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Introduction

Congratulations on downloading my eBook, you should be proud of yourself. You've just done something that most people lack, taking action and making something happen, even if you are unsure you can do it.

I started training for my first half marathon when I was 26 years old. Prior to that, I would consider myself unhealthy and not active. I never played sports growing up and I was generally picked last in gym class, even if my friends were team captain, what the hell? My first half marathon time was 2:32:00, my last half marathon time at age 30 was 1:39:00. Over the course of four years I've lost about 40 pounds, learned a lot about running and most of all myself. I made a lot of mistakes, but as long as you learn from your mistakes, who gives a shit? My eBook is going to help you avoid some of the running mistakes I made to start, that I can guarantee you.

What's the worst that can happen? You'll learn quickly as a runner to never fear failure. If you have a fear of failure you will never set goals and push your boundaries, so be prepared to change your mindset if that's something you haven't been doing! No matter what happens, you will always be further ahead than when you started, even if you don't succeed. I'm very excited for you and wish I had this eBook when I had first started my journey. I was lucky enough to have a running mentor who is still one of my close friends to this day. Everything didn't come together in one or two months, not even a year. My goal is to take everything I learned over the first few years of my journey and give you that knowledge before you start so that you will achieve what I did in less time, a lot less!

The next time someone asks you, what do you do? How cool will it be to tell them that you run half or full marathons instead of saying, I work at "insert here". They will have a million questions on what you do for training, what you eat, what's it like running 10k – 15k training runs? What kind of a rush do you get after crossing the finish line?

Getting Started

You've decided that you want to get into running. Well guess what, it's about damn time! Running is one of the most basic forms of movement that we've been gifted with to keep us healthy. Now I don't want to be too hard on you as I once believed that I too wasn't a "runner". Every time I went to the park for a walk with friends and family, I was always envious whenever I would see someone running, especially if they looked fit.

When I first met my running mentor, I never really believed I could even run 5k, let alone a half or full marathon. After some time, he finally convinced me to go for a run and everything changed after that, he started sharing his knowledge with me and gave me the tools I needed to succeed. The good news is you will progress incredibly fast, faster than you ever thought possible. At least I did and I am confident you can as well. I will cover one of the most important and "obvious" tips in chapter four to ensure that you are successful in all things including running.

I've been running ever since then and have truly fallen in love with it and couldn't imagine a life without it, after all, it is one of the most basic forms of human movement.

The feeling you will get from achievement is intense, but something even more intense is you've just done something that most people believe they can't do.

Benefits of long distance running

There are many benefits of performing any endurance sport, especially running. Some of the obvious benefits are weight management, heart health, stress release and generally living a longer happier life. Provided you take steps to avoid injury, you'll be able to perform this sport well into your elder years.

I had the opportunity to attend a seminar, the guest speaker was a multi-millionaire who retired at 45. He looked as if he was in his late forties maybe early fifties. He had run 85 marathons in his life so far and was one of the oldest to compete at the Ironman that he completed. Wait a minute? How old is this guy? It turned out he was 67 years old, it's amazing how regular exercise and living a healthy life style will keep you young. Out of everything he has in his life – a beautiful wife, successful kids, millions of dollars in his bank account, the thing that is most important to him was... you likely guessed it, his Ironman metal. He brought the damn thing to the seminar! Now imagine how you're going to feel when you cross the finish line of your first half or full marathon? You've just done something that not a lot of people can do, I can tell you right now that you will be damn proud. Be prepared to celebrate as well! It's going to unlock a lot more possibilities and challenges for you as well. I'm staring at my picture right now with my half marathon team along with my metal, I display them proudly for everyone to see. Not to brag but to share my success and hopefully inspire a few people in the process to chase their dreams.

One of the not so obvious things that I discovered is how good it is for your soul. Now I don't want to get all spiritual on you, in fact I'm not very spiritual at all, however there is something about running, especially when you get deeper into your long distance runs that you start to feel connected to the earth. It's a magical feeling and will put things into perspective, especially if you're facing challenges in your life right now.

Not that I need to sell you on running if you've made it this far, but if that didn't, I really do not know what will.

