

# Cleaning the Engine

Let's be honest, we've all used training and the workouts to justify poor nutrition habits. "It's OK, I ran today." Now that we're getting closer to the race though, it's much tougher to get away with these bad decisions. Your gut health is just as important as the rest of you, and a healthy gut is better able to extract and process the nutrients from the food you are eating which will lead to better performance. You don't need to make any drastic changes to your existing routine. Instead, just be more aware of how you are fueling your body. You'll be amazed how you feel on race day after taking a little extra time to "clean the engine."

- Drink more water. Water helps with everything down to how well you sleep at night. You'll feel more energetic and revitalized, have better quality workouts and look years younger. When in doubt, have another glass.
- Avoid heavy foods right before the race. Give your gut a little time to catch up so you're not trying to digest a heavy dinner AND perform a high workload at the same time. Your body can only do one thing well at once, so while you DO need to fuel appropriately save the double-stacked burger for AFTER the run.
- You don't need to carb load. Save the carb loading for the longer distances...your body stores enough glycogen to get you through a 5K or 10K race with plenty of room to spare. It's tempting to use "carb loading" as an excuse to "binge eat" but you're not doing yourself any favors by spending two hours at a buffet the nice before a race.
- Sweat it out. Use a sauna to purge your system and sweat out all the toxins that might still be floating around in your body. Be careful though, 20 minutes is good enough...you're not doing yourself any good by hanging out in the heat any longer. Provided you've been eating well and staying hydrated, heat therapy is a nice way to "flush" yourself out so you feel primed and ready to run!