**Runners at Heart**

**Training Tips for a Half Marathon**

Preparing for a half marathon is something you cannot do in only a few days. Runners who have not run at least 5 miles in a previous race do not need to attempt the half marathon, but if you are truly a long‑distance runner, then you should consider joining us in training for the upcoming River City Half Marathon. The following training tips should put you in fine form for the race!

**Choose a Plan**

Your training schedule should last at least 14 weeks, so give yourself plenty of lead time to train. Your body must acclimate to the training demands, and training should match your fitness level.

**Run Quality Miles**

Simply running a distance is not enough preparation. In fact, the more miles you run at the same pace, the greater is your chance for injury. Always begin with a 1-mile warm-up at a relatively slow pace, and end with a 1-mile cool down at the same slow pace. The miles in between should be run at about 30 seconds slower than your typical 5K pace.

**Cross-train**

Light resistance training and aerobic exercise on the days you do not run is a great way to optimize your fitness. Try cycling, swimming, or using an elliptical machine to target your core and upper body. Such workouts also help you maintain good running form and help counteract fatigue.

**Prepare Mentally**

A half marathon isn’t really comfortable, but it also is not too hard for an experienced runner. It is a bit mentally taxing, so train your brain to turn every negative thought into a positive thought. Mental lows will creep up, so be prepared to combat them.

**Train with Others**

Training in a group can make it a fun experience. In fact, it can make all the difference between success and failure as you approach that half marathon. Also, others will count on you; if you don’t show up, you’ll be missed.

**Do your Research**

As simple as it sounds, find out what sports drink will be provided at the race, and then train using the same drink. Or you can plan to bring your own in a hydration belt. Take a look at the route, study the changes in elevation, and try to train under the same conditions.

**Rest**

Give your body time to repair and rebuild. Take your scheduled rest days, and listen to your body.

**What to Wear**

Skip the cotton, and wear clothing designed to wick moisture. Major sports brands usually provide gear made especially for runners, such as Nike Dri-Fit™. The same rule applies to socks. Above all, don’t wear something on race day that you’ve never worn before.