Book your first half marathon

I challenge you to do two things, the first is register for a half marathon, please give yourself at least three months to prepare, I recommend at least 6 months if you've never ran a half marathon. Within the first 3 months you will be able to go from 0km – 10km and the next three months go from 10km – 21kms. The second part is to tell all of your friends and family that you've registered for this race. They will probably think you've finally lost it or are going through a mid-twenties or mid-life crises. I did exactly that and here's why, it will force you to train so you are prepared for your race. It gives you something to work towards and your friends and family will hold you accountable. They will ask how your training is going. At the end of it all, they will also be there to support you as well and see you cross that finish line. Who knows, you might even inspire a few of your family members to give it a try? If they do, tell them to download my eBook as well, ha-ha.

If you don't have the money to register, find a sponsor. Most people don't know this but I have never paid for an actual race, my sponsor does and I wear their t-shirt for each race. All I did was ask, they thought about it and said hey, \$60.00 - \$80.00 to advertise to 3000 – 6000 people? That's a bargain!

If you are unsure of what races are taking place in your area, a tool I generally recommend is www.raceroster.com, it's easy to use and the majority of organizers that I have dealt with all use RaceRoster for marathon registration.

Gear

One of the most important things my running mentor taught me was having a proper pair of running shoes that are fitted to you. One of the first pieces of advice I never took from him that I wish I did was buying a new pair of shoes, ha-ha. I'm not perfect and am also a little cheap, or as I like to say careful with money. I ended up training in a pair of shoes that were a few years old, my mom had purchased them for me for Christmas to use at the gym.

When I first started running, I would always get really sore ankles and calves. I always attributed that to the fact that I was new to running. I would literally get home and dump ice into a bucket and stick my feet in to help with the swelling. I still remember my first 10k run like it was yesterday. After some convincing, I had finally worked up the courage to give it a try and let me tell you, at the time it was a toughest thing I had ever done. But I took the advice I was given and worked through it. I remember it took me over an hour and a half to finish. The high I got from that though was like nothing else I had ever felt before, I was hooked! But I won't lie, I did have second thoughts the next day when I was incredibly sore. I can now easily do 10k in under an hour without really trying, you'll hear me say this a lot but you progress fast as long as you stay consistent and injury free. The reason why I bring up my first 10k run is the majority of my soreness would start during and after those runs which I attribute to my crappy pair of shoes looking back at it now.

Enough was enough, I took the pair of shoes down to my local running store and they were in disbelief that I had trained for a race in them and actually ran a half marathon in them. I can tell you one thing, once I got fitted with a proper pair of shoes, it felt like I was running on a cloud, no more sore ankles. First lesson I learned was having a not so good pair of shoes will make you appreciate having a proper pair of running shoes and to act on the advice I'm given. Buy a proper pair of shoes to avoid injury and unnecessary soreness! Remember to replace them after the cushion goes away, this generally takes 6 – 9 months.

When you run, you want to be as light as possible when it comes to gear. I always recommend a light pair of shorts and a comfortable shirt, avoid cotton as it can irritate your skin. Whatever is comfortable for you will work at the end of the day. When you first start you do not have to get the "fancy" gear, in fact I wouldn't even recommend it. Once you start putting on the miles, you will actually notice a difference when you do invest in gear and will even appreciate it a bit more. An added bonus is the gear will last for a long time, as you move forward though the clothes may not fit as you will naturally start to lose weight, especially if you don't exercise regularly right now.

When the temperatures start to drop you will want to start layering and this isn't fun as we get spoiled in the summer. If you live in a warm climate that doesn't drop below 0, well I hate you, just kidding. For those of us who do live in a colder climate, the goal is to layer just enough so you are warm, not overly warm as you do not want to sweat, especially in the winter. The wind can be quite cruel. If you go to your local Running Room, they will be able to get you a few different options. If you are on a budget, go to Winners or Marshalls, I purchased a light snowboard jacket and used that for one season until I could afford to buy a nicer winter running jacket the next season. A good rule is for every -10 Celsius or 14 Fahrenheit for my American friends below 0 Celsius or 14 Fahrenheit, is to add a layer. For example, if it's -20 Celsius or -4 Fahrenheit you should have at least two layers on not counting your shirt. If it's -30 Celsius or -22 Fahrenheit, you will want to have at least three layers plus your shirt, the same goes for

pants! Yes, you will be running at least 5k in -30celcuis and actually enjoying it, you will feel like a bad ass.

