

RACE DAY CHECK LIST

Pre-Race Preparation

- Pick up your race package *before* Race Day – don't forget safety pins!
- Experiment with nutrition products in the weeks leading up to the race.
- Set out your race clothes and all equipment the night before the race.
- Hydrate in the two days preceding the race.

Essentials

- Runners
- Favorite Socks
- Water
- Hat/Visor
- Sunglasses
- Watch
- Heart Rate Monitor
- Torso Pack
- Sunscreen
- Body Glide
- Nutrition Product
- Pace Band
- Race Number

To Do List

- Relax – You can do it!
- Arrive Early!
- Include a Warm up
- Start Slowly
- Drink Water
- Stay Positive!
- Finish Upright and Smiling!

RACE DAY TIPS

Nothing New on Race Day – Eat nothing different than you have during your training. Race Day is not the day to try a new food item for breakfast. Wear clothing and shoes that you have worn during training. Do not break in a new pair of shoes on Race Day.

Get your Rest - Get plenty of rest earlier in the week. Might be too nervous to get a good night's sleep the night before.

Pick Up Your Race Packet Early - Pick up your race bib and goody bag before Race Day, if possible. This way, you won't have to worry about rushing to get it on the morning of the race. Also, you're more likely to get your desired race T-shirt size if you pick it up early.

Don't Overdress - A good rule of thumb: Dress as if the weather is 10C warmer than it is. That's how much you'll warm up once you start running. If it's cold, you can always wear warmer clothes while you're waiting for the race to start. Many races offer a gear check where you can store your bag with extra clothes for before and after the race. Removable layers that can be tied around your waist are a good idea if there is no gear check.

Pin Your Bib - Your race bib goes on the front of your shirt, not the back. You can use safety pins on all four corners of the bib to keep it in place. Bib can be pinned to shirt or upper pant leg. Write your name or medical information on the back if you are not carrying ID with you or pin Cash and ID in a small plastic baggy to the back for quick access after the race.

Get There Early - Arrive at the race site early to make sure you get a parking spot. Regardless of whether you're driving there or not, you'll also need time to pick up your number (if you haven't already), check your bag, take a warm-up jog, and use the bathroom (the lines may be long).

Line Up Properly - Don't line up near the front of the starting line. Faster, more seasoned runners don't like to weave around newbie (and likely slower) runners at the start of the race. Some races have corrals based on estimated pace or post pace signs. If not, ask runners nearby their anticipated pace. If it's faster than yours, move further back. It will be easier to fall into your pace if you're around people that are the same speed as you.

Use the Water Stops - Take advantage of the water stations on the course.

Thank the Volunteers - Don't forget to thank the volunteers for handing out water or those that are anywhere out on the course! Without the volunteers there would be no races. Better yet, give back by volunteering for at least one race a year yourself. It's a lot of fun and you usually get a shirt as well as qualify for draw prizes.

Bring Your Support Team - Invite your friends and family members to support you. Ask them to stand near the finish line so they can cheer you on at the end. Friends with cameras are a good idea too.

Set Reasonable Goals - Don't put pressure on yourself to achieve a really fast time for your first race. Finishing the race and enjoying the experience are excellent goals for a first-timer. Don't forget to smile when you cross that finish line!

Don't Wear the Race T-Shirt - Lastly, you'll most likely get a race T-shirt when you sign up for the race. Don't wear it until after you've completed the race. Not only are there superstitions associated with wearing it in the race, but it also makes you look like a rookie!

RACE DAY ETIQUETTE

Pay for Your Spot - Running in a race you haven't entered, also called "banditting", is not fair to race organizers, volunteers, and especially the people who have paid to participate. It's also unsafe, since race organizers plan their course amenities, such as water and sports drinks, and medical assistance based on the number of people who have signed up for the race. And overcrowded race conditions can lead to [falls](#) and other problems.

Line Up Properly - Nothing is more annoying to a runner at the start of a race than having to weave around slower runners after the gun goes off. Faster runners should line up at the front of the starting line, slower runners and walkers at the back. Some races have corrals based on estimated pace or post pace signs. If not, ask runners nearby their anticipated pace, and if it's faster than yours, move further back. Most races use timing chips, so the time it takes you to reach the starting line won't count in your final net time. If you feel you must start in an earlier spot, keep to the side and out of the way of the faster runners.

