



## August 2010 Newsletter - Training Newsletter

### When that ache won't go away!

I suppose it was a combination of wishful thinking and a sense of invincibility that convinced me that the persistent pain in my achilles tendon would go away. In almost thirty years of running, I had rarely been hurt, and so I figured that this pain would soon fade. Not only was I wrong, I was injured.

Here are a few lessons that I learned through my injury:

1. Deal with it quickly. R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevate) are the simple rules for the first couple of days. With luck, this will be sufficient to calm things down and get you back to training.
2. Make sure your body is aligned. If you have persistent pain on one side of your body, then the first line of defence is a chiropractic adjustment. By making sure that your back, hips and feet are structurally functioning the way they should, you can resolve a lot of your troubles. Look for a therapist who will spend 10-15 minutes with you doing a mix of soft tissue work and skeletal manipulations.
3. Get in to see a massage therapist. This will help break down any muscle tightness and knots that could be leading to your injuries.
4. If the pain persists, then get to a sports medicine doctor to get a proper injury diagnosis and to develop a recovery plan.
5. If it is a knee injury, then look to your feet and your hips. Most knee injuries from running come from incorrect footwear and biomechanics or from pelvic misalignment. Make sure that your footwear is not over or under correcting your foot plant. Think twice about getting custom orthotics this close to the race as they often take a while to break in and be adjusted to your feet. If you require a bit more support, try a pair of orthotics.
6. Stay fit through cross training. Running in the pool, swimming or cycling should keep your aerobic fitness from declining.
7. Should you have missed more than a week of training, then you will need to make a slow return to training. Start with a mix of running and walking where you are running for 1 minute and walking for 1 minute. Keep this up for 20 minutes the first day, 30 minutes the next day and 40 minutes the third day. If all is pain free, then start back on your training schedule, reducing the volume of each run by 50% for the next 4 days. The next week, up your volume to 75-80% of your scheduled volume. By the end of the second week you should be ready to do your full volume of training...providing you are pain free.

Of course the best strategy is to stay injury free by listening to your body, running on soft surfaces and ensuring that your shoes are not too old.

## Hills

The GoodLife Victoria Marathon course is not what you would term hilly. There are no scary hills that will cause you to significantly change your running form. That said, the course rolls and there are few sections where you are running on complete flat terrain.

The gentle ups and downs won't take a toll provided you are able to "run through" the hills. The key is to learn to run gradual ups and downs without significantly altering your form or losing too much energy to vertical motion.

Unlike shorter races where you want to charge your way to the top of the hill, during a marathon the objective is to conserve energy by maintaining a consistent effort going up and down the hills. Focus on keeping your stride rate constant, reducing your stride length going up and increasing it on the way down. Don't try to make up time by speeding up on the down hills, but rather use them to conserve energy. Rest a bit as you go down the hill, letting gravity do most of the work.

You will notice that the schedules lack the traditional hill workouts where you charge up to the top of a hill and then jog down. Instead, the hill work is either performed as a mix of 10k and marathon efforts or consists of running on hilly courses during your easy and long run days. Traditional hill running often teaches runners to be aggressive on the hills, and this approach is not a wise strategy for most marathons and half marathons. This aggression would waste the energy you need over the latter parts of the race.

As you come to hills during your long runs, practice keeping your rhythm and effort constant. This technique will come in handy on race morning.

Bruce Deacon

[coachbruce@runvictoriamarathon.com](mailto:coachbruce@runvictoriamarathon.com)