Consistency

That magic word that I live my life by, consistency. Without it, you will never get anywhere, no matter what you are working on. Consistency is everything. The more consistent you are at something, the more likely you are to succeed and become better at it. Whether it's attracting your next mate, working for that promotion, following your dream or setting your next running PR, you must stay consistent.

Think of the last time you gave up on something and how much regret you had shortly after. It could be anything from weight loss, exercise to not finishing the course you signed up for or something as trivial as finishing a video game. My father taught me something that I still remember to do this day, 99% of the time the hardest thing to do is the right thing to do. I have plenty of examples but will stick to a couple. One is someone knows they are in a toxic relationship but instead of ending it which would be the hard thing to do, they choose to stay in it because it's the easier option. On the flip side, we all have that friend who complains about being single and when faced with the opportunity to change that, a lot of us (including myself, sometimes) chicken out. What I mean by that is you see someone you are attracted too, they might even smile at you and the easy thing to do would be to smile back and carry on with your day. The hard thing to do would be to go over there and talk to them. This rule especially relates to running, the easy thing to do would pass on one of your training days or give this up all together, the hard thing to do would be to stick with it and get out there. Always remember that!

If you hire me as your Amateur Running Coach, you will be able to run your first 5k without stopping in 4 weeks and your first 10k shortly after within 12 weeks of starting out. That probably sounds impossible and I thought it was when I had first started but my running mentor made that same guarantee to me and he was right. But you must stay consistent, be patient and prepared to work hard!

Technique

When I first started running I didn't really focus too much on my technique and I don't encourage you too, I just focused on getting out there and putting on the miles. In fact, I didn't even track my pace at first, but I will get more into that in chapter seven.

Some basic tips are keeping good posture while running, especially when you start to get tired and fatigued. This puts less stress on your joints and distributes energy evenly throughout your body. You can google good running posture and find some great examples. The other big thing you always want to do, especially when you start to get tired is to always keep your head up. I used to do put my head down all of the time and was given advice, I can't even remember from who, to always look forward. A lot of runners when tired will start to look at the ground which restricts breathing and can eventually lead you to stopping for a break. Plus you always want to remain aware of your surroundings. It's always a good thing landing flat on your feet.

Another trick I learned when I started to advance was to never stop, especially in your distance runs. The key is to just slow down so you do not lose your rhythm. As soon as you stop, you will feel how tired you are and your legs will start to feel wobbly when you start again. This really played a factor in helping me finish my first 10k run, however I did have to stop at about 7k and that's fine too. Believe me I felt how tired I was as well, slightly dizzy and a little wobbly, but that's normal, you just push through it. By the time you get to week 12, you will have this method down and be able to exercise it during your 10k runs. I will cover more of this in training as you will need to stop when you first start, it's all coming together isn't it?

Breathing is fairly straight forward but another big one, you always want to ensure your body is getting enough oxygen. If you are out of breath quickly into your run, especially at the start, that generally means you are out of shape or smoke, do not smoke! You always want to breathe in a nice calm fashion, it will help maintain your heart rate. Lungs, they will likely start to hurt! One weird trick I learned that worked for me and I am hoping it will work for you is when your lungs start to hurt, inhale through your nose and exhale out of your mouth. Repeat this until your lungs stop hurting. It sounds absolutely ridiculous but does work! Eventually, you will no longer get sore lungs, I can't even remember the last time this happened to me but I know when it did, I would do those and it would tremendously help.

Stretching

One of the biggest things that is going to keep you healthy, injury free and aid in recovery is stretching. I always recommend a morning stretching ritual on training and rest days. I generally take 15 – 30 minutes to do a full body stretch in the morning and have noticed massive benefits. I'm not as stiff anymore and I tend to recover quicker.

