

## Ask Stacy – September 2011

***Question – I just signed up to run a marathon this fall, but now I am wondering what I was thinking?! Do you have any training tips for running a marathon?***

Congratulations for signing up for your first marathon! I ran my first marathon in January at Disney World and I'm planning to run the Charlotte Thunder Road Marathon this year. Finishing a marathon is an accomplishment that less than one percent of the people in the world can say they have achieved and you are about to be one of them!

While running a marathon is challenging, it is also fun and exhilarating. Training for a marathon requires motivation and mental stamina. While most people think of running as physically challenging, I found that it is just as important, if not more, to work out the mind.

As George S. Patton, U.S. Army General and 1912 Olympian, said:

“You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. It is always tired in the morning, noon and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired.”

There will be many days that you will not feel like running. It will rain. It will be too hot or too cold. You will feel like quitting. Many days you will wonder why you signed up in the first place. But the secret to successful marathon training is staying positive and motivated. Write down the reason you want to run a marathon and put it in a highly visible place. Use that as your mantra when you're at mile 18 and your legs feel weak and you are tired and sick of getting out of bed at the crack of dawn every Saturday morning while the rest of your family sleeps in. Tell your mind you can do it and your body will follow.

I recommend signing up for a marathon-training program to take the guesswork out of when, where and how long to run. The Fort Mill YMCA offers a Fast Feet Marathon and Half-Marathon Training Program. Not only does this offer a group of other runners you can stick with on the long runs, but it is led by RRCA-certified running coach, Paige Kell, who provides tips on running form, nutrition and hydration.

The Fort Mill YMCA also offers a 5K Training Program for those who want to train for one of the many fun fall 5K races. Email [ynotrun@hotmail.com](mailto:ynotrun@hotmail.com) for more information about either program.

If you decide to train on your own, there are many resources that can help you plan your own training schedule. Here are a few of my favorites:

marathonrookie.com

Runnersworld.com  
Halhigdon.com  
Jeffgalloway.com

Regardless of the training program you choose, keep this famous quote from Oprah Winfrey in mind, "Running is the greatest metaphor for life, because you get out of it what you put into it."

Heathfully,  
Stacy Cacciatore