

GET, SET... GO!

The Mumbai marathon is a few months away and for those who are serious about participating and completing it, there is no time to waste. **Dev Goswami** tells you how you can go about training for the marathon this year...



>>> If you want to participate in the marathon, it's time to start training

"RUN 3-4 TIMES A WEEK"

"I ran my first marathon in 2008 and also took part in the marathon this year. My training schedule for the last marathon included hitting the gym almost 5 days a week while squeezing in about 3-4 runs a week. I tried to increase both my speed and distance with each passing day. One of the most important things to keep in mind is to train at the gym and run regularly. At the gym, pay extra attention to your legs to help improve stamina."
— Shrenik Alvani, 32, Mumbai

Those who have successfully completed a marathon will agree that no matter what position you finish in, the feeling of running a marathon can give you a high which no other fitness achievement can. It is because of this reason that running a marathon is a gruelling task and successfully completing it is proof that your body is fit enough to withstand the challenge.

However, just like college or school exams, you cannot just show up at the starting line and expect to achieve the impossible. You need to maintain a strict schedule along with increasing the intensity as you near the marathon if you want to run the whole length.

We speak to Althea Shah, fitness expert from Gold's Gym, who tells us how we should prepare for the marathon this year.

DRESS UP CORRECTLY

Before you even start your training, it is important to ensure that you have the proper equipment with you. The most important thing is your pair of running shoes. Althea says, "Running puts a lot of stress on your shins, calves and knees so it is important to wear a good pair of running shoes. Use shoes that have covered less than 640km to maximise shock-absorption." She advises buying a new pair of shoes 4-6 weeks before the marathon. Also, make sure to wear light colours along with a cap to reduce the effect of the heat.

WHAT EXERCISES TO INCLUDE

When training for a marathon the best exercise that can be undertaken is, well... running. People who already have a jogging routine incorporated in their workouts will find it easier to train for a marathon. You should aim to complete a run each day with a set distance in mind. Till your body is completely comfortable with a particular distance, you should not increase it.

Apart from running, Althea also stresses on the need to include strength training in your training schedule. While running will increase your stamina, Althea warns, "Only running and no strength training is detrimental to your joints and can lead to degeneration of

muscles." There are no specific marathon exercises when it comes to weight training. You just have to make sure that you include a couple of days of weight training sessions at the gym, concentrating on your whole body.

THE REGIME

When it comes to your weekly regime, Althea tells us, "Your exercise regime should include four days of runs, two days of weight training and one day of rest." She also adds that you must include one road run per week as it gives you a feel of the outdoors. As you near the marathon, try and include two road runs per week. But, Althea says that the last week before the marathon should be reserved for rest.

As far as intensity is concerned, Althea emphasises on listening to your body. She says, "When you start feeling that your current pace or distance has become too easy, you should increase your stride, length or speed." She however, recommends increasing your time only over the months and not according to your body's signs. See the box for more information on how you should increase the duration of your runs over a period of months.

Finally, it all comes down to your motivation to succeed. When compared to other fitness achievements, running a marathon is a lot less complicated but crossing the finish line is completely worth it!

Althea tells us about how you should vary the duration of your runs and what your running schedule should look like over the next few months:

- You should preferably look to increase the duration of your runs by a few minutes each week and stick to it for an entire week.
- By the end of October, you should look to complete a non-stop run for about 30 minutes.
- As you enter November, start increasing your duration at the end of each week. Look to have a run of 45 minutes by mid-November.
- Try and enter December with a run of about an hour and aim to run for about 1 ½ hours by the end of December.
- By mid-January you should easily be able to complete a 2-hour run.