I personally do not recommend stretching when you are "cold", this means stretching right before a run, there hasn't been any proof that this avoid injuries or even helps. If anything, I believe it can hinder your performance and possibly cause an injury. When I first started running I would generally stretch at 2.5k if I was doing a 5k run. As I progressed I was able to stretch after finishing my 5k and 10k runs as I didn't need to take a break.

One of the most important things is that you will always want to stretch after every run to avoid injury, no matter how tired or sore you are. This is going to help you get ready for your next run. When realistic, I try to do yoga at least once a week as well, although that doesn't always happen. You can find plenty of great stretching routines on YouTube or Google.

Remember you are going to be doing a lot of volume over the next 12 weeks which is why recovery is so important so you can stay fresh and keep on training.

Training

The moment we've all been waiting for, what the hell to do for your first run. We will start with what to expect during your first 5k run. Chances are it's going to be tough and demotivating, that's normal. Remember, consistency and patience.

You will start off with 5km runs for the first four weeks and then move into 10km runs and leading up to the race you will be putting on a lot more mileage. Most training plans are fairly generic, however we all come in all different shapes and sizes, especially when we are first starting up and my coaching approach is to have a customized plan that lets you go at your own pace. You might need to stop 500meters into your run while the next person doesn't need to stop until 1km. This will make more sense as you start to consistently train.

5KM Amateur Running

You will have two options. The first one is getting a gym membership if it's winter so you have access to a treadmill and other equipment for cross training on your "rest" days from running. The second and better option weather permitting is finding a nice 5km loop, a park is best. Once you get going you will start to obtain more gear so weather will not be a big factor in six months' time. The reason for finding a 5km loop is it will give you points of measurement to ensure that you are improving. If you had to stop by that tree last time, well let's push past it next time and so on, until you are running the loop without stopping. A treadmill will do the same as you will see at what km's are you having to stop at.

When I ran my first 5km run, I had to stop about four or five times, it's normal. That would work out to taking a break every 1km. I would start walking and remember why I am doing what I am doing, which would push me to start again. Remember, keep a slow comfortable pace to start, it's not a race, yet. When I would get to my second break is generally when I would do a good stretch, this was usually at the half way point. After this I would start running again.

You will want to do three to four 5km runs per week for the first four weeks which is going to lead into your first 10k run, aren't you excited?

On a side note, if you are worried what others might think when you run and have to stop, who cares? At least you're trying to better yourself. Remember all runners for the most part started at the same spot, especially runners like you and I who got into the sport later on in life. At the end of the day people will criticize you for trying something new and it's likely because they are jealous that they are not taking action in their lives. Do not let the haters bring you down, keep pushing forward and take control.

What time of the day should you run at? Whatever the hell works for your schedule, it's as simple as that. I have always been an advocate for early morning runs as it will set the whole tone for your day. It has amazing benefits, however this takes a lot of discipline and getting used to. When I first started running it was always after work and in the morning on my days off. The advantage of this is you are on a full fuel tank calorie and hydration.

10k Amateur Running

It's starting to get exciting now, congratulations, I guarantee if you stayed consistent with the training and stretching, you can now run 5k without stopping. That's something to be very proud of. Now it's time to master the 10k runs. The main reason for this is the mental game. By week 12 you will start to feel that, I could do another lap if needed. Week five is a different story, let's get you through your first 10k run!

You will use the same principles as above building up to it. Pick a "long run day", whatever day you are not working and slowly build up from 7kms to 8kms and so on. It took me an hour and a half to do my first 10k run, but once I finished, I got a high that I will never forget, I was hooked after that and I'm excited for you to get that same feeling.

16k Amateur Running

The reason why you want to work up to 16k is simply to improve your mental game. If you run 10k, you likely can run 21k. Imagining having to do another 11kms might be challenging though. I know it was for me. However, once you finish your 16kms run, what's 5km more? That's an easy training run for you!

Race Week Amateur Running

You want to be completely recovered for your race and I'm so proud that you've made it this far. Believe it or not with all of the training you've done, it will feel weird not running for four days.

