

FITNESS

## Ready, set, run

It's that time of year when runners begin to rev up for race season. Whether you're running a 5K or a marathon, follow these tips and you won't eat dust:



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**Plan.** First off, write a plan. Race season is like a buffet – your eyes are generally bigger than your stomach. It is important to be selective so that you can have fun and have time to recover.

**Training schedule.** Plan on running various distances four days per week. Alternate between 3-7 mile runs anchored with one 8-20 mile run (depending on your race duration and goal). Your schedule should include resistance and cross-training workouts. For example: a run/lift combo workout two days in a row, a long run, a cross training session and rest. Yes, rest should be a part of your schedule.

**Technique.** Keep your spine positioned over your center of gravity and align your head, torso, hips, knees and ankles. Avoid leaning back or hunching over. Land in the middle portion of each foot and make sure your stride is heel to toe. Running is an ankle-based action;

more float than pound. Keep your upper body relaxed and lean slightly forward with your head tilted down to perfect your technique.

**Vary the stride.** Mix sprint sets, plus running up and down hills, into your routine to improve cardio and strength endurance. For marathoners, sprint slopes 8 to 12 times with 30-second rests a few days per week.

**Resistance training.** Spend a maximum of 45 minutes on a full-body program. Sample resistance moves include squats, leg curls, crunches, incline bench presses and lat pull-downs. Include injury prevention exercises as well. Reduce your training intensity two weeks out from your race.

**Cross training.** Work out on cardio machines or try a group fitness class.

**Nutrition.** You need fuel, so eat every three hours and drink half your body-weight in ounces of water. Eat 15 to 30 minutes after your workout. For longer runs, carb up one to two hours before hand with fruits, oatmeal or bread.

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