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## Post-Race Training Newsletter

By Bruce Deacon

Congrats! The race is over and hopefully things have gone well. Probably by now, the excitement of the race has started to wane and 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 it 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. Here are some guiding questions:

1. Did you arrive at race day healthy and injury free?

If not, it could be that you ran too hard in the couple of weeks before the race. Sometimes that fast long run three weeks out can turn into an effort that is too similar to the race. When this happens our immune system can be compromised and we can be vulnerable to viral infections. Were you battling a nagging injury? If so, check your shoes to see if the last few weeks of training were run without the proper support.

2. Were you adequately trained?

In retrospect, do you think that you did enough of the right training to get you to your goals?

3. Is there anything that you could have done differently before the race?

Did you warm up enough; eat the right pre-race meal; leave yourself enough time to get to the start; and dress appropriately for the conditions?

4. Was your race strategy right?

Pacing is key for racing success. Did you have the right pacing strategy? Were you adequately fuelled during the run?

5. Are there any lessons to be learned from this race?

Always try to learn something either about running or about yourself. This might be a running specific tip or an awareness of your inner character.

Once your debrief is complete, give some thought as to what goals you want to set next. It is best to leave yourself some time between a marathon and your next race to allow your body to recover and to give yourself a mental rest.



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It will take about a day for every mile you ran 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.

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.

**Contact Bruce Deacon**

Email: [coachbruce@runvictoriamarathon.com](mailto:coachbruce@runvictoriamarathon.com)

Blog: [www.runningforit.com](http://www.runningforit.com)

Twitter - @brucedeacon