It's time for what is likely going to be one of the biggest challenges you've ever faced, until your next race that is. I can assure you that all of your hard work and time has paid off. You should be fairly confident at this point. It's time for you to put your training to the test.

Now don't get too excited 😊, you still have to finish the remainder of the eBook before you start training. There are still some key factors to avoid injury and keep you as efficient as possible.

Over Training

This is a big one. Remember to always listen to your body, if something doesn't feel quite right, take the day off, go for a 5k walk or bike ride instead. You do not want to injure yourself as this will all be for nothing.

I had a hard lesson when it came to over training, at the time was the most adversity I had ever faced in my life. It was so bad that I didn't think I would ever be able to run long distance and I was crushed as I had fallen in love with the sport. I had a few close friends telling me I was over training and didn't want to listen, they were both about 15 years old then me and I remember thinking to myself that I had my youth and father time was on my side. The better you become at running, the more addicting it becomes, like anything in life that you become good at. I was running 6 – 7 days a week nonstop and putting on some serious miles. I almost felt invisible to the point that I wasn't really even stretching after my runs or in the morning, however that all came to a halt rather quickly. This one is near and dear to me... I DO NOT WANT THE SAME THING TO HAPPEN TO YOU. So please take my advice, listen to your body and stretch on a regular basis!

Aside from running being addicting, another reason for over training is wanting to keep the calorie burn going if you are trying to lose weight. After I finally recovered from my injury, I started stretching again on a regular basis and cross training, which was cycling in between my run days. For example, I would run Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and cycle Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. It doesn't have to be cycling either, it could be swimming, badminton, tennis, golf, boxing or weight and strength training. The key is to have another cardiovascular activity that you enjoy so you do not need to much motivation to go out and do it.

Seasons

Summer, oh how glorious it is. You might be surprised to hear that my favorite time of year for running is in the fall. It's never too cold or too hot, it's a nice in-between, especially if you are running right after work or in the evening. I'm going to go through the advantages of each season and what to watch out for.

Summer

Generally, I always recommend early morning or late evening runs in the summer, especially if you live in a hot climate. I've had a few terrible runs in 30+ weather. Although my friend had claimed it builds endurance and mental toughness, we both ended up getting eaten alive by mosquitoes when we had to stop, it did however encourage us to run but we were so dizzy and dehydrated, we couldn't outrun the buggers. It will make you appreciate normal running temperatures and makes you tough.

Fall

This is by far the perfect time of year as you can essentially run whenever you want and be relatively comfortable. You don't have to layer too much at this point. The evening sunsets will be breathtaking as well, you will really start to appreciate running in these moments.

Winter

As I said earlier in the book, yes you will be running outdoors in the winter. This is an amazing way to build endurance, you just have to be smart about it and know your limits. I've ran 5k in -45celcius and 10k in -25celcius, I survived both runs and it was a bit of a rush. Always remember to properly layer, the more winter runs you get under your belt, the more you will know what works for you. The big downside with winter is a lot of your runs will be running in the dark which can be a bit gloomy. I always try and save my big run for my day off, that way I can run during the day when the sun is shining. The biggest bonus of winter is it will make you appreciate the warmer weather and only having to wear a singlet.

Spring

This time of year, can be a bit wet and muddy, depending on where you live. However, you can slowly start to say good bye to the layers and you know summer and race season is right around the corner, that's right. If you downloaded this book in the winter, you are going to be a beast for your race.

Goals

This chapter is fairly general and not running specific. You likely already set at least one goal if you've made it this far into the book and if you are unsure what that might be, well it's the race you're training for!

You should always be setting goals, that's how you progress and move forward in life. I always smile when people ask me what my New Year's Resolutions are and I always tell them I don't have any, I set goals year round, why just do it once a year? The biggest thing that holds people back from setting goals and actually achieving them is the fear of failure. I've done a lot of failing in my life, however the key is to learn from your failure, readjust and start again. The worst thing you can do is give up and quit. Running will make you mentally stronger than you already are, at least it did for me. It's had profound benefits on my health, social life and career.

