



Presented by  new balance

April 2011 Training Newsletter

By Bruce Deacon

Make This YOUR Year!

Why not cross an item off your "bucket list" at this year's 2011 GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon? Maybe you have dreamt of finishing a half or full marathon. Perhaps there is a time goal that seems elusive. It could be that you have vowed to qualify for the Boston Marathon one of these years. Make 2011 the year when these dreams come true. Push the limits and discover your possible.

Setting goals is a key to success. An athlete I used to coach went from barely being able to jog 3 km to chasing a sub 2:40 marathon time. His friends thought he was crazy when a year after starting to run he announced that he wanted to complete his first marathon. They thought he was certifiable when he told them he wanted to run it in close to 3 hours. He was willing to work hard, stay focused and train wisely. It paid off when he ran close to 3:10. He discovered that what other said was impossible actually was within his reach.

While I am not recommending that you set unrealistic goals, sometimes you need to reach a bit further than you think you can. The question isn't always "what is realistic", but rather "what would it take to make it realistic." When setting goals, most people err on the side of caution. Afraid of falling short and failing to reach their target, they set their goals too low. As a result, they don't push themselves as hard as they might, and never really test their limits.

Make 2011 the year that you set ambitious goals. Don't settle for a goal that you know you can attain. Reach for a goal that you think you might reach if you work harder than you have in the past. This is the year to see what you really have in you.

What Schedule Is Right?

You will note that there are schedules for different distances and different goals. For most people, it will be fairly clear what program to use. If you are just starting out, then the Marathon First Timers or the Half Marathon Go the Distance programs might be perfect. For other runners, they might be unclear as to whether they should follow a challenging program or keep with one similar to what they have used in the past. I recommend that you look at the first three weeks of the program and ask yourself these questions:

1. Does the first three weeks require that I run farther than I have ever gone before?
2. Is the volume of the first week more than 15% the volume I have been averaging for the last month?
3. Have I had any running injuries during the last month?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, then you are best to start with the easier program. If you are asking how this caution relates to setting more ambitious goals, then I will explain.



Presented by  new balance

You can always shift to a more challenging program after a few weeks. Sometimes what is needed to do the more difficult sessions is a few weeks of training under your belt. Not sure how to progress to a harder program once the training has started? Just email me for help at coachbruce@runvictoriamarathon.com.

Staying Injury Free!

There are few things that can sabotage your running goals more than an ill-timed injury. Although injuries can strike at any time, the most common occurrences are when you increase your training volume and intensity too quickly. Since that is often the case at the start of a program, it is helpful to keep these injury prevention tips on your mind over the first month:

1. Start with a new pair of shoes. The protective cushioning of your running shoes is designed to last about 500-700 km. The trouble is that the outer soles often last much longer, so your shoes have lost their cushioning before they look too worn. Look for signs of wear on midsole. Reach into the shoe with one hand and press downward into the midsole near the heel and ball of your foot. You should feel that there is lots of cushioning and it shouldn't feel overly hard. Check the heel of the shoe to see if it is losing its firmness and support. When in doubt, buy a new pair of shoes to start the new program. Go to a running store with a knowledgeable staff that can fit you in a shoe that is designed to meet your individual biomechanical needs. Remember that just because the shoe is expensive, doesn't mean that it is right for you. Choose soft surfaces that absorb the impact of your foot strike. Run on grass, wood chip, dirt paths, or gravel. Avoid running on concrete or asphalt if possible.
2. Listen to your body. The schedule is a guide to help you to progressively increase your volume and intensity. It is written on paper and not etched in stone. If your body needs a couple of days off to adapt to the increased training load, be wise and take them. Are you feeling tired and worn out? Reduce the suggested training by 10- 20 minutes until your body gets a bit fitter. Time is on your side.
3. Tend to aches and pains early. As soon as you start to feel an injury pop up, get some treatment. A chiropractic adjustment, massage or bit of physiotherapy will usually sort things out quickly if you act quickly to nip the injury in the bud. The longer you wait to get treatment, the longer it will take to get well.
4. Be aware of the stress in your life. When life gets hectic, nutrition takes a back seat, or late nights are too common, your body will get worn down. This will affect your ability to recover and will eventually lead to injury or sickness. Reduce your training expectations during times of high stress.