



## 7 Secrets to a Successful Race!

1. **Don't** give in to the temptation to train too much and/or too close to race day. You will not be able to positively influence your fitness level in the days leading up to the race; however, you can negatively impact your race by training during that time (training meaning anything of significant duration or intensity).
2. In the days leading up to your race, **Don't** drink excess amounts of water in the hopes of "getting a head start" on your fluid requirements for the race. Consumption of water equivalent to roughly .5 to .6 of your body weight in pounds is a good gauge in regards to how much you should be consuming daily (example: 180-lb athletes should drink approximately 90-108 ounces of water daily). However, if you've not been following this recommendation consistently, don't start now, as this will overwhelm your body with too much fluid too soon, which may increase the potential for hyponatremia.
3. Leading up to a race, **Don't** stuff yourself with extra food in the hopes that you're "carbo loading". The time period for carbohydrate loading (i.e., maximizing muscle glycogen storage capabilities) has, for all intents and purposes, passed. In essence, "carbo loading" is what you did in the 0-60 minutes after all your workouts leading up to the race. That's when the glycogen synthase enzyme -which controls glycogen storage- is most active, and that's how you topped off your glycogen stores. Any excess food you eat in the days leading up to the race is either going to be passed through the bowels or stored in adipose cells...neither of those things will benefit you.
4. **Don't** consume extra sodium (salt) in the hopes that you'll be "topping off your body stores" prior to the race. Since the average American already consumes approximately 6000 to 8000 mg per day (if not more), an amount well above the upper end recommended dose

of 2300-2400 mg/day, there is absolutely no need to increase that amount in the days prior to the race. (Hint: Adopting a low-sodium diet will do wonders for both your health and athletic performance). High sodium intake, especially in the days leading up to the race, is a recipe for disaster because it will greatly increase the potential for disruption of the hormonal mechanisms that control sodium regulation, re-circulation, and conservation. In the days leading up to the race, be especially cognizant of the salt content in your foods, especially if you go out to eat. Dining out can easily increase your already-high salt intake dramatically (into double figures!).

5. **Don't** overeat the night before the race, thinking you're "carbo loading". You can't positively affect muscle glycogen storage capabilities the night before the race, a time when the glycogen synthase enzyme -the enzyme that controls glycogen storage- is inactive (hint: that's why post-workout refueling is so important). Consume complex carbohydrates, some high quality protein, and low-to-no saturated fat, and be sure to drink sufficient amounts (but not too much) of water. Skip the alcohol, fatty foods, and dessert...save those "rewards" for after the race. Eat clean, eat until you're satisfied, and then call it a night.
6. If your workout or race is over 60 minutes in length, **Don't** consume any calories three hours prior to the race. The first fuel your body will use when the race begins is muscle glycogen. Eating a pre-race meal at the wrong time will negatively affect how your body utilizes its finite stores of glycogen, which will negatively impact your performance.
7. **Don't** sacrifice sleep to eat; it's not necessary. A better strategy than eating 1-2 hours prior to a 60+ minute workout or race is to consume 1-2 servings of Hammer Gel 5-10 minutes prior to the start. That will top off liver glycogen stores nicely (the goal of the pre-race meal), and provide some calories to augment muscle glycogen store during the beginning, but without negatively affecting how muscle glycogen is utilized.

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