

## RUNNING SHORTS

### **Beyond the race; preparing for success**

By Matthew Wagner

Most of us that consider ourselves runners realize that the race is ultimately the reward for all of the hard days of training. Not too many people are willing to wake up at 5:30 in the morning to go on a solitary run. Add in some cold, wet or humid weather, and some of us will choose to “blow it off” or wait for a better day. Consistency of training is a crucial factor in being successful on race day.

However, the day to day grind is only a part of our quest for a great race. We must understand that improvement does not only come from training harder or putting in more mileage, but from implementing other key performance aspects into our program.

An often overlooked factor of preparation is our nutritional intake. Notice how we didn't say “diet”. A diet implies a temporary change in eating habits to achieve some short term goal. Many diets result in short term weight loss that is quickly regained. We need to understand that our nutritional intake is extremely important in training and race performance. Many of us will ask “what is the best food to eat, or what are foods that I shouldn't eat”? The best way to answer that question is to say that there are no “super foods” to consume for optimal performance, and there are also no “bad” foods that you should not eat. However, even though there are no bad foods, there may be bad quantities. You enjoy your ice cream? How about one scoop instead of three? And maybe only treat yourself once a week instead of everyday. Be aware of how much of your nutritional intake consists of foods that will not enhance your performance.

The key in nutrition is relatively simple – eat well balanced meals from all of the food groups. Vegetables, fruits, meats and grains all have nutritional value, therefore these are the foods you should consume the most. Focus on eating “clean”, meaning try to reduce your intake of processed foods. Watch the added fat intake. Fat has a lot of excess calories that we do not need. Include a protein source at each one of your meals. Make sure you eat breakfast. Always consume a snack or meal with 75% carbohydrate and 25% protein within one hour after your workout. And even though you may be a runner and burning lots of calories, remember the two key words in nutritional intake: Portion Control.

Proper hydration is a very important aspect of your nutritional intake. Therefore, drink lots of water, but don't forget to consume electrolyte replacement drinks, especially when it is warm outside. Remember that you are sweating more than just water out there.

Eat so you can run better, don't run so you can eat more. You will be rewarded with a better race day performance!

#### **Recent race results:**

##### **Classical 25K (15.5 miles), Houston, Nov. 16**

Dana Forman, 26      2:57:56

##### **La Porte By the Bay Half Marathon (13.1 miles), Nov. 16**

Darryl Shreves, 55      1:51:01

Gerald Johnson, 59      2:40:00

**City of Conroe Turkey Trot 5K, Nov. 15**

Donna Fabian, 40 23:21

**Run for Life 5K, Rockdale, Nov. 15**

Steve Allen, 42 22:00

**Rob's Birthday Bash Trail Run, 30 Miles, Houston, Nov. 9**

Jacob Gautreaux, 42 4:58:23

**Madison Marathon, Madison, WI, Nov. 9**

Brian Backhaus, 31 3:25:55

**Fort Worth Marathon, Nov. 9**

Jody Slaughter, 51 4:45:13

**Veteran's Day Run, The Woodlands, Nov. 8**

**10K**

Steve Bickford, 53 42:22

Ken Johnson, 73 1:16:59

**5K**

Donna Fabian, 40 23:11

Cathy Bickford, 52 32:49

**CASA Superhero 10K, Liberty, Nov. 8**

Steve Allen, 42 47:15

**Upcoming races in Huntsville:**

November 22 – Texas Trail Endurance Runs, 50-Mile, 50K, 20K, Huntsville State Park

November 27 – Leftover Turkey 10K, 5K, 1-Mile, Physical Therapy Associates