on your wrist or your neck and count the beats for 60 seconds. If you do not want to wait that long, then count them for 6 seconds and multiply by 10 for a very rough estimate, or for 30 seconds and multiply by 2.

Getting in Shape and Competing in Local Races

Once you begin to get into shape you will want to phase walking out as a major part of your training. You may want to maintain a walking regimen as part of your cross training activities, but your main exercise is going to primarily involve running.

Depending upon your time commitments, your training strategy can range from low to medium mileage per week. Low mileage is going to be in the 10 to 25 miles per week range, and medium mileage will be in the 25 to 50 miles per week range. Most of your runs will be at an easy pace, but you will mix some speed work in at least once per week and usually twice. Depending upon your goals, you may mix in long runs of 10 to 15 miles on the weekends.

Most of the people that you meet at any given 5k are going to belong to this group. The time that is spent training every week can vary quite a bit from person to person, but the time spent training will be fairly constant for each person. You may or may not be following a specific training plan, but exercise and working out is a regular part of your life at this point.

This is a great time to find a local running club. Having friends to run with on a regular basis is a lot of fun and can help keep you motivated. Look around at your local 5k or 5 mile races; are there people that you see month in and month out at all of the local races? Is there a particular team wearing a matching singlet that you see quite often?

That is how I found two of my teams. I began by running with a local club team, which was great because I got to know a lot of the running community in my area. The people on my team would introduce me to the others that you see everywhere, and people would approach me to chat when they saw that I ran for "Run to Win." After a few years, I joined a more competitive team that I saw at all of the races.

Running Competitively and Marathons

Running local races can become addictive. As you strive to improve your times, you naturally become more competitive as you race against yourself, the clock and those around you.

If you have joined a club, then some of the members may be more competitive than others, but most of the people will just be out there to be in shape and have fun.

There are some teams that are put together solely to be competitive. You can find ones in your area in the same way that you found a local club team, except you

will want to look for the teams that are consistently putting runners at the front of the races. You can also check with your local chapter of the RRCA or USATF to see what teams are registered in your area.

Competitive runners tend to run medium to high mileage. High mileage will usually be in the 50 to 80 miles per week range. If you belong to this group, then you are probably going to be running at least 1 or 2 speed sessions per week, and will almost certainly be running long once per week.

If you are a competitive runner, then you will probably travel a little more to race. My team competes in the USATF-NE grand prix, so most of our races are in Massachusetts and involve an hour or two of driving to get to. Some of the members of my team also compete on the national stage, especially in the masters divisions. (Masters runners are those that are at least 40 years old.)

Marathoners and competitive runners tend to train in a similar fashion. Not all marathoners are competitive, but many are. If you are trying to run your first marathon, you may only run low to medium mileage, but most marathoners are in the medium or high range for the miles that they run per week.

If you are not a competitive marathoner, your training program may not have you running much in the way of speed work each week. I think that this is a mistake; running intervals makes the marathon a much easier experience. Running mile repeats can really help build strength and mental toughness.

As a marathoner, your long run is going to be the staple run each week. Most training schedules will have you gradually build up the length of your long run until you are easily able to run 18 to 22 miles a few weeks before the race.

Marathoners also tend to be travelers. Not everybody has a local marathon that they can compete in, and destination marathons can make for great vacations.

There is a club for people that want to run a marathon in every state that is appropriately enough called the "50 States Club." Once you have run a marathon in at least 10 states, you can join the club and use their resources to help arrange transportation and lodging to different events. Some races offer discounts to members of the 50 States Club.

Elite/Professional Runners

Elite and professional runners compete for a living. Most professional runners run high mileage, often going above the 80 miles per week range. It is not uncommon for a professional athlete to run 100 to 150 miles per week on a regular basis.

You do not need to be an elite runner to run that kind of mileage. Many college programs also involve running high miles. When I was in school in the late 90s, I used to average 85 miles per week throughout the year including "off" seasons. The most that I ever ran in one week was 122 miles, with a half dozen weeks in the 115 to 120 mile range.

I think that it built a great base, but long term I am not so sure that it was the right thing to be doing. It is very difficult to run that sort of mileage if you have other commitments, so most amateur athletes will never reach this level. Most amateur athletes will also never have a *need* to reach this level.

While cross training is a good idea for everybody, it becomes highly recommended at the competitive level and necessary at the professional level. It is difficult to get in the amount of training necessary without getting injured if there is not some component of cross training.

Ultramarathons

Ultramarathons are for a different breed altogether. They honestly mix in traits from all of the other groups. An ultramarathoner may run high mileage, and they may also break into the 100+ miles per week range on a regular basis.

Most of their miles are going to be much slower, though. Elite runners are still running a lot of speed work when they are in that high range, where most ultramarathoners are just out there getting the miles in.

