



Recovering From 26.2

Post-marathon recovery tips

Congratulations, you finished a marathon! Your hard work and training have paid off. Whether this is your first marathon or your fifteenth, it is important to take care of your body and recover properly. 26.2 miles stresses your muscles, joints and circulatory system. Follow these post-marathon tips to recover and heal properly, and return to training for the next big race.

- Recovery starts the minute you cross the finish line, so after you collect your medal and hugs, keep moving. Walk for at least 10 to 15 minutes before sitting down. Stopping abruptly can lock up and tighten the muscles. Continuing to move will help your body cool down and slowly return to its normal resting state.
- After a marathon your body is like a car after a long trip. It needs to refuel. Replenish your nutrition stores in the first 30 minutes after the race to ensure the nutrients aid in healing stressed muscles. A combination of carbs and protein in a 3:1 ratio are absorbed best. Eating a small amount every 30 minutes will ease your system back to normal.
- Rehydrate. Many runners skip the water stations to cut time and end the race dehydrated. Water works, but sports drinks replenish electrolytes, cutting your risk of over hydration. Continue to sip fluids throughout the day. Medium to deep yellow urine means you are still dehydrated. Clear urine means you are well on your way to a fully hydrated body.
- Try to resist the hot tub and soak your lower extremities in a cool bath or use ice packs to diminish inflamed muscles.
- Light-pressure massages are good, but wait 12 to 24 hours after the race. Getting deep muscle work too soon can increase inflammation, prolonging the healing process.
- Be prepared for post-marathon blues. You focused on the race, eaten according to plan and slept on schedule for the last few months. Now that the race is over, be sure to set a new goal or allow time to ease back into the “real world” of non-training.
- You can start running again in a few days. A light, 30-minute jog will increase blood flow and warm muscles up. Your body will tell you if you’re ready. If you are still sore wait another day or two and add some light flexibility work.
- Pay attention to your health. Marathon training and the race can lower your immune system. Continue eating right, drinking fluids and getting plenty of rest.
- Reward yourself! You have accomplished a great feat. Treat yourself accordingly.