

# Long Distance Training

Four tips to improve your relationship with running.

Kimberly Feeny  
Head Women's Volleyball Coach at Chestnut Hill College



Spring is the start to race season and there seems to be no shortage of races available to sign up for. The trend now is to simply not just run a race, but to do so while running through mud, being chased by zombies, dressing in costume, or having colored dye thrown at you. Races are getting much more creative and fun, becoming almost a social activity to do with friends and they generally give you the opportunity to raise money in support of a good cause as well. Regardless of the gimmick that enticed you to register for the race, you still have to actually run that race and training for anything from a 5K to a full marathon takes a commitment.



Having just ran the Independence Blue Cross Broad Street Run and approaching my first half marathon in a few weeks, long distance training has become a part-time job. I have been a runner for 17 years and from my experience, I have decided that running and I have a high school relationship. Some days we are madly in love and couldn't imagine our lives without each other, and the very next day we may find ourselves screaming obscene things to each other in hate

and rage and breaking up, only to get back together and repeat the cycle. It is this love/hate relationship that can be on of the biggest mental hurdles that you face when training for a long distance race. Training for a race takes a lot of time and physical and mental perseverance. Through my experience training and running races, here are some tips I can offer to help move your relationship with running from rocky to blissful. When I follow my own advice, I am less likely to skip a training run or to go into the run half-hearted.

## Tip 1: Schedule It

One thing that people often don't realize about long distance training is the time commitment it requires. Logging 30 or more miles a week requires some planning. To make sure I don't run out of time in the day (or use that as an excuse!), I schedule my run into my day. This could be simply saying to myself, 'I am going to do my run after work today from 5:30 to 7:00', or even putting a calendar reminder in my phone. This really helps me resist the temptation to skip the run.

## Tip 2: Music Please

For me, I cannot make it over 3 miles without the encouragement of music. Keep that iPod in your gym bag or download a radio app like Pandora on your phone to make sure you always have music by your side for your run.

## Tip 3: Fuel Yourself

May seem obvious and a no brainer, but eating the right food throughout the day, especially on a day that you have a to do a long run in your training, will help you seem more prepared, energized, and confident for your run. I like to have a high protein snack 60-90 minutes before my run. This physically helps prepare my body but it even mentally prepares me thanks to the renewed energy I feel from the protein. Protein is used for some energy and to repair tissue damaged during training. Protein should make up about 15% of your daily intake. Runners, especially those training for long distances such as marathons, should consume .5 to .75 grams of protein per pound of body weight. Carbs should be incorporated into your diet all throughout your training and two days before a long training run or the big race day itself, about 65% of your caloric intake should be carbs. Along with planning protein and carbs into my diet, I make sure that I am staying hydrated with plenty of water.

## Tip 4: Recover And Reward Your Body

In order to stay on track with your training and be ready to hit the cement (or treadmill) again the next day, make sure you take care of yourself post run. Having at least 20 grams of protein after a long run will help your muscles repair and prepare for the continuation of your training. Be sure to refuel within a 30 minute window after you run. Otherwise, your body will start to break down the muscles you just worked to strengthen and you wouldn't want your hard work during your run to go to waste. I tend to rely on recovery shakes as a great way to keep my metabolic rate going.

Whether you are just getting into running or have been identifying yourself as a runner for years, running is a challenge that can really teach you a lot about yourself and your body. For me, it makes me feel healthy, grateful for my body and its abilities, and it often times serves as meditation and stress relief. Hopefully if you have found yourself struggling with your training, these tips can offer some help to you.

*Kimberly is the Head Women's Volleyball Coach at Chestnut Hill College, located in Philadelphia PA. She also coaches high school athletes who compete on travel volleyball teams. She has worked with numerous athletes of various ages and levels to help them achieve their maximum potential. When not helping and teaching others as a coach, she enjoys challenging herself in the gym and looks forward to a Java Jolt smoothie after a good work out!*