When you finish your first race, it goes without saying that you will see your time and likely set a goal to beat that. My second eBook is going to focus on improving your half marathon time and explain how I went from 2:29:00 to under two hours in four races.

I challenge you to set 10 – 25 goals that you would like to achieve within the year, not just one or two like you typically do around New Year's and try to set one weekly goal at the start of each week. These goals could be anything from a new place to visit to saving money. Your yearly goals are going to take a lot of time to work at and your weekly goals are going to take minimal time to achieve. The more you achieve the more you will feel rewarded and want to push yourself, which is why weekly goals rock. One of your yearly goals could be a promotion at work in twelve months and one of your weekly goals could be setting a new 5km PR by the end of the week. During my morning runs, I generally set three daily mini goals. One usually involves my health, work and something revolving around my loved ones, such as cooking dinner for someone special or spending time with my family.

One of the key things that most people forget when setting goals is they must have structure to them. What I mean by that is if you want to achieve something, make a plan for it, similar to what you are doing with this book and running. If you want to lose weight, what exactly are you going to have to do to achieve that, what books will you have to read, what will you have to eat? The more prepared and organized you are, the more likely you will be to succeed. One of my goals when I was in my early twenties was to buy a house, everyone wants a place to call home but we sometimes forget to make a game plan to get it. It took me about five years of calculated saving and a lot of sacrifice, but now I have a house and a mortgage, which I sometimes ask myself if it was all worth it, ha-ha.

One thing you will notice is the harder you work, the luckier you become. Hard work pays off, especially in running! One of my favorite UFC fighters Conor McGregor doesn't believe in talent, instead he believes that all humans are born as equals and if you are lucky enough to find your craft, become obsessed with it and work hard, you will eventually rise to the top of whatever that might be. At least that's what he did. Good luck, although I know you do not need it as you make your own luck now.

Nutrition, Hydration & Sleep

What you put into your body is going to dictate your performance and recovery time, after all we are what we eat! I was obsessed with the candy “Nerds” growing up, my sister always told me that same thing and look at me now. I’m not sure what your current weight is and this isn’t really a “weight loss” book, even though you will notice the pounds start to drop the more you run as you will be burning calories you normally wouldn’t have before, especially if you were not consistently exercising before you started reading this book.

One thing to note is the lighter you are, the faster you will be able to run, that’s a fact. When I finished my first half marathon I weighed around 190 pounds, my time was 2:29:00. When I set my new PR of 1:58:00 a year and a half later, I was at 160 pounds. Aside from being able to run faster, being at a healthy weight will help you live a long and fulfilling life. I really do believe that we are in complete control of who we want to be, especially in the western world, you just have to work for it, be consistent and patient. I also think you should be happy with who you are, after all we are unique in our own way. But there is nothing wrong with working towards becoming a better version of yourself, in fact I encourage it. I am on the quest to become what I feel is the absolute best version of myself in health and spirit.

I will give you some basic “diet” advice that you probably already know. If you are trying to “diet”, the easiest thing to remember is weight loss is all about calories in vs calories out. If you consume less calories, you will lose weight. If you eat at maintenance, which means you won’t gain or lose weight and burn 500 – 1000 calories from a run, you will lose weight as your exercise has put you into a caloric deficit. If you are supposed to consume 2500 calories in a day and ate 3500 and burned 500 calories, you will slowly gain weight. It’s complicated I know.

Something else I’ve learned over the years is a calorie isn’t a calorie. What I mean by this is if you were to eat 8 medium size apples which would be around 500 calories or eat three small cheese burgers from your favorite fast food chain which is around 500 calories, which is more likely to make you gain weight? It’s really simple when you think about it. A great app for counting calories is MyFitnessPal, it’s free too! Download it and eat what you would normally consume in a day, you might be surprised what the numbers turn out to be.

