

### SMART Goals

Specific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant & **T**ime-bound. "I want to run the Shamrock'n half marathon on March 16, 2008 in 2:05, which is 1 minute faster than my projected half marathon time based on my best 10-K time of 2007." Writing down your goal and posting it in a visible increases your chances of achieving it! You can even try setting **three goal times**, **Gold**, **Silver** and **Bronze**, so that your goal isn't all or nothing.

### Train With A Purpose

There are many training plans to choose from in print or on the web. Make sure your plan has not only **Frequency** (when to run) and **Duration** (length or distance of each run), but **Intensity** (HR or pace of each run) and **Mode** (walk/run, strides, pickups/fartleks, descending intervals, hill repeats). Recent scientific studies have shown that running 3-times (track, tempo, long) plus cross training 2-times per week (**3plus2**) is more favorable than running 5-6 times / week (without a purpose for each run) with respect to injury prevention, enjoyment, fitness levels, and race times. Check out the book "Runner's World Run Less Run Faster" by Pierce, Moss and Murr for more information. Other principles to follow in your training include **periodization** (focus shifts from endurance to strength to speed and generally involves 4-week cycles of ramping up for 3 weeks followed by a down week) and the **10% rule**, which states that you should increase your weekly volume and long run by no more than 10% each week.

### TRAP: Tell, Record, Adjust, Publish

Following to the **TRAP** method will help ensure you are "trapped" into sticking with your plan. First **Tell** your family, friends and co-workers your intentions (try backing out now!). **Record** your training log to discourage skipping a workout and use for analysis. Evaluate your training log at the end of the week to **Adjust** the upcoming week's schedule and paces if necessary. **Publish** your progress so that others can follow you and have eyes watching over you. For a small monthly fee, TrainingPeaks.com and WorkoutLog.com has built-in public portals for others to easily view your progress as you record your log.

### No Bad Weather, Just Bad Preparation

Being comfortable with your running equipment (clothing, sneakers, accessories) can be the difference between loving and hating a training run or race. Wear layers, clothing that wicks away moisture, properly fitted sneakers with less than 400 miles, and have a towel and dry clothes waiting for you at the end. Wear glasses with bright tinted lenses on wet runs for visibility and eye protection. Use either **BodyGlide** (lubricant)

or **Gold Bond Triple Medicated Powder** (soaks up moisture) on your feet and abrasive areas on long or wet runs. Start making next year's gift list!

### Proper Warmup and Cooldown

Sure you can leap off your front door step directly into your run and hop into the shower directly upon your return and burn a bunch of calories, but you are not going to get the most out of your time invested and are risking short-term and long-term injury. When at the track, begin with an easy **10-min warmup** followed by a few minutes of **dynamic stretching** (pelvic rolls, side lunges, etc.), **form drills / strides**, then run and finish with a **10-min cooldown** and **10-min of static stretching** (hold each stretch for 30 sec.). When performing short, long or tempo runs, begin with the non-static warmup method of your choice, integrate the warmup and cooldown into your run, and always finish with static stretching.

### Think of Food As Fuel

Fueling is one of the trickiest yet most important aspects for getting the most out of your body during and after a workout. **Drink water gradually** throughout the week and **eat balanced meals** - 6 smaller meals/snacks per day if possible. Consume about 100-200 calories of complex carbs and protein within 1 hour before running (force yourself!) and another 100-300 calories of complex carbs and protein within 30 minutes after running. On runs longer than 1 hour take fluids and gels with carbs and electrolytes (extra sodium when humid), but on shorter runs water is best.

### Embrace Technology and Be Safe

Even Alberto Salazar, formerly a marathon world record holder and minimalist, encourages the use of **GPS devices**, **heart-rate monitors**, and **portable music players** (Outside Magazine, February 2008). Use them for enjoyment and to increase performance but **be safe**. Don't listen to music when running alongside vehicles, wear lights when running in the dark, **run off-road to prevent injury** but if on the road **run against traffic** (keep in mind dawn and dusk are the most difficult times for driving visibility). And **Sharp Pain = Stop**.

### Simulate both Mentally and Physically

Visualization of your race can be a helpful to simulate what you will do on race day. But how about physical simulation? The weekend prior to your race, perform a simulation (shorter of course) that includes a warm-up, dynamic stretching, drills, taking off your warm-ups and staying loose for 10 minutes before taking off.