I ran a 50 kilometer trail race, which is about 5 miles longer than a marathon. There was not a huge difference between the two races. Once you begin getting into the 50 mile to 100 kilometer distances, though, your fueling strategy really needs to change.

Most of the ultramarathoners that I know are regular guys and girls that hold down full time jobs and have families. They get up before the sun or are out running after they put the kids to bed.

Whenever you run a race, the majority of the people that you run with and against are going to be supportive and are generally good folk. Ultramarathoners take this to the next level. Their sport does not have the mass popularity of the shorter distances, and it seems that everybody knows each other. Even if they don't, they tend to help one another out. It is a very tight-knit and accepting community.

One of the folks that I train with and that helped convince me to run my first ultramarathon is Jamie Anderson. He told me, "*You always make friends in these long races. You're stuck with them for 30, 40 miles and say, 'Sure, I'll make friends.'*"

Triathletes

Triathlons, adventure racing and other multi-sport competitions are a natural next step for anybody that implements cross training into their program. If you already swim or bike regularly along with your running, then it only seems natural to find a local sprint triathlon to test yourself in.

An advantage that most triathletes have over runners is that they can more easily fit in more speed work. A competitive triathlete may easily have 5 or 6 speed sessions per week between the 3 different disciplines. That may or may not be a good idea from a fatigue standpoint, but I know at least a few people that feel as though they get enough rest between workouts to keep up such a demanding schedule.

In running, the marathon is the gold standard of endurance. For ultramarathoners, the 100 mile race is the gold standard. For triathletes, the Ironman is the gold standard. It began as a bet amongst a group of swimmers, runners, and cyclists. Navy commander John Collins settled the argument by combining the Waikiki Roughwater Swim, the Around-Oahu Bike Race and the Honolulu Marathon. Each event was followed immediately by the other, which set the standard distances for the event when it is held outside of Hawaii. The swim is 2.4 miles, the bike ride (originally a 2 day event) is 112 miles, and the marathon is of course 26.2 miles. The first Ironman race was held in 1978.

Beginning triathletes will obviously wish to start with a shorter race. Sprint triathlons are *usually* somewhere near 500 meters for the swim, 20 kilometers for the bicycling, and 5 kilometers for the run. The Olympic (or Standard Course) Triathlon is 1.5km / 40km / 10km for each discipline.

Part IV - Combining Your Strategies Effectively

Most people have some sort of regular strategy that they use for their rest, their diet, and their training. It may not be the most effective strategy, one area may interfere with another, and they may never have given it much thought, but they have a strategy nonetheless.

Whether you consciously plan them out or not, these three strategies determine how fast you can meet your goals. Ignoring any one of these three strategies means that your training plan may not succeed or reach its full potential.

By consciously choosing what your strategy will be when it comes to these three areas of your training, you can drastically improve the chances that you will meet your goals.

Having read this far, you have almost certainly given your training some thought and made comparisons to what you are currently doing. If you already have good habits, then you are in good shape. Concentrate on those habits and don't let them slip!

If you believe that your habits could stand some work, then first think about what your goals are and why you are training. Which type of athlete are you? Find yourself a training plan that will help you reach your goals.

Next, think about how much rest you are used to and whether it is enough. Be sure that you take enough rest to recover from your workouts while still maintaining a workload that will allow you to reach your goals. You may need to get creative in order to get enough work in without injuring yourself or burning out.

Last, pay attention to *how* you eat and not just what you eat. While a good diet is always something to strive for, most people can more easily implement good eating habits than better nutritional choices. Concentrate on fixing your eating habits first, and then consider your nutrition later. If you train hard enough and get the furnace hot enough, then just about anything will burn. You need to make sure that you provide the right amount of fuel at the right times to keep the fire going before you worry about the quality of that fuel.

More Information

About the Author

My name is Blaine Moore, and I am an RRCA Certified running coach. I have been a competitive runner for most of my life. I have competed on the roads, on grass, on trails, and on the track. Since graduating from college, I have competed for both a club team and a competitive team in the USATF-NE Grand Prix. I ran my first marathon in 2000, and for years now have been averaging 2 or 3 marathons (or longer) per year.

Your Comprehensive Guide to Marathon Preparation & Recovery

I have written extensively on running and cross training at RunToWin.com, and have written an extensive guide to Marathon Preparation and Recovery. I have made a lot of mistakes with my training and my racing, but I have found ways to make sure that I am enjoying every minute of the races that I run no matter how difficult they are. I have also found steps that I can take to prevent falling apart at the end of a long race and to recover swiftly afterwards.

My **Marathon Preparation and Recovery Guide** includes simple steps that anyone can take that will allow them to not only be mobile after the race, but to be back to normal within a day or two. I travel to most of my races, and I enjoy being able to walk around and spend time as a tourist following my races. I have even spent hours the day after a marathon raking leaves without being any the worse for wear.

For more information about the book, point your web browser to:

<http://www.marathoning.org/marathon-preparation>

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