

Consistency is Key

Practice makes perfect, right? While perfection might not be the ultimate goal for everyone here, I'm sure that running a strong race is. The best, and perhaps only, way to ensure success is by staying consistent throughout your training cycle. Consistency doesn't mean running every day, and it also doesn't mean there won't be setbacks and struggles. What it does mean is keeping a clear vision of your goal, and making daily decisions to see that goal realized. I've been coaching all levels, for every surface and any distance throughout my career...and these are the top three nuggets of wisdom I can give you to ensure consistency:

- Focus on progression at the macro level. There will be training runs where things just don't "click" and you may feel what you're doing isn't working, or that you are not progressing as rapidly as you think you should be. Not every day is going to be the perfect day, but as long as you are trending in the right direction overall you don't need to stress about the day-to-day details.
- Don't make up for missed mileage. Trying to do extra work significantly increases injury risk and can also be detrimental to a progressive, periodized training plan. If you missed the workout yesterday, don't dwell on it. More importantly, don't try to rebound in a way that could sideline you for the season. Sure, getting sick is not ideal and that crisis at work might not resolve itself...but life happens, and sometimes it's best to simply roll with it.
- Do something every day that gets you closer to your goal. For the most part this means completing the workouts that are in your training plan. Other days it might mean something completely different! Are you scheduled for a recovery day? Use the time to truly recover by stretching, rolling or getting a massage. Do you have to miss a workout because your flight was delayed? Close your eyes and visualize the race in your head while you're stuck in the airport. Did your morning miles take longer than planned and now you're stuck in traffic on the way into work? Bring your attention to your breath and practice nasal breathing to stimulate your parasympathetic nervous system. It will help your body recover, and help your brain relax.

It's not easy to stay consistent, especially for twelve weeks straight. Check in next week for a post on establishing visions, goals and habits that will make it easier to be successful!