I always recommend a high carb, low fat medium protein diet and eating abundantly (whole foods; lots of vegetables, fruits, legumes, beans & nuts – fiber!!!). When you eat healthy and consume your maintenance calories, you will actually have energy to exercise and you will recover quicker than being on a calorie deficit. Protein will help you recover as well, don’t overdo it though as the protein your body doesn’t use will be stored as fat, at least that’s what I’ve been told. I always recommend .05 of protein per pound of whatever your goal weight is. So if you weigh 230 pounds and your goal is to get to 180 pounds, you would only have to eat 90 grams of protein, but I wouldn’t really focus too much on that number until you get into the 10km portion of your training.

The best advice I can give is to have a lifestyle change which is pretty much what you are doing right now and not a “diet”. Every fad diet that you’ve tried and believe me I have tried them too, they simply don’t work because they are not sustainable over long periods of time. Having a well-balanced diet with a normal calorie intake and lots of exercise is sustainable, it’s what makes us human. Here is a typical day of eating is for me when I plan on doing a 5km or 10km run.

Breakfast

- **One weight loss hack is to skip breakfast and train fasted in the morning, you can save your calories for a bigger meal at lunch or in the evening, the strategy is called “intermittent fasting”, I recommend you do your own research on it!**

(If you're short on time, throw everything into a blender)

1 apple

2 mandarin oranges

1 banana

1 cup almond milk

1 vegan protein scoop

Lunch

Big salad packed full of greens; bright colors

Homemade dressing

Organic sprouted bread

3 table spoons of hemp seeds

Dinner

1 – 3 cups of cooked rice

6 cups of steamed spinach or other greens such as peas or broccoli

Tofu, lentils or beans (great protein sources)

Snacks

This is generally when I consume my fat sources which come from nuts, cliff bars, oils and avocados.

The above works out to about 50% Carbs / 30% Protein (about 100grams) / 20% Fat for the day. Calorie wise it's about 2590 and I need to eat 2600 to maintain my current weight. MyFitnessPal will break this down for you each day. Now technically I will lose weight as I will be in a calorie deficit, most days I am. However on my rest days, I love to indulge and cook for the people I love, generally I will be on a calorie surplus that day which makes up for the calories I burned. Needless to say if I purposely want to lose weight, it's really easy on this life style.

The only supplements I take is Vegan protein and B12. You can skip on the protein if you are on a budget but I like it. Vega is a great brand. I don't recommend Whey protein as it will spike your insulin which can cause weight gain. Plus it's made from milk, aside from babies, who even drinks that stuff anymore? I'm not here to preach about supplements and your diet though, do some more research and do what works best for you. We are all built differently so what works for me might not work for you. Some

people prefer to have six small meals a day, others would rather have three large meals and some people prefer to do all of their eating in the evening and fast throughout the day.

At the end of the day, focus on running and work on what you put into your body. If you have an unhealthy life style, slowly cut things out, do not do it all at once or you will be setting yourself up for failure. I speak from experience, there was a time when I would eat fast food 5 – 6 times a week. Your body gets addicted to all of the salt, fat and MSG. Instead of going 6 times a week, I set a goal to only eat out four times a week. I soon had that down to 1 and now I do not eat fast food at all and if I do it's a healthy option.

You always want to stay hydrated, no matter what you are doing. It's especially important before a race and I will go into more detail on that. One of the biggest things that will dehydrate you and I hate to say it, but its alcohol. I never consume alcohol the week (or even a few weeks earlier) leading up to a race or on training days. It can also really mess with your recovery, especially after a big race, but hey we only live once!

Go out and buy a 1Litre water bottle. I always consume a liter of water every morning with half a lemon squeezed in. If I sleep in or am running behind due to my morning run, I will throw breakfast into a bag, bring it to work so I can still consume my liter of water before eating, I'm dedicated aren't I (ha-ha)? It makes digestion a lot easier, you will notice a huge benefit and feel more awake. I can't really tell you exactly how much water to consume in a day but your pee should be almost clear throughout the day, it's a great way to tell if you are hydrated or not. Now for the good part, you will want to drink a bit more water 3 days before your race, I usually start on Thursday if I have a race on Sunday. The reason you do this is it isn't realistic for you to drink 2 – 3litres of water on the morning of your race, you'll maybe be able to drink a liter which is perfect as there will be water stations throughout the course.

Over everything else, one of the biggest factors for recovery is how much sleep you are getting. On average you want to get at least 8 hours of sleep. When you sleep, your body actually starts to heal itself, which is why you go to bed sore and wake up feeling much better the next day, provided you got enough sleep. Getting eight hours of sleep isn't always manageable depending on what we have going on in our lives but you should always make an effort to get enough sleep. Your employer will appreciate it as well as you will be more productive throughout the day. This is one of the easiest things you can do that doesn't take much effort to stay healthy, recover quicker and avoid injury.

Mental Game

One thing running long distance has done for me and I'm confident will do for you is make you mentally stronger, that's a fact. I actually crave those moments of fatigue when my body and mind want to quit but I push forward, not always but most times, ha-ha. It's a feeling like nothing else, when you are 9k into a 15k run, there is no turning back but just finishing the run. A lot of us do not get to experience that in our 9 – 5 jobs. Especially in the western world, we have it pretty easy here.

When I want to give up and throw in the towel, I always try to think of everyone I am letting down or everything who thinks that "I'm all talk". I want to prove to my loved ones that when I say I am going to do something, I damn well do it. I also like shutting up the haters too, not that I have too many. This is your opportunity to do the same. You have to know that some of your friends, although they are sincere will think to themselves "oh another training program, what happened to your last one"? Do not let this be a fad, let this be your new lifestyle.

Running has shown me that I could do things that I didn't think possible. When I ran my first half marathon, afterwards I never thought I would ever be able to get my time under two hours. However after staying consistent and patient with running, I actually started to believe that I could be under two hours. I could feel myself getting faster. It's incredible what you can achieve when you stay consistent with something and work hard. If you had asked me five years ago that I would ever even run a half marathon, I would have told you that you're crazy. In fact, I believe that's what I told my running mentor at the time. But he believed in me and after a while, I started to believe in myself when it came to running. Once you win yourself over and actually start to believe in yourself, you will be amazed at what you will be able to accomplish.

Finding a Running Buddy

At the end of the day you are the only person in control of your life, no one else is, no matter what you want to believe. We can't control everything in our lives as shit happens sometimes, but I truly do believe we are in control 99% of the time. You do not have to do anything, you chose to. You might argue with me saying well everyone needs a job to pay for food and shelter. I would argue you chose to work so you can have food and shelter. You could quit your job tomorrow, but would risk possibly having to move back home with your parents or worse, becoming homeless and not having food, the consequences will usually outweigh your decision.

The reason I bring this up is for you not to blame your failure on other people but to put it on yourself. I'm not asking you to feel sorry for yourself, I'm asking you to take responsibility, learn from your failure, adjust and try again. There are huge benefits of having a running buddy, I have a couple people that I regularly run with. However I never use them as a scapegoat for not going for a run, "I'm not going to go today because so and so can't make it". You will never get anywhere in life if you constantly believe you have to rely on other people to get shit done. If you are married, I would encourage you to get your partner involved in your journey and have them partake in your new lifestyle. Regardless if they chose too or not, I'm sure they will end up supporting you no matter what. I ran with my significant other at the time on a regular basis, it was one of the favorite things that we had in common. There is nothing better than going for a Sunday morning 10km run and having an awesome breakfast after. You get where I am going with this. A partner will always help motivate you but do not let it do the opposite either.

Start Running

Congratulations, you've made it through and are ready to start a big, new and exciting chapter in your life. I'm very excited for you. I remember when I first started, I was incredibly nervous and even a little scared, especially when it came to my first 10k run as I was unsure what to expect. Never let fear hold you back, imagine if I would have? I would have missed out on so much over the last four years. As I said before, the rush and high you get after doing your first long distance run will have you hooked.

Remember you are in control, I can't force you to run, no one can do that, only you can. Start making your own luck and work hard at this, you will be successful if you stay consistent. Of course, if you want, I can be with you along the way with my online coaching services. If you have any questions or feel that I might have left something unanswered, I encourage you to send me a quick email. I will get back to you as soon as I can.

All the best and Happy Running!