

Ask the Coaches – 7/7/21

Coach Gael and Coach Yvel

Thank you everyone who attended Ask the Coaches! This week's session focused on pain treatment, recovery, nutrition, and running in hot weather.

Question: Given pain is the body's way to notify one that something is wrong, is the use of Tylenol/Ibuprofen or topical pain relief aids contraindicated for running?

Natural recovery is best. Coach Gael and Yvel do not recommend taking them. Instead, evaluate your discomfort – is it muscle soreness or indeed pain. Seek the advice of a credentialed physician, do not self-diagnose or ask the internet. The coaches recommend natural recovery for muscle soreness including rest and recovery. If you train appropriately, you will never have the use for topical pain relief aids.

- Do NOT run through pain, no matter what your tolerance is. Pain is different from soreness and discomfort. It's common for a lot of runners to run through pain, but it can build up and worsen, especially around the joints (ankles, knees, hips) with harmful long-lasting effects. If the joint has any issues, constant impact on pavement will worsen it, may result in surgery, or at worst, the inability to continue running.

Differentiate between different types of pain.

- Muscle pain means that the muscle is overworked, but if the pain is continuous, you may have strained it. Rest is important to let the muscle fibers regenerate; apply R.I.C.E. therapy and ensure that you are hydrated with enough water.
- Joint pain can result from a number of factors but results from continuous impact on pavement will exacerbate it.

Rest, recover, and sleep!

- Rest is CRUCIAL and it will allow you a better and mindful performance and running economy. Depending on your activity and the intensity, recovery requires 24-48 hours of rest. Coach Gael runs 4 days a week, cross trains 1 day and rests 2 days a week to let the muscles recover. Some of Coach Gael's personal records came from being rested.

Make sure to stretch.

- Many athletes have tight IT bands and hip flexors from not stretching and recovering enough after training. When you see people waddling at the end of a marathon, unable to bend their knees, it could be the cause of these two work horses that are often used, but rarely stretched.
 - If you don't stretch, it leads to ultra-tightness in the muscles, a poor running or racing experience. An overused muscle will take longer to work out its soreness if it is not loved by stretching, rolling, massaging, or even an ice bath.

What if you end up needing to use pain relief aids?

- They should be diagnosed by your doctor, but knowing that folks will do what they feel is best for them, do not apply topical balms unless you go through a warmup. They can create a false sense of preparation and make the muscles seem to be warmed up when they are not.
- Biofreeze: If you want to use it, try it out on a run or two before your race to see how it is received by your body. All of these things only bring temporary relief for muscle soreness, we recommend you back off training and apply natural remedies such ice, massage, and rest.

Question: What building blocks (nutritional) are needed to be available for maximum recovery periods?

The coaches prefaced this discussion with the fact that they are not nutritionists. Nutrition was discussed in general terms.

Nutrition is a key component for athletes. Same as you ensure that your car has enough gas and oil to continue its destination without breaking down, you must do the same with your body in preparation for the endurance of your run/race. It's important to have a proper balance of carbs, proteins, and fats. The coaches suggest consulting a nutritionist.

- **Fuel yourself well.** Do not go out for a long run on an empty stomach as you will become lethargic; you will be completely void of the energy to finish your run. Appropriate fueling as before and during your run will prevent binge eating post run.
 - Be mindful of calories burned and what you are putting back in.
- Coach Gael uses Pedialyte as an electrolyte drink during her runs along with other nutritionally appropriate foods and Coach Yvel used Ensure during his track training.
 - For rest days (no running), Coach Gael increases her protein intake with (2) protein 8-ounce drinks of whey protein, water or unsweetened almond milk.
- Neither coach recommends loading prior to a ½ or full marathon as it is not an effective approach to fueling for these distances. Your glycogen storage takes about 48 hours to cycle carb necessary for your endurance through your body and ingesting copious amounts of carbs a few hours before your race is counter-productive. Instead, start ingesting a bit more carbs a week out before race day such as increasing your breakfast of oatmeal from a cup to a bowl, your small pasta lunch to a medium size etc.
- **Get enough sodium.** Insufficient sodium can lead to cramping and at worst, death.
 - When athletes have ashy-white residues across their foreheads, it's because there is a lot of sodium in sweat. Sometimes this is a measurement of dehydration, but not necessarily. Simply use it as a guide to ensure appropriate sodium and electrolyte levels. A well-balanced nutritional fuel provided by vendors such as Tailwind or UCAN blend can ensure that you are well-balanced during your running. Salt and electrolyte tabs before your activity is another helpful source.

Question: How do we run in hot weather?

Run Smart! If you are not yet acclimated to the temps, run at a slower pace until your lungs adapt to the pacing faster or going longer in our hot and humid temps. Consider applying a run/walk method. Be mindful of heat strokes and it is OKAY to run inside on a treadmill. Coach Yvel loves running in warm weather, while Coach Gael can barely tolerate; when the indices are over a 100, she runs on the treadmill.

Emphasis on hydration is a must! Not being sufficiently hydrated for your summer runs will result in a very unpleasant experience. Coach Gael tries to consume all of her water by 2:00 p.m. for a 5:00 p.m. run or by 8:00 p.m. for a 5:00 a.m. run. In the summer time, she adds a bit of salty foods such as a handful of potato chips, salted almonds, or a salt tablet to prevent cramping

Wear clothing made of light, wicking materials. Do not wear clothing like cotton T-shirts that will prevent sweat from evaporating.

- Coach Gael suggests a running visor with terrycloth lining to trap the sweat; it also keeps the sun off your face. Be sure to also add sunscreen; she uses SPF 30 in her facial moisturizer and body spray.

Wear appropriate gear to avoid chafing.

- For men, avoid chafed nipples by wearing wicking materials or adding nip-guards. Some men also swear by Band-Aids. Men, consider wearing Spandex under shorts to minimize more chafing.
- For all, there are anti-chaffing ointments that can be applied pre run to aid in preventing chaffing.

Try running very early a.m. before sunrise or in the evening at around 6:30 or 7:00 p.m.

- During her summer training, Coach Gael sometimes run her long runs at 4:30 a.m. to avoid most of the sun and humidity. She also loves running in the evening and recommends shaded areas.
- Coach Yvel enjoys running on Memorial Drive – there are many runners and it's close to water, which is better than the city.