

# Race Day Game Plan

So, you've trained for three months for the Great Race and the week is finally here. Now what? What should the last few days and hours between now and the race look like?

- 24-48 hours: Cross your "T's" and dot your "I's". I always feel more comfortable once I have my race bib in hand. Picking up your packet early means that you can troubleshoot any potential registration snafus in plenty of time before the race. I also double-check the weather and any traffic updates to ensure that I arrive in plenty of time to loosen up before the run. There's nothing like finding out that your bus is delayed on the morning of your event.
- 12-16 hours: Assemble the team. You'll want to pull out your race gear, fix your bib to your shirt and take final inventory of everything you'll need for the event. Are you packing the right pair of shoes? Do you have a change of socks and an extra t-shirt for after the race? It's inevitable that you'll forget something, but do your best to make sure that something is your chapstick and not your sneakers.
- 8-12 hours: Zzzzzz. Or at least "zzzzz" as best you can. It's not unusual to have some increased stress or anxiety the night before a race. Do your best to create optimal sleeping conditions by getting away from blue light, turning down the thermostat in the bedroom and setting an extra alarm for the morning. Don't be surprised if you get a fitful night's sleep, especially if it's your first time racing, but utilize some of these best practices to increase the likelihood of falling asleep and staying asleep.
- 2-3 hours: Eat whatever solid food you plan to before the race, so your body has time to digest and make the nutrition available to you come game time. Leave yourself enough time and space to eat in a relaxed environment and manner at home before travelling to the event. You don't want to stress yourself out trying to cram a bagel into your mouth while tying your shoelaces and navigating through traffic.
- 1-0 hours: Hydrate. Sip on some water instead of chugging it. You won't want an entire bottle sloshing around in your system while you're trying to perform. Loosen up. Use your dynamic warm-up drills to open up the joints, and jog around a bit to get the blood flowing. You'll want your joints to be lubricated, and your muscles full of fresh blood and oxygen when the gun goes off.
- 1 minute in: Slow down. Everyone. EVERYONE. Always. ALWAYS goes out too fast in a race. We can't help it. It's the environment, and it's our nature as competitive and excitable creatures. Lots of coaches will tell you to relax and pace yourself from the start. I'm not that coach, because it's an absolutely unrealistic expectation. Instead, what I like to tell people is to simply "settle" back into their goal race pace as soon as that initial burst of adrenaline wears off. Go ahead, get yourself off to a strong start! Find a good position, and hook up with a nice pack of people to pace with...then ease off the throttle just a bit so you don't crash and burn too early.

- 15 minutes to 2 hours in: Celebrate! Job well done. You've made it across the finish line happy and healthy. Whether this was your first race or your fiftieth, you deserve a hug and a high five!!