



Post-Race - October 2009 – RVM Training Newsletter

By Bruce Deacon

Congrats! The race is over and hopefully things have gone well. Probably by now, you have started to think about what is next. Is there another race on the horizon? Should you take some time off?

The first thing to do is to grab a cup or glass of your favourite beverage, a piece of paper and a pen. It is time to debrief your run. Spend some time reviewing your training and thinking through your race. Ask yourself if there is anything that you would have done differently to run a bit faster or to finish a bit stronger. Are there things you can learn from your training or the race day?

Next, plan out your recovery. It will take a while before the cellular damage caused by the race is fully healed. Your immune system has taken a hit, and it is very common to pick up a cold or flu after a hard marathon. You might feel great a few days after the race, but your body is still mending for the next three weeks. Some people like to rush back to training, but I strongly counsel against this approach. Now is the time to take some rest and recuperate. It is simply not worth the risk of injury or sickness to rush back.

During your recovery time, drink lots of water and eat more protein than usual. Distribute your protein intake throughout the day. You might consider taking additional vitamin C tablets during this period.

My suggested recovery plan is as follows:

Post Race Day 1-3—Take completely off running. If you are keen to exercise, go for a swim or a gentle spin on a bike. Try to get a massage. Avoid hot tubs or hot baths, as they will slow your recovery at this stage.

One of the key tips to easing muscle soreness is alternating hot/cold shower massages. With a massaging shower head, massage your legs with hot water for 45 seconds. The warmth will relax the muscles and open up the capillaries. Next run very cold water on your legs for 30 seconds. The cold will constrict your muscles and narrow your capillaries. Continue to alternate this pattern eight to ten times. The opening and closing of your capillaries creates a pump action that flushes your muscles with fresh blood. Always end with the cold shower to “trap” fresh blood in your muscles.

Day 4—Jog easily for 20 minutes on a soft surface.

Day 5—Take a day off. If you are keen to stay moving, bike or swim. By now the swelling should have subsided and you are ready for a hot tub or warm bath.

Day 6—Jog easily for 25 minutes on a soft surface.

Day 7—Jog easily for 30 minutes on a soft surface

Day 8—Day off running.

Continue the pattern of adding 5 minutes of jogging two days in a row and taking every third day off. When you get to 60 minutes of jogging (day 16), take a day off before returning to your pre-marathon frequency of running.

I recommend that you don't return to speed work or long runs until the end of the third week after your marathon. I would not return to racing anything over 8 km for four weeks after your marathon.

Most of all, take the time to reconnect with some of the friendships and activities that you may have neglected during your marathon or half marathon training. Take a mental break from the rigours of training and schedule a bit of R&R.

Celebrate a bit...you have worked pretty hard over the past 20 weeks and have earned the right to feel good about yourself.

Questions, Questions, Questions

Do you have questions about your training? Email Bruce Deacon at coachbruce@royalvictoriamarathon.com.