Don't Take Up the Whole Road - If you're running with a group, try not to run more than two abreast, so others can pass you.

Don't Jingle - Don't carry loose change or a set of keys in your pocket. They'll annoy those who are running near you.

Show Appreciation to Volunteers - Say "Thank You!" to race volunteers who hand you water or put your medal around your neck. They're volunteering their time and the race would not be successful without them.

Thank Supporters, Too - Acknowledge supporters who cheer for you as you pass them. If you're too tired to say "thanks," show them a smile, wave, or give them a thumbs up. It will make them feel good and encourage them to keep rooting for others. Be a cheerleader yourself and tell your fellow runners "You're doing great!"

Be Careful at Water Stations - Careful the area can be slippery when wet. Water stations can get a bit chaotic and crowded. Use caution when running into a water stop and make sure you're not cutting off other runners or spilling water on them. If you're going to stop or slow down to walk through the water stop, make sure there's not a runner behind you.

Keep Moving at the Finish - Don't immediately stop at the finish line or in the chute. There will be runners coming in right behind you, so keep going until it's safe to come to a stop.

Don't Be a Glutton - Don't take more than your fair share of food and drinks at the finish line. The back of the pack runners will appreciate it when there are still enough goodies for them at the end.

HOW TO DEAL WITH CROWDS AT YOUR RACE

As the sport of running has become more and more popular, runners are finding that races are much more crowded. If you've had some trouble dealing with crowds at races, try these tips to help ease your frustration and improve your race performance.

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Get to the Race Start Early - Part of lining up properly also means getting there with plenty of time to spare. I'll sometimes talk to runners who complain about getting stuck behind a huge group of walkers at the start. But then they'll confess that they got to the race start right before the gun went off, so they didn't have time to get a good spot. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the race start, especially if you need to pick up your race packet there. Head to the starting line and find a good spot for your pace.

Use Extra Caution at the Start - Even when you've lined up properly, crowds at the starts can be a real headache. I've seen a lot of falls, as runners stumble trying to pass slower runners, get jostled by the crowds, or trip over a water bottle or piece of clothing that someone discarded at the start. When you line up at a race start, make sure that you don't get distracted by the excitement of the race. Pay close attention to other runners, and be on the lookout for discarded items.

Have a Plan for Water Stops - Many runners get frustrated at the crowded water stops, but if you take the right approach, you can keep your frustration to a minimum. First, don't go to the first table at the water stop. That's where all the rookies stop and, if it's a big race, it's going to be very congested. Keep running to one of the tables farther down. Run through the middle of the road, since people are more likely to stop suddenly at the tables along the sides. If there are tables on both sides of the course, go to a table on the left side. Since most people are right-handed, the tables on the right tend to be much more popular.

Keep Moving at the Finish - Practice good race etiquette and keep moving through the finish line or in the chute. There will be runners coming in right behind you, so keep going until it's safe to come to a stop. If you keep moving, hopefully other runners will do the same and you can avoid congestion.

Stick to Small Races - If you really, really hate dealing with huge crowds at road races, there are still plenty of smaller, local races. Once you find some races, you can always check the results from last year's races to see how many finishers they had.

Question: Should I Run the Day Before a Race?

Answer: There are lots of opinions out there about whether or not you should run the day before a race. On the one hand, it's good to rest your running muscles in preparation for a race, especially if it's a long one, such as a marathon. Most runners who rest the day before a race say that they feel fresh and ready when they get to the starting line. But other runners will swear by running very easy for 20 minutes the day before a race, saying that it helps them loosen up and shake off the nervous feelings.

So, you really need to see what works best for you. If you're the type of person who gets race anxiety, it might be beneficial for you to do a very slow, 20-minute jog the day before. But if you think you perform better on rest, then just relax during those 24 hours leading up to the race. Whatever you do, just make sure that you don't do a significant workout that's going to leave you feeling tired